

Allerdale Borough Council

Executive – 23 November 2022

Collection Development Policy Review

Portfolio holder	Councillor Fitzgerald Councillor Markley
Report from	Rebecca Stamper Senior Specialist Sport, Art and Leisure
Wards affected	The wards directly surrounding each of the museums Keswick, Workington and Maryport.
Is this a key decision	No

1.0 The reason for the decision

1.1 The Councils Collection Development policy is due for renewal. The original policies were agreed in 2017, which consisted of one Allerdale generic policy document and three individual museum policies.

All four policies have been reviewed in 2022 with each of the museums and it has been agreed that the policies are still appropriate. The policies have been updated with some minor amendments.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Council agree to follow the revised versions of the policies.

3.0 Background and Introduction

3.1 The Council is responsible for three museums and their collections (Helena Thompson, Maryport Maritime and Keswick Museum) either directly in the case of Maryport Maritime Museum or as a Sole Charitable Trustee in the respect of Keswick Museum and Art Gallery Trust and The Helena Thompson Museum Trust. This requires the Council to act only in accordance with the objectives of the Trust and not allow for the Council to derive any benefit as an organisation from its position as Trustee. Currently, all three Museums are managed through different management organisations.

- 3.2 The Council developed a collection policy in 2012, which was reviewed in 2017, which each of the three museums follow (although each one has a variation of the generic policy in line with the type of collection they hold). The policy is due to be renewed and has been reviewed by each of the management organisations through their curatorial experts.

4.0 Content

- 4.1 The Councils role in museum services is to hold collections for the benefit of the public. To be able to do this in line with the Councils and the individual museums objectives, sound curatorial reasons need to be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items. As a governing body for museums, Allerdale voluntarily commit to abide by the Museums Association Code of Ethics and adoption and delivery against the policies reduces the reputational risk of any unethical disposing of items as well as ensuing acquisitions will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard.
- 4.2 The Arts Council manage the Museum Accreditation Scheme (of which all our museums are signed up to) and through that process, they give best practice guidance on the detail of collection policies. Each museum must apply to be an Arts Council accredited museum as part of their agreement with the Council. To achieve accreditation, they must follow an up to date, fit for purpose Collections Development Policy.

To achieve Museum Accreditation, Arts Council need to see that there is an approved policy being followed that has been reviewed within 5 years of the previous version.

Arts Council and the accreditation team are aware of the LGR process and understand that the Collection Policy is likely to be reviewed before the 5 years is up, to bring it in line with Carlisle and Copeland policy.

Having regularly reviewed policies is good practice, and also strengthens any grant funding support to develop museum and heritage collections.

- 4.3 The option to not approve the updated policies would mean that our museums would be at risk of not being able to renew or reapply for Museum Accredited Status, and would be therefore in breach of their Management Agreement.

5.0 Delivery arrangements

- 5.1 Once approved, the museums will continue to develop the collections as per their policies on behalf of the Council.

6.0 Implications and Impact

6.1 Contribution to Council Strategy Priorities, Outputs and Outcomes

Helping to ensure we have relevant and accessible activity in our town centres, attracting visitors.

Supports regeneration and levelling up agenda, enhancing the cultural offer and visitor economy.

6.2 Finance/Resource implications

There are no financial or resource implications directly associated with adopting this recommendation. Although funding may be required to deliver against the collection policy as and when required.

6.3 Legal and governance implications

Not following the policy could lead to loss of museum accreditation which is a clause in each of the museum management agreements that they must attempt to achieve this.

Following up to date policy helps to ensure collection management is thorough and transparent and that acquisitions and disposals follow robust process.

These policies will need to pass over to Cumberland Authority.

6.4 Risk analysis

By adopting the revised policy, the reputational risk to the Council due to lack of commitment to culture and heritage is significantly reduced.

Any changes in the management of the collections would need to incorporate the implementation of the adopted collections policy through their management agreement.

Adoption of the collection policies gives the Council and the organisations managing the collections on the Councils behalf clear guidelines on how and what is added, and disposed of from the collections, reducing the potential of any wrongdoing and that of reputational and governance risks.

6.5 Increasing satisfaction and service

Members of the public can have confidence that the collections are managed with care and accountability and will continue to be for the benefit of the public.

6.6 Equality impacts

Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis? If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons.

6.7 Health and Safety impacts

N/A

6.8 Health, wellbeing and community safety impacts

Improving health and well being through providing access to quality leisure and cultural activities.

6.9 Environmental/sustainability impacts

The policy ensures that the Council is developing the museum collections to allow for a long term heritage offer. Collecting and preserving items that are important to the local history, sustaining that local knowledge and interest.

There are no environmental or sustainability impacts as a result of approving this policy.

6.10 Other significant implications

Having up to date policies gives confidence to funders supporting large scale capital and revenue projects which embeds art and cultural development.

Appendices attached to this report

Appendix 1 - Collection Development Policy 2022 – Generic

Appendix 2 - Collection Development Policy 2022 – Keswick Museum & Art Gallery

Appendix 3 - Collection Development Policy 2022 – Helena Thompson

Appendix 4 - Collection Development Policy 2022 – Maryport Maritime

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