

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Paul Crossley, Cabinet Member for Communities	
DECISION DATE:	On 18 December 2020 (for single Member decision)	
TITLE:	Museums’ Collections Development Policy	E3248
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
Attachment to this report: Museums’ Collections Development Policy		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 The Government agency overseeing museums, Arts Council England (ACE), requires collections development policies to be adopted by governing bodies every five years as an essential criterion for achieving Accredited status. Updating these policies ensures that they remain in line with national best practice, are up to date and fit for purpose.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet Member is asked to:**

- 2.1 Adopt the Museums' Collections Development Policy attached.**

## **3 THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The Council holds important museum collections which are used to deliver much-valued services to residents, visitors, researchers and schools. The Council's museum collections at the Roman Baths and Fashion Museum enjoy Designated status, the Government's way of recognising regional museum collections of national and international importance held by non-national museums.
- 3.2 This authority has always observed best practice in the management and development of its museum collections. Museum governing bodies are required to meet minimum standards of collections care and development in order to qualify for the Government's Accreditation standard administered by ACE.
- 3.3 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. It is also a criterion required by many grant-giving bodies including the National Lottery Heritage Fund as evidence of sound stewardship of the collections.

3.4 Collections development policies are required to be updated every five years, although this has slipped; the current policies were last updated and approved in December 2013.

3.5 The rationale for the recommendation is that updating these policies is a way of ensuring that they remain in line with national best practice and are fit for purpose.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 The Council's power to operate its Museums derives from the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

5.1 No additional cost arises from adopting these policies, other than potential loss of access to grant-aid.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.1 The Collections Development Policy outlines how the museums address gaps in their collections. It sets out our commitment to diversity, to ensuring that collections are representative of the different communities in Bath & North East Somerset and to recognising historic inequality and injustice.

7.2 The Service will build relationships and work in partnership with diverse communities such as BAME groups to support the development of collections which reflect the nature and diversity of local communities within the district.

7.3 The Equalities Impact Assessment identifies physical access as the most significant equalities issue affecting the policy.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

8.1 The Museums use digital records systems to manage their collection development processes and conservation records. This economises on the use of resources, principally paper, and also reduces waste. By providing information about the collections electronically via websites and social media, the Museums also help to reduce the need for people to travel to, from and within Bath. By caring for collections by keeping them in good environmental conditions the need for active conservation intervention is minimised, saving resources.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 To do nothing. This would risk loss of the authority's reputation for good practice and loss of access to grant-aid. This course of action is not recommended.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 This policy has been created in consultation with the Heritage Services Focus Group of local residents; it is also discussed with Museum stakeholders which include South West Museum Development (a Regional arm of ACE), Heritage Services' Learning & Participation Manager and the Archway Project Community Engagement Officer funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- 10.2 This report and the policies attached have been seen and approved by the s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

<b>Contact person</b>	Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services 01225 477750 or x7750.
<b>Background papers</b>	None
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	

# Heritage Services: Museums' Collections Development Policy

November 2020

## BACKGROUND.

Museum 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. Accreditation also qualifies museums for grant-aid from a number of charitable trusts and grant-giving bodies.

The requirement is that there should be a single policy covering acquisition, disposal and other aspects of collections management known as a Collections Development Policy. The current policy was adopted by the then Executive Member for Tourism Leisure & Culture in November 2013 and is now due for updating.

Accreditation, or working towards Accreditation, is a criterion of grant-aid offered by the Council to independent museums in Bath and North East Somerset.

## 1. CORPORATE POLICY FRAMEWORK.

1.1 The Council's Vision is set out in its Corporate Strategy 2020 – 24 and is simply expressed as:

**Improving People's Lives.**

This is being pursued through two core policies which are:

- **tackling the climate and nature emergency**, and
- **giving people a bigger say.**

The acquisition and development of museum collections in public custody supports this vision by caring for unique and original resources, creating educational opportunities around them, adding to the quality of life and building community identity. The Museum collections make a major contribution to cultural life in Bath and North East Somerset and provide opportunities for individuals and groups to derive personal and collective intellectual fulfilment through them.

