

Summary Sheet

Title

Disposal of flood damaged objects from the Museum Collection

Assistant Director Approving Submission of the Report

Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director Culture Sport and Tourism

Report Author

Jessica Tarver, Care of Collections Project Manager

Ward(s) Affected

None

Executive Summary

In 2007 Heritage Services main Museum store was badly flooded. At the time over 45,000 objects were affected. Following a report to Cabinet on 2nd July 2007, approval was given for the Heritage Services Manager to carry out any necessary disposals. As a result the majority of the objects were either restored and retained in the collection or disposed of. However, due to the extent of the damage, not all objects were reviewed at the time. Therefore, in 2018 the Care of Collections Project was created to resolve the final outstanding issues.

All remaining flood damaged objects have now been reviewed and this report is seeking approval from the Assistant Director for the Care of Collections Project Manager to carry out disposal of the objects listed in Appendix one.

At the end of the Care of Collection Project a full report on objects retained in the collection and objects disposed of will be submitted to the Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism.

Recommendations

The Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism gives approval for the Care of Collections Project Manager to ethically dispose of the objects, outlined in Appendix one, as part of the Care of Collection Project.

List of Appendices Included

- 1) List of objects for disposal
- 2) Blank Disposal Proposal Form
- 3) Blank Object Entry Form

- 4) Museums Association Disposal Toolkit
- 5) Museums Association Code of Ethics

Background Papers

- 1) The Former Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services
Monday, 2nd July, 2007
- 2) The Former Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services
Monday, 2nd June, 2008

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Clifton Park Museum Acquisition and Disposal Panel

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

Not exempt

Title: Disposal of flood damaged objects from the Museum collection

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism gives approval for the Care of Collections Project Manager to carry out the disposal of objects identified in appendix one. This will be done in accordance with the disposal of museum objects protocol set out in the Museum Association's Code of Ethics, and the Council's Financial Regulations.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2007 Rotherham was hit by a serious flood, which saw both rivers burst their banks. Heritage Services housed the Museum's collection at Northfield store. This store was badly hit by the flooding, with over 45,000 objects being submerged.
- 2.2 In the aftermath of the flood the majority of the objects damaged were cleaned and moved to the new store or disposed of at the time. Approval for disposal was given by Cabinet on Monday, 2nd July 2007.
- 2.3 However due to the large amount of objects affected and staff changes not all objects were dealt with in 2007.
- 2.4 In 2018 Heritage Services established a Care of Collections project to resolve all outstanding issues from the 2007 flood. The project team have now assessed 1,669 objects. Cleaning and returning 1,114 into the main collection and identifying 555 objects that need to be ethically disposed of. See Appendix one.

3. Disposal process

- 3.1 All objects that have been reviewed as part of the Care of Collections project have been assessed by museum professionals. They are only recommended for disposal by destruction, if they are beyond restoration, or, are a risk to staff, the general public or the rest of the collection. Other methods of disposal considered will be (but are not limited to), transfer to another accredited museum, transfer to an institution in the public domain or recycling the object.
- 3.2 Disposing of the objects will deliver a number of key outcomes that will help to improve the care of the Museum collection as a whole.
 - Many of the objects are either covered in mould or damaged by pests and removing them from the collection will reduce the risk of these poor conditions spreading.
 - The backlog from the flood in 2007 will be completely resolved, enabling the Museum staff to focus on other parts of the collections care.

- Extra space will be created in the already crowded store. At the moment the objects identified for disposal take up 13m²

3.3 The procedure for disposal will be as follows:

- The object will be deaccessioned. This means removing the object from the museum's collection. When an object is first brought into the museum it is accessioned. As defined by Collections Trust 'accessioning is a formal commitment by a museum governing body to accept objects into its long-term collection.' If a museum has followed procedure and agreed to remove an object from its collection. It must be deaccessioned. This is done by:
 - Removing the objects from the accessions register
 - Removing the unique number on the object. This number is given to the object when it is accessioned.
 - All documentation relating the object will be updated with a disposal number and details about how and why the object was disposed of.
- If the object is transferred to another institution
 - details about the transfer will be added onto the Collections Management System (CMS)
 - Photographs of the damaged object will be added to the CMS for future reference.
 - A transfer of title document will be completed and a clear audit trail for object will be established
- If the object is to be disposed of by destruction it will either be put into an enclosed skip that can only be accessed by Heritage Staff or taken away by disposal specialists where there is a specific risk.

