

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING / DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING / DECISION DATE:	4 December 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2597
TITLE:	Heritage Services Collections Development Policy	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1: Heritage Services Collections Development Policy		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The report introduces a revised Collections Development Policy for the Council's Museums and Archives. An up-to-date Policy is necessary for the Accreditation Scheme for which the Council's Museums are being assessed during 2013 and 2014.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Cabinet approve the Collections Development Policy.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from the adoption of this Policy. However the Accredited status enabled by this Policy can qualify the Council's museums and archives for grant aid from external bodies. Heritage Services has benefited from grant-aid from these Accreditation-dependent sources amounting to £1,200,000 over the past seven years
- 3.2 The Council employs suitably-qualified curators and archivists to implement the Policy.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The provision of museum and archive services by local authorities is a discretionary rather than statutory service. However this authority has important museum and archive collections which are used to deliver much-valued services to residents and visitors alike. The basis for the proposal is that the authority would wish to continue to observe best practice in the management and development of its museum and archive collections.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council holds important collections of historic material in its Museums and Record Office. Three of these collections – at the Roman Baths Museum, the Fashion Museum and Bath Record Office – have been 'Designated' as nationally important collections held in non-national institutions.
- 5.2 Museum and record office governing bodies are required to meet minimum standards of collections care and development in order to qualify for the Government's Accreditation standard. Accreditation marks governing bodies as worthy guardians of unique public collections of historic, artistic and archival material which they hold in trust for the public good.
- 5.3 Previously these requirements have been met through a separate Collections Management Policy and Acquisition & Disposal Policy. These were last adopted by the then Executive Member for Tourism Leisure & Culture in 2005 and are therefore due for updating. However the current requirement is that they are now brought together in one Collections Development Policy.
- 5.4 Accreditation also qualifies museums and record offices for grant-aid from a number of charitable trusts and grant-giving bodies. Heritage Services has benefited from grant-aid from these Accreditation-dependent sources amounting to £1,200,000 over the past seven years.
- 5.5 Accreditation, or working towards Accreditation, is a criterion for grant-aid from the Council to independent museums in Bath and North East Somerset.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 Adopting this Policy would keep the authority in line with best practice and maintain its reputation as a good custodian of important museum and archive collections.
- 6.2 Loss of 'Accredited' status would render the museums and archives ineligible for grant-aid from numerous sources.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The following bodies have been consulted during the preparation of this report:

- Heritage Services Focus Group
- Somerset Heritage Service
- Radstock Museum
- Bristol City Museums & Archives

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

Contact person	Stephen Bird 01225 477750
Background papers	Arts Council England (October 2011) Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Accreditation Standard.
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