## 1.2 The Council's three key principles:

To translate its purpose into commitments the Council has identified three key principles that underpin its core policies and help it realise its vision.

**To prepare for the future:**

The Service plans its activities through a 5-year business plan and this Collection Development Policy also has a 5-year span as part of that same strategic approach. This includes maintaining the relevance of collections through an active approach to acquisition and disposal to ensure that resources are only expended on worthwhile material.

The Museum collections are a resource bank that helps to sustain the corporate memory of society and in so doing help it to plan better for the future armed with knowledge and understanding. They help society at large, not just the Council, to be better prepared for the future.

**To focus on prevention:**

The Museums work to protect the collections by operating security standards recommended by relevant professional bodies.

They also work to protect the collections from physical deterioration by providing suitable environmental conditions and intervene with active specialist conservation to prevent loss arising from physical decay, pests and pollution.

The Museums help to further public understanding by developing learning and public engagement programmes using the collections and by providing a high standard of interpretation.

The Museums also occupy important listed buildings that form part of the historic landscape of the city. They care for these buildings and provide protection for them by involving the public with them. In providing opportunities for public enjoyment, and by animating and interpreting them through exhibitions and special events and providing an essential resource for interpretation and understanding of many other buildings throughout the World Heritage Site and the wider district.

**To deliver for local residents:**

The Service balances the needs of visitors, with developing the commercial potential and improving the physical care of its collections and buildings to provide sustainable growth. In so doing it makes a net financial contribution to the Council which helps it to deliver better services for local residents in everything it does. Through its Discovery Card scheme it provides free admission to local residents and concessions at many other attractions in and near to Bath and North East Somerset.

The Service consults with people in the local community to find better ways of providing access to original material. A variety of means such as permanent displays, temporary exhibitions, lectures, public study facilities, workshops, special events, store tours, retail merchandise and digital access via the Internet are employed. The Museums also work to provide good quality physical access to these resources by implementing improvements in building design and offering safe, neutral spaces in which people can study, debate and enjoy themselves.

Heritage Services engages in project work with groups of young people and provides events and stimulating activities to which local young people are admitted without

charge. The Service has an apprenticeship scheme for which local young people are eligible. Work placements are also sometimes available for young people, while volunteer opportunities are available to those of all ages. Education is recognised as a core function of Museums offering unique learning opportunities to people of all ages through formal and informal programmes.

### 1.3 Legislative framework.

The Council's power to operate its Museums derives from the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*.

### 1.4 Heritage Services 'statement of purpose'.

The Council has adopted a statement of purpose for Heritage Services that supports its three key principles. The Collections Development Policy derives from this statement:

#### **HERITAGE SERVICES** **For learning, inspiration and enjoyment**

### 1.5 Heritage Services Service Aims:

- to enhance the quality of life for residents of Bath & North East Somerset;
- to maximise public enjoyment of the Council's world class heritage;
- to enable people to learn from the activities and achievements of past and present societies;
- to promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures;
- to contribute to the district's economic prosperity through our Business Plan.

### 1.6 To achieve these Service Aims, we:

- protect and develop the Council's unique historic collections and public buildings;
- plan for and invest in their sustainability;
- interpret them through displays, study facilities, learning programmes and special events;
- mount the best available exhibitions from other regional and national collections;
- sell high quality merchandise to complement our services;
- hire out historic venues for a wide range of events and activities;
- train and develop our staff to realise their full potential;
- consult widely with users and stakeholders on an ongoing basis;
- use information technology in accessible and imaginative ways;
- work in partnership with others wherever appropriate.

