

MUSEUMS ACCREDITATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Museums Accreditation has replaced Museums Registration and is the national standard for museums in Britain, administered by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Wirral Museums Service needs to submit applications for the Accreditation of the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and Birkenhead Priory before the end of March 2009. Both sites were Registered under the previous national scheme. Part of the application process requires Cabinet approval for the application for Accreditation, the Forward Plan and the Acquisitions and Disposal Policy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Museum Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed standards for UK museums. To qualify museums must meet clear basic requirements on how they care for and document their collections, how they are governed and managed, and on the information and services they offer to users.

2.2 Accreditation benefits museum visitors and users of the Museums Service. It supports museum managers and governing bodies in planning and developing services, and it provides a benchmark for grant-making organisations, sponsors and donors.

2.3 The Aims of Museum Accreditation:

- to encourage all museums and galleries to achieve minimum standards in museum management, user services, visitor facilities and collections management.
- to foster confidence in museums as bodies which (a) hold collections in trust for society and (b) manage public resources appropriately.
- to reinforce a shared ethical basis for all bodies which meet the definition of 'museum'.

2.4 Accreditation is important to the Museums Service because restrictions are placed on the dissemination of Government money through MLA and Accreditation is the minimum standard required to access that money. This applies to grant-aid for purchases, access to specialist advice and services, training and information. Access to funding from agencies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund would also be adversely affected.

2.5 A copy of the draft Wirral Museums Service Forward Plan is attached in Appendix 1 and the draft Acquisitions and Disposals Policy in Appendix 2.

3.0 ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS POLICY

3.1 This policy (Appendix 2) sets out the principles that will provide the governing bodies and staff of museums 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.

3.2 Implementing the policy will enable Wirral Museums Service to demonstrate the public benefit in their 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.

3.3 The policy is based on that of the Phase 2 Registration Guidelines, as accepted for the previous Wirral Museums Management Plan (approved by Council in 2001) and the present edition of the Accreditation Standard. It has been brought up to date, and reflects recent legal changes. The wording in the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy is prescribed by MLA to achieve minimum standards and approval needs to be given for the policy as it is written for Accreditation to be achieved.

4.0 FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Achieving Accreditation gives access to funding opportunities that would otherwise be denied.

4.2 There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Cultural Services facilities are provided to all Wirral residents however some are targeted to those with special requirements.

6.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The targeted provision of Cultural Services facilities has been demonstrated to lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and petty crime.

7.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Cultural Services provision contributes to many of the aims of Local Agenda 21.

8.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Cultural Services can make a significant contribution to the health and well being of Wirral residents.

10.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Cultural Services can make a significant contribution to the health and well being of Wirral residents.

11.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The report covers all of Wirral.

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 There are no Background Papers associated with this report.

13.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 That the Cabinet approve the applications for Accreditation for Williamson Art Gallery and Museum and Birkenhead Priory.

13.2 That the Cabinet approve the Forward Plan for the Museums Service.

13.3 That the Cabinet approve the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy for the Museums Service.

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