3.4 At the end of the Care of Collection Project a full report on the project including objects retained in the collection and objects disposed of will be submitted to the Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism, for information.

4. Consultation

4.1 Not Applicable

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 A decision by the Care of Collections Project Manager on the disposal of all of the objects will be made by June 10th 2019. This is necessary to give the Care of Collection team time to ensure that the objects are ethically disposed of by the end of the project. It also allows time for all paperwork to be completed.

- 5.2 The Heritage Services team have completed several stages of review in order to ensure that procedures have been followed and can be reviewed in the result of an enquiry. These stages are.
- A member of the Care of Collections team reviews the object and the paperwork that accompanies it.
 - All this information is put onto a disposal form, which is taken to Heritage Services Acquisition and Disposal panel. The panel is made up of 6 members of staff who specialise in museums collections. These include collection care (including museum objects and archives) and visitor experience. Everyone on the panel has a clear understanding of the Museum Associations Code of Ethics and ethical disposal of objects.
 - Each object is discussed in detail at a panel meeting and minutes are taken.
 - When agreeing to dispose of an object a number of things are considered, including: condition of the object, provenance and method with which the object was collected.
 - Only if an object is agreed, by the Acquisition and Disposal panel, for disposal is it brought to the Assistant Director for a decision.

6. Finance and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 Approval was granted by the Strategic Director – Finance and Customer Services on the 23rd October 2016 to proceed with the Care of Collections Project, using funding from earmarked revenue reserves. This includes staff costs and the costs associated with the disposal of any damaged objects. These disposal costs are expected to be minimal and will include skip hire and any delivery costs, where objects are transferred to other museums. In total these are estimated to be less than £1,000.
- 6.2 The process for the disposal of the objects, outlined in this Delegated Officer Decision, is in accordance with the procedures identified in the Financial Regulations Guidance Note 7 – Disposal and Write-off Procedures for Moveable Assets and referenced in paragraph 27.7 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

7. Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

8. Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 Not applicable

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Not applicable

10. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

10.1 Not applicable

11. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

11.1 Not applicable

12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 Risk: Loss of objects of value / significance

Mitigation: A three stage checking process reduces this risk significantly. When an object is finally agreed for disposal it has had a minimum of 10 people review it. If at any part of the review process concerns are raised, experts including the Collections Trust and Museum Development Yorkshire, are asked for their advice. A number of staff involved in the review completed a specialist training course (Banish the Backlog), which outlines best practice for completing rationalisation of collections and identifying and mitigating risk. Extensive research and risk assessment is undertaken for each object as part of completing the disposal form.

12.2 Risk: The object disposed of was not a gift

Mitigation: The three stage checking process, as described above, also reduces the risk of this significantly. The disposal form ensures that the object's records and entry form have been checked to ensure that it clearly states the object was a gift. In addition, all the objects damaged in the flood have been in deep storage, due to their condition, and during that time no one has come forward to request the objects.

12.3 Risk: Causing public upset by disposing of Museum objects.

Mitigation: Transparency about the process of disposing of collection. At the start of the project the Care of Collection Manager gave a number of talks to the Friends of Clifton Park Museum and the Friends of the Rotherham Archives. Another talk will be given at the end of the project. An exhibition will also be on display at the end of the project showing its impact, including the issues of needing to dispose of objects. This exhibition will also open up a discussion on the rationalisation of the museum collection as a whole.

12 Accountable Officer(s)

12.3 Jessica Tarver, Care of Collection Project Manager

12.4 Steve Hallsworth, Leisure, Tourism & Green Spaces Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Richard Young	10 th May 2019
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Stuart Fletcher	15 th May 2019
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	N/A	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	N/A	