### 1.7 Heritage Services Business Aims

Through our business plan we aim for ongoing sustainability in three equally important and inter-dependent activities:

**Conservation** – preserving our heritage for present and future generations to enjoy

**Customer Care** – meeting the needs of all our audiences, customers and guests

**Commercial Success** – maintaining our positive contribution to the Council's budget

To achieve these Business Aims, we assign equal importance to these three core activities.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY.**

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to define the areas of collecting, and the constraints within which collecting will take place, by the Museums governed by Bath & North East Somerset Council. These are the Roman Baths Museum; the Victoria Art Gallery and the Fashion Museum.
- 2.2 The Policy follows the Museums Association's revised *Code of Ethics for Museums (2008)*, which has been adopted by the Council and the revised guidelines and template (2011) laid down by Arts Council England (ACE) *Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Accreditation Standard*.
- 2.3 The Policy recognises the legitimate collecting aims of other organisations. It seeks not to acquire material to the exclusion of other bodies but to ensure that original material relating to the social and cultural history of Bath and North East Somerset, are secured in public custodianship in perpetuity by an institution which can give them appropriate care and make them publicly accessible.
- 2.4 In all areas of collecting relating to the Museums, it is ensured that the authority obtains absolute legal title to material acquired and that no material is acquired to which the authority cannot obtain legal title or whose prior ownership is in doubt. In all cases, the terms under which material is donated or bequeathed to a Museum will be clearly recorded and understood by all parties.
- 2.5 In all areas of collecting, documentation accompanying the material acquired is considered an essential part of the acquisition as it enriches and interprets the item. An item may be refused if the accompanying documentation is considered inadequate.
- 2.6 The Policy provides a platform for the future development of the existing collections of Romano-British archaeology, fashionable dress and fine art which are the main subject areas represented in the Council's Museums. Richly diverse, these collections cover a span of seven thousand years and extend to include social history, local history, coins, antique furniture, local silver, decorative art, dress history and spa equipment.
- 2.7 The Policy follows a format prescribed by ACE.

## **3. POLICY REVIEW.**

- 3.1 The Policy is intended to be responsive to changes in Council objectives and national standards and guidance, and to this end will be reviewed at least once every five years. The next review will be in or before November 2025. ACE or its successor body will be notified of any changes to this Policy and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

## **4. COLLECTION DESCRIPTIONS.**

### **4.1 Roman Baths Museum.**

#### **Nature of collections:**

The collections are principally archaeological, but also include a diverse local history collection and a major collection of numismatics which together tell the story of 7,000 years of human activity around the hot springs at Bath. The collection is Designated in its entirety by ACE as one of outstanding national significance.

### **Archaeology:**

In the prehistoric collections there are flint and stone objects, mostly from the downs to the north and south of Bath but including a small but distinctive group of mesolithic flint tools found in excavations in and around the hot springs and further finds from the site of the Southgate shopping development, together making a significant assemblage from the south west. There is also Bronze Age metalwork, the most significant pieces being from the Monkswood Hoard. There are small quantities of prehistoric pottery, human and faunal remains including objects from the Iron Age hillfort at Little Solsbury.

In the Roman collection, the bulk of material relates to the Baths and Temple site in which the museum is situated, consisting of building blocks, architectural fragments, sculptural reliefs, inscriptions, tile and lead and bronze plumbing fittings. There are also thousands of coins and many smaller objects from the sacred spring thrown in as offerings to the goddess Sulis Minerva. Amongst these are fragments of 129 curse tablets, the largest group known from within the Roman Empire and the only objects from Roman Britain to have been added to the UNESCO Memory of the World register of intangible cultural heritage.

There are some similar objects from sites elsewhere in Bath including architectural fragments, tomb sculptures and stone coffins. Notable amongst them is the Beau Street hoard of Roman silver coins, one of the largest from any town in Roman Britain. In addition, there are many small objects in copper alloy, iron and bone as well as substantial quantities of pottery, tile, human and animal bone and samples of wall plaster, mosaic tesserae and window glass.

From elsewhere in the district there are objects from the Roman villa at Combe Hay and there is an important collection of material from Keynsham which includes Roman objects from the Durley Hill Roman villa and the Somerdale Roman house.

The post-Roman collections are much smaller including remains from a Saxon cemetery at Bath and from the medieval settlement at Eckweek, excavated in 1988 in advance of the Peasedown St. John by-pass. Important objects from the Medieval Abbey site at Keynsham are also held. The post-medieval objects are principally ceramic and glass.

