

Agenda Item: 7

Report to: Museums Committee

Date: 9th June 2008

Report from: Museums Curator

Title of report: **ACQUISITION & DISPOSAL POLICY**

Purpose of report: To consider the Museum's Acquisition & Disposal policy which requires updating in line with new requirements of the Museum Libraries and Archives Council's Accreditation Standard and is due for review in 2008

Recommendations: The report is for noting

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The current Acquisition & Disposal Policy was approved in 2003 and is due for review in 2008. Some amendments were made when the Museum applied for Accredited status in 2006 under the scheme run by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. I
- 1.2 In April 2008 the Accreditation Committee issued revised requirements that reflect legal changes and developments in thinking. Museums must adopt these requirements when their acquisition policies are under review in order to meet the Accreditation standard.
- 1.3 The Acquisition and Disposal policy sets out principles that provide governing bodies and museum staff with a framework for the scrupulous and ethical acquisition and disposal of collections using clear procedures and decision-making processes common to UK museums in the Accreditation Scheme.
- 1.4 Implementing the policy enables museums to demonstrate the public benefit in actions relating to the acquisition and disposal of collections. It provides a basis for open and transparent decision-making and an informed dialogue between governing bodies, donors, funding bodies and other stakeholders.
- 1.5 The policy applies to material which the museum owns and has accessioned into the collection or intends to own and accession into the collection.
- 1.6 The acquisition, management and disposal of collections flows from:
 - the Museum's constitution and statement of purpose
 - the legal basis on which the collections are held
 - the public benefit derived from the effective use and management of the collections
 - an assessment of the needs of the Museum's collections
 - collections held by other museums and organisations collecting in the same or related geographic areas or subject fields.
- 1.7 Financially motivated disposal risks damaging public confidence in museums and the principle that collections should not normally be regarded as financially negotiable assets (Museums Association Code of Ethics, 2008, paragraph 6.13).
- 1.8 The main areas of amendment to the Museum's 2003 policy are references to new material in the collection and new displays, further guidelines from the Accreditation Committee on acquiring objects that lack previous ownership history, the holding of human remains, repatriation of exhibits and stricter disposal procedures. Changes are shown in bold.

2.0 Policy Implications

Equalities & Community Cohesiveness	X
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	
Risk Management	X
Environmental issues	
Economic / Financial implications	X
Human Rights Act	
Organisational Consequences	X

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