



West Lothian  
Council

**COUNCIL EXECUTIVE**

**MUSEUMS SERVICE ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY 2012 - 2017**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF AREA SERVICES**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To present the Museums Service Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2012 – 2017 (Appendix 1) for adoption by the Council Executive.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Notes that the national museum Accreditation scheme obliges West Lothian Council Museums Service to have an Acquisition and Disposal Policy (ADP) which conforms to Accreditation standards in form and content and is adopted by West Lothian Council.
2. Notes the revisions to the Museums Service Acquisition and Disposal Policy necessitated by changes in the Accreditation Standard model ADP as revised in 2010.
3. Adopts the Museums Service Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2012-17

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Being honest, open and accountable  Making best use of our resources  Working in partnership
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	The amended policy takes account of all current legislation relating to the ownership and provenance of museum collections. Following a Relevance Assessment (Appendix 2) this policy is deemed to have no impact on equality issues.
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	The adoption of this amended policy will enable WLC Museums Service to retain its Fully accredited status under the national Accreditation Standard for Museums as revised October 2011 (Appendix 3). Accreditation status

qualifies WLC for external funding and object deposits which maintain and enhance the performance of the Museums Service.

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| <b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>           | Outcome12: "We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations". The application of the ADP will ensure protection of WLC's museum collection and so enable its enhancement for future generations.  |
| <b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b> | The ADP will be applied by the Museums Development Officer using existing revenue budgets and grant aid for which Accredited museums are eligible. Objects whose collection might incur higher costs would be referred to the Council Executive. Properly applied, the ADP ensures suitable care for WLC heritage assets, both those which form part of the Museum Service collection and those non-museum items which are held in Museum Service stores. |
| <b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>                         | Considered at Culture and Leisure PDSP on 22 <sup>nd</sup> December and recommended for adoption.   |
| <b>VIII Other consultations</b>                          | Museums Galleries Scotland; Almond Valley Heritage Trust; Bennie Museum Trust; Linlithgow Heritage Trust; West Lothian Council Planning and Conservation; West Lothian Council Local History Library; West Lothian Council Archives and Records Management; West Lothian Museums Forum.   |

#### **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

It is a core requirement of the national Accreditation Scheme for Museums as revised in October 2011 (Appendix 3) that the museum has an approved acquisition and disposal policy. The policy must include themes and priorities for collecting and information about the legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items. Such a policy was adopted by West Lothian Council in 1994 and revised in 1999 and 2006.

The national Accreditation scheme is now operated by Arts Council England (ACE), which took over the functions of the abolished Museums Libraries and Archives Council on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Museums Galleries Scotland remains the inspection body for Scottish museums and the Accreditation scheme stands apart from other ACE functions. West Lothian Council Museums Service will be invited to apply to meet the fourth incremental level of museum Accreditation standards during 2012. As part of that application, an acquisitions and disposal policy, updated in the light of recent legal and ethical developments, must be adopted by the Council and submitted to the Accreditation panel.

## **Differences from 2006 version (All references are to Appendix 1)**

1. The Statement of Purpose of the Museum, approved by its governing body, must now be incorporated into the ADP. The Museums Service Statement of Purpose has been revised in the light of the Single Outcome Agreement, in which WLC community museums are named as contributors to outcome 12: "We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations". (Section 1)
2. Public Art is no longer relevant to the Museum ADP as works have been dealt with under the Public Art Strategy since 2008. (Section 3.4.5)
3. The policy review procedure is unchanged but has been made explicit in the text of the ADP. (Section 6)
4. Museums Galleries Scotland is new name of the body in responsible for monitoring museum standards in Scotland. (Section 6)
5. The section on Treasure Trove takes into account recent administrative changes in the Treasure Trove system in Scotland. (Section 8.6)
6. Object disposal used to be regarded as extremely unethical to the extent that museums were obliged to sacrifice valuable storage space to objects which were inappropriate to the collection or in very poor condition and not accessible. It has now been recognised that good collection management can include disposal if carried out transparently after careful consideration of:
  - The public benefit
  - The effect on the remaining collections
  - Other museums collecting in the same geographical or subject areaClauses have been added to reflect this change. However other clauses have been expanded to emphasise the ethical limitations on methods of disposal including, as a last resort, sale. (Sections 12.1 and 12.6-7; 12.9-10)

## **E. CONCLUSION**

This acquisition and disposal policy involves only slight changes in content and emphasis from the 2006 -11 policy. However recommendation for adoption of the policy by the Council Executive will assist the Museums Service to achieve the 2011 Accreditation standard, remain eligible for grant aid in the Museums sector and continue its high quality collections management work.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Museums Libraries Archives Council: Acquisition and Disposal Policy for museums participating in the Accreditation Scheme. Revised April 2010.

### Appendices/Attachments:

1. Museums Service Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2012 – 2017
2. Equality Impact Relevance Assessment
3. Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Accreditation Standard. October 2011

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