The Roman Baths Museum is one of only two museums in the former County of Avon which have been approved by Historic England for the deposition of excavation material and their associated archives. The museum collections are added to continually through receipt of excavation material as well as occasional stray finds. Most archaeological acquisitions result from development work in the district.

### **Numismatics:**

There is a strong collection of Roman coins of which the most important are those excavated from the King's Spring. There are also coins from the Saxon mint at Bath as well as a number of ancient coins (mostly Roman), a representative collection of English coinage from the Saxon period to the 20th century, miscellaneous foreign coins, commemorative medals, jettons and reckoning counters. There is also a very



comprehensive collection of local 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century tokens, tickets, inn checks and banknotes from Bath and north eastern Somerset. The thousands of Roman coins from the Sacred Spring and in the Beau Street hoard are both collections of national significance.

#### **Local History:**

These collections consist principally of objects relating to the city and immediate environs of Bath. They include an important collection of Spa-related equipment rescued in the 1980s, which was enhanced in the 1990s by the creation of an oral history archive for the Spa, and a large group of weights and measures transferred from Trading Standards. There is also a significant and substantial collection of old photographs, postcards and glass negatives, mostly of Bath but also of nearby villages.

Title to the collection of civic regalia and silver of the former Bath City Council was transferred to the Charter Trustees upon local government re-organisation in 1996, but curatorial advice is still given to the Trustees by the Roman Baths Museum when required.

## **4.2 The Fashion Museum.**

#### **Nature of Collections:**

The Fashion Museum is one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of fashionable dress and associated material in the UK and in the world and contains in excess of 100,000 objects. The collection is Designated in its entirety by ACE as one of outstanding national significance.

#### **Fashionable Dress:**

The collection includes items of fashionable dress for women, men and children from the 1600s to the present day. This includes an expanding collection of work by contemporary fashion designers, acquired through the museum's unique Dress of the Year scheme.

The work of leading names of fashion history, from Lucile and Worth to Alexander McQueen and Vivienne Westwood, are represented in the collection. Also included are significant collections of a number of fashion designers, including Helmut Lang, Sarah Dallas, Wendy Dagworthy, Victor Edelstein and Jean Varon.

Other discrete collections include the 'wardrobe' collections of Mary Chamberlain Carnegie, Lady Curzon, Ottoline Morrell, Molly, the Rani of Pudukkottai, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Dame Alicia Markova, and Sir Roy Strong.

The breadth of the historical collections ensures that dress worn by a wide spectrum of wearers is featured and that the Museum's collection is not merely a 'name check' of fashion designers' work.

The term 'fashionable dress' is widely interpreted to embrace the complexity of the fashion system throughout the period when dress survives. Thus, for example, the collection includes couture pieces as well as stylish examples of ready-to-wear and dressmaker fashions inspired or informed by named designers. Equally, the collection also includes 'street' and other fashions which have in turn inspired fashion designers.

Currently, the collection does not include dress from areas other than what has historically been termed 'western European'. This situation will be redressed in future.

**Fashion Accessories:**

The collection includes a range of fashion accessories to dress, including shoes and hats, gloves, parasols, stockings, bags and vanity cases, scarves and handkerchiefs, fans and costume jewellery.

Significant discrete collections in this area include the Glove Collection of the Worshipful Company of Glovers of London, arguably the finest collection of gloves in the world, which has been on loan to the Fashion Museum since the 1980s.

There are also good collections of the hidden items of fashion including nightwear and underwear, collars, cuffs etc.

**Fashion Archives:**

The collection includes sizeable archive collections, including fashion photographs and drawings, knitting and dressmaking patterns, designers' archives and costume historians' papers.

Of particular note is the Worth Paquin Archive, as well as other archive collections of other significant designers or fashion houses, including Lachasse, Mattli, Bellville Sassoon, Victor Edelstein and Jan van der Velden. The archive collections also include the Ernestine Carter Collection of fashion photographs from the 1960s.

