

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 12 March 2021

Subject: Museum Documentation and Collection Care and Conservation Policies

Report by: Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present the Documentation Policy (Appendix 1) and Collection Care and Conservation Policy (Appendix 2) for approval.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Documentation Policy is approved.

2.2 That the Collection Care and Conservation Policy is approved

3. Background

3.1 The Documentation and Collection Care and Conservation Policies (Appendices 1 and 2 respectively) are an essential part of the council's collections management framework. They states the aims and methods for the documentation and recording of the council's museum collections and their care and conservation. Effective documentation of collections is achieved through working practices, creation and maintenance of electronic and paper records guided by the policy; effective conservation is achieved through preventive measures that protect the collection from damage supported by remedial work if and when required.

3.2 The two Policies provide guidance for staff and decision making and encourage public confidence in the museum as a suitable repository for collections items.

3.3 Along with other formally approved policies, they are also required for Accreditation, the national standard for museums in England managed by Arts Council England (ACE). Through Accreditation ACE aims to encourage all



museums and galleries to achieve agreed standards in how they are run, how they manage their collections and the experience of users.

- 3.4 Museums are required to reapply every four or so years. Accreditation is a continuous process. The standards are evolving requirements, designed to drive improvement and development within the sector. Each round demands more of the applicant museums.
- 3.5 Portsmouth Museums achieved full Accreditation for all its sites in 2016 and is due to reapply in early 2022. We want to be well prepared for what is a demanding and time-consuming process.
- 3.6 The majority of the service's policies are now due for review. As well as the policies presented here, officers will be bringing forward further policies for approval later this year. These include: the Museums Strategy, Collection Development Policy and Access Policy (new requirement). We will also be producing a raft of implementation plans some of which we would want to share with the Cabinet Member (although these do not require formal approval).
- 3.7 The current Accreditation standard has some significant new requirements which will be reflected in the Policies. This includes enhanced standards around recording environmental data, acquisition and cataloguing.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The Documentation and Collections Care and Conservation Policies are essential tools in a collections management framework. They provide staff with guidance, ensure that council resources are not wasted in undirected measures thus endorsing the principles of 'value for money' and the appropriate management of public funds.
- 4.2 The various elements of the Documentation Policy are essential parts of audit procedures and control, permitting us to account for the collections items in our care.
- 4.3 The policies are two of the required documents to support an application for Accreditation. ACE requires that such documents have formal approval by the governing body.
- 4.4 Accreditation is a 'passport' to many services and funding streams from external bodies such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). Grants from several external organisations demand full Accreditation status as a condition for funding. It also encourages joint working within and between organisations such as when borrowing items from other institutions.
- 4.5 Full Accreditation status demonstrates 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.

5. Integrated impact assessment

5.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment is attached as appendix 3.

6. Legal implications

6.1 As outlined in the body of the report, the two policies presented for approval are required in order to provide assurance as to the standards to be maintained by the Museum Service with a view to achieving renewal of the Service's national accreditation which, in turn, is key to its success going forward.

6.2 The policies themselves identify the required legislative compliance and best practice which is to be observed in the course of the Service's activities.

7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1 These policies are fundamental to the operation of the museum service as they provide a framework for the management of the collections. The policy documents are required by ACE in order to achieve full accreditation status.

7.2 This is a core policy which has and will continue to be funded through the approved service budget

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Signed by:

Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Portsmouth Museums Documentation Policy
- Appendix 2 - Portsmouth Museums Collection Care and Conservation Policy
- Appendix 3 - Integrated Impact Assessment

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:

Title of document	Location
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The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Growth