**Fashion Periodicals:**

The collection includes sizeable collections of fashion periodicals and magazines. This includes 19<sup>th</sup> century fashion plates and 20<sup>th</sup> century fashion, women's and trade magazines, from *Vogue* and *Harpers and Queen* to *Tailor and Cutter* and *Woman and Home*. The fashion periodicals also include newspaper articles and features on fashion.

**Uniforms:**

The collection includes items of uniform, principally men's ceremonial and civil uniforms.

**Dolls:**

The collection includes a significant collection of dolls, and dolls' clothes. This part of the collection also includes some children's playthings. Of particular note is the collection of dolls from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dressed and collected as fashion dolls.

**Fashion Mannequins:**

The collection includes a significant number of fashion mannequins, from early 20<sup>th</sup> century wax busts to historical display mannequins. Highlights include pieces by Pierre Imans of Paris and the collection of the Dress of the Year mannequins by Adel Rootstein from the 1960s to the 2000s.

**Textiles:**

The collection includes some textiles, principally household furnishings. Of particular note is a small collection of 18<sup>th</sup> century embroidered covers.

**Fashion Making and Care:**

The collection includes sizeable numbers of objects in connection with the making and care of dress, from panel pieces of garments and trimmings to buttons and other haberdashery items. Of particular note is an important collection of historical needlework workboxes.

**Other:**

The collection currently includes sizeable amounts of furniture, ceramics and glass and other household ephemera, including, for example, a hip bath and a collection of cricket bats and hockey and croquet sticks. This material was collected originally for the purpose of props for display.

#### **4.3 Victoria Art Gallery.**

##### **Nature of collections:**

The Victoria Art Gallery's collections of fine and decorative art date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. To a significant extent they tell the story of art in the city of Bath and the surrounding area, reflecting the demand from visitors and residents alike for pictorial records of themselves, the local landscape and architecture. Most of the 10,500 items in the collection were acquired by way of gift and bequest following the laying of the Gallery's foundation stone in 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, although judicious purchasing of modern pictures and sculptures has augmented the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century holdings.

##### **Fine Art:**

The bulk of the collection consists of British drawings, paintings, watercolours and miniatures and silhouettes from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are also small collections of sculpture and of European works of art. Of particular significance are the collections of prints, drawings and watercolours associated with Georgian Bath, important depictions of aspects of the 'City of Bath' World Heritage Site. Reflecting the history of artistic practice in Bath, the Gallery holds a large collection of portraits produced by artists who worked in the local area, including Thomas Gainsborough and Sir Thomas Lawrence. The Kimball Collection, donated by etcher Katharine Kimball in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, consists of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century prints by British and Continental artists. Of particular note is a small collection of rare early lithographic stones by Thomas Barker of Bath.

##### **Decorative Art:**

The collections include porcelain, pottery, watches and glass dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The bulk of this material is British and the collections of Delftware and of English drinking glasses are of particular note, albeit lacking 19<sup>th</sup> century examples of the latter.

### **5. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COLLECTING.**

#### **5.1 Roman Baths Museum.**

##### **Archaeology:**

The museum will only normally collect within the boundaries of Bath and North East Somerset. In those parts of North East Somerset where another museum has a particularly strong tradition of collecting (i.e. Bristol Museum at Camerton) a decision to collect will only follow consultation with that other museum and consideration of such matters as the wishes of the donor, ease of access for students and scholars, potential for public display, access to conservation resources and grant-aid.

##### **Numismatics:**

The museum will continue to develop its collection of locally associated objects from the whole district of Bath and North East Somerset.

##### **Local history:**

The museum will take a leading role in promoting the acquisition of objects of local and social historical significance by appropriately accredited museums and other organisations in Bath and North East Somerset by:

- (a) itself collecting objects and other media relating to the City of Bath and its environs, particularly the history of the Spa and the Pump Room and other public buildings belonging to or managed by the Council.
- (b) offering professional advice and encouragement and alerting other museums and kindred organizations in the district to opportunities to develop and sustain community-based collections of local history.
- (c) working together with Bath Record Office to support the development of collections reflecting the nature and diversity of local communities within Bath and North East Somerset through both historical objects and intangible media.

## 5.2 The Fashion Museum.

The Museum will target collection acquisition in the following areas:

### **Fashionable Dress:**

- Collect to fill gaps in existing collection, e.g. early 19<sup>th</sup> century corsets
- Collect to fill gaps in types of dress, e.g. Rational Dress
- Collect to extend range of dress, e.g. contemporary fashionable dress from Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe and Oceania
- Collect to extend chronology, e.g. Dress of the Year.

### **Fashion Accessories:**

- Collect to fill gaps in existing collection, e.g. 1970s-2000s
- Collect to fill gaps in types of accessory, e.g. backpacks
- Collect to extend chronology.

**Fashion Archives:** stop collecting, except for significant archive collections from fashion producers or consumers.

**Fashion Periodicals:** stop collecting, except for *Vogue* fashion magazine.

**Uniforms:** stop collecting.

**Dolls:** stop collecting.

**Fashion Mannequins:** stop collecting.

**Textiles:** stop collecting.

**Fashion making and care:** stop collecting.

**Other:** stop collecting, and stop accepting further long-term loans-in, other than in exceptional circumstances.

## 5.3 Victoria Art Gallery.

The Gallery seeks to build on and improve its collections with the acquisition of items which complement existing holdings.

Priorities include the following:

- Good quality works depicting the City of Bath World Heritage Site and surrounding area, in particular showing buildings which are of architectural significance and also places that have changed beyond recognition.
- Good quality works depicting the people and diverse communities of Bath & North East Somerset
- Good quality topographical works depicting locations in Bath and North East Somerset currently poorly represented in the collection.
- Good quality works with a strong local provenance and/or by local artists, i.e. those who were born in or trained in or worked in the local area, including post-1945 art and craft by artists who taught/studied at Bath Academy of Art or were members of the Brotherhood of Ruralists when it was based at Wellow near Bath. Works by the following artists would be of particular benefit to the collection: Thomas Gainsborough (the collection lacks a Bath period landscape, for example), Thomas Lawrence, Joseph Wright of Derby, Robert Edge Pine, William Scott, Malcolm Hughes, Richard Allen, Michael Craig-Martin, Bryan Wynter, Terry Frost, David Inshaw and a work from the 1960s by Howard Hodgkin.
- Good quality works relating to significant aspects of local history, for example Bath's Georgian architecture, the Bath Blitz, spa bathing and medical treatments, transport, sport, entertainment, or local industries and trades.
- Good quality works by artists of national and international significance that would complement the existing collection and enable us to present a more art historically comprehensive display.
- Items of decorative art associated with or made in Bath and North East Somerset including modern craftspeople such as Rachael Woodman, Takeshi Yasuda and Felicity Aylieff.
- Items of decorative art that complement our existing collection, in particular glass and studio ceramics.

## **6. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR RATIONALISATION OF COLLECTIONS.**

### **6.1 Roman Baths Museum.**

The Roman Baths undertook rationalisation of its collections in 2000 and 2001 when a collection of cast iron objects and architectural fragments was dispersed to other more appropriate institutions. Since then some duplicate material from the historic furniture collection has also been disposed of. All of these disposals followed the procedures recommended by the national agencies in being at the time and were the subject of specific reports approved by the relevant Cabinet member. The consequence of these disposals is that the collection now has a high degree of synergy with the current Collection Development Policy and no further disposals are proposed within the time frame of this policy.

### **6.2 The Fashion Museum.**

The Museum will target collection rationalisation in the following areas:

**Fashionable Dress:** no rationalisation currently planned.

**Fashion Accessories:** no rationalisation currently planned.

**Fashion Archives:** Collection Review planned.

**Fashion Periodicals:** no rationalisation currently planned

**Uniforms:** no rationalisation currently planned.

**Dolls:** no rationalisation currently planned.

**Fashion Mannequins:** no rationalisation currently planned

**Textiles:** Collection Review planned.

**Fashion making and care:** Collection Review planned.

**Other:** Collection Review planned.

### 6.3 **Victoria Art Gallery.**

The Victoria Art Gallery has systematically reviewed many accessions particularly of historic furniture that were once allocated to its collections but were no longer relevant to collection objectives. This resulted in two de-accessioning reports and subsequent disposal of some of the objects. Both of these disposals followed the procedures recommended by the national agencies in being at the time and were the subject of specific reports approved by the relevant Cabinet member on each occasion.

The collection still includes some items that should be considered for de-accessioning, when time and resources allow, in particular a large number of poor quality drawings and watercolours by amateur artists, of subjects with no local relevance.

## 7. **LIMITATIONS ON COLLECTING.**

- 7.1 The Museums recognise their responsibility, in acquiring additions to their collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. In all areas of collecting, material will only be acquired in line with the acquisition objectives set out in this policy, and only when the Museums have the physical, financial and human resources to properly care for them.

## 8. **COLLECTING POLICIES OF OTHER MUSEUMS.**

- 8.1 The Museums will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museums:

Victoria and Albert Museum  
Gallery of Costume, Manchester City Art Galleries  
The Museum of London  
National Museums of Scotland  
National Portrait Gallery  
Tate Britain  
The British Museum  
South West Heritage Trust (with regard to historic Somerset)  
Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

## **9. ACQUISITIONS NOT COVERED BY THE POLICY.**

- 9.1 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

## **10. ACQUISITION PROCEDURES.**

- 10.1 The museums will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 10.2 In particular, the Museums will not acquire any object, record or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object, record or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- 10.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Museums will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2005.
- 10.4 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museums will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority
- 10.5 The Museums will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures. In England the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.
- 10.6 Any exceptions to the above clauses 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, or 10.5 will only be because the museum is:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin;
  - acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded;

- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin;
- in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970;

In these cases the Museums will be open and transparent in the way they make decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

10.7 If a Museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

## **11. SPOILIATION.**

11.1 The Museums will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission. Spoliation is defined as "pillaging, seizure of property by violence, depredation, despoiling" (Oxford English Dictionary).

## **12. THE REPATRIATION AND RESTITUTION OF OBJECTS AND HUMAN REMAINS.**

12.1 A museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums' (DCMS 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 14.1, 14.3 and 14.8 below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

The disposal of human remains will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums'.

## **13. MANAGEMENT OF MUSEUM ARCHIVES.**

13.1 As the Museums hold and intend to acquire supporting archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, their governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002).

## **14. DISPOSAL PROCEDURES.**

### **14.1 Disposal preliminaries:**

The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

By definition, museums have a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. A governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.



When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

#### **14.2 Motivation for disposal and method of disposal.**

When disposal is justified by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 14.3-14.8 will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

The Museums will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

Any financial benefit arising from disposal will be assigned to the care and development of the remaining collections as set out in paragraph 14.5 below. This supports the Council's duty of care in discharging its trusteeship of the collections which have been acquired for public benefit rather than as financial investments.

#### **14.3 The disposal decision-making process.**

Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

#### **14.4 Responsibility for disposal decision-making.**

A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

#### **14.5 Use of proceeds of sale.**

Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the remaining collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from ACE.

The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

#### **14.6 Disposal by gift or sale.**

Once a governing body decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition where greater public benefit can be realised.

If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

#### **14.7 Disposal by exchange.**

The Museums will not dispose of items by exchange.

Retaining an option to dispose by exchange can lead to objects which are no longer of benefit being retained indefinitely in hope of a suitable exchange opportunity arising. This can waste resources on retention costs and delay or prevent the value of unwanted items being assigned to the benefit of the wider collection and its development. Disposal by exchange can also lead to the full and correct value of collections not being recognised or realised.

#### **14.8 Documenting disposal.**

Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with the SPECTRUM procedure on de-accession and disposal.