

# ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL: MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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**Name of museum:** Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums

**Name of governing body:** Aberdeen City Council  
City Growth  
Museums and Galleries

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** 27/11/2018

**Policy review procedure:** The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** Nov 2022

***Museums Galleries Scotland* will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.**

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## **ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL: MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

This is the Policy Statement regulating the acquisition of items for the Collections of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums (AAGM, hereafter known as 'the Museum'). The adoption and implementation of such a policy by The Council is a requirement of the Accreditation Scheme for Museums in the UK. Accreditation is a set of national standards for UK museums, which all participating museums are required to meet to achieve Accreditation status. The scheme was previously administered by Museums Libraries Archives (MLA) and is now administered by Arts Council England (ACE) following its merger with MLA in 2011. ACE administers the scheme for the entire United Kingdom, in partnership with Museums Galleries Scotland, Northern Ireland Museums Council and CyMAL.

This Policy Statement represents the aims and plans of the Council at the time of its adoption in 2018, and as such will be subject to revision as AAGM develops. It is intended that this policy should be reconsidered at least once every five years and no later than 2021, when a revised statement will be brought before the Council for its agreement.

This Policy Statement supersedes all previous and existing practices and policies, formal or informal, relating to the acquisition of items for the collections of the museum.

The general intention of the policy shall be to strengthen the scope of the existing collections by filling gaps and in some cases by acquiring comparative material. This shall be achieved both by purchase and by adding to the collections by passive means, i.e. accepting gifts. Disposal will be undertaken only for sound curatorial reasons and following procedures in line with Accreditation and Museums Association Ethics.

The Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums received full Accreditation in 2005 from the

MLA. This has been successfully reviewed on a biennial basis by the MLA.

Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums re-launched its website in 2009 greatly enhancing online access to the collection.

This Policy recognises the financial restraints that are likely to occur over the period 2018 – 2021. Future collecting by means of purchase will reflect the economic climate and AAGM will continue to seek grant aid avenues in order to maximize our purchasing potential.

### **REASON AND PURPOSE FOR COLLECTING**

Our collection connects Aberdeen's unique past, present and future, inspiring and empowering our communities to love their own culture and sharing that pride with the wider world.

For us connection is key to understanding and developing our collections:

- Connecting audiences with objects, sites and stories
- Connecting objects with people, places and processes
- Connecting the past with the future of Aberdeen and its place in the world
- Connecting the themes and specialisms within our collection

We have exported inspirational people and products to the world; and brought the best of the world to our hearths.

We will continue to create an inspirational collection that reflects our city of Aberdeen and its place in the world as a creative, industrial, social and artistic centre, raising the profile of Aberdeen and north east Scotland.

**1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:**

- 1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is: *To maximise the potential of Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums as an art gallery and museum service that develops and celebrates collections, enlightens, educates and inspires.*
- 1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, 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.

- 1.7 In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
  - the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
  - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
  - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored
  - extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken
  - the item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection.

## 2. History of the collections

- 2.1. The Museums and Galleries Service is part of Aberdeen City Council's City Growth function. It delivers museums and art galleries services across the City of Aberdeen, with a focus on themes of art, heritage, social history and culture. The Service is a key player in the provision of cultural activity and museums in the North East of Scotland and makes an important contribution to the cultural agenda for Scotland. Through partnerships, networks and loans the Service also is a major contributor to UK national museum provision and has an international reputation.
- 2.2. The origins of the Museums and Galleries Service can be traced to 1873 when John Forbes White and a number of local art collectors decided to hold a public exhibition to display their collections. From this developed a plan to establish a public art gallery for the benefit of citizens, an objective that continues to drive the programmes of activity today. Aberdeen's handsome granite Art Gallery, designed by Alexander Marshall Mackenzie, one of the loveliest Victorian galleries in the UK, was opened in 1885. The displays combined industrial exhibitions with exhibitions of art, greatly enhanced by generous gifts, including Aberdeen granite merchant Alexander Macdonald's private collection in 1900. Aberdeen Art Gallery was originally described as a gallery and industrial museum and early exhibitions included industrial exhibitions with contributions from local industry, folk art and "bye-gones".
- 2.3. Twenty years later the building was extended to accommodate the establishment of a plaster cast collection from which art students at the newly established Gray's School of Art, adjacent to the Art Gallery, as well as granite carving apprentices could practice drawing and take inspiration. This light and clean central space is used today to exhibit works by leading contemporary artists.
- 2.4. In 1907 the Town Council assumed responsibility for the building and its growing collections. In the 1920s further development took place with the addition of the City's War Memorial and the Cowdray Hall, opened by King George V and Queen Mary. The cost of the War Memorial was met by public subscription, and that of the Cowdray Hall, a unique recital venue, by Lord and Lady Cowdray "with a view to encouraging the taste for art and music in the City of Aberdeen".
- 2.5. In 1935 a number of key items were transferred from the Town House in preparation for the establishment of the Regional Museum which opened in 1937, in the basement below the Cowdray Hall, with displays of regional history, natural history and geology (closing in the 1970s with the opening of a new display space in James Dun's House). Whilst the museums and galleries service still holds collections from the wider region, the focus of the collection is the City of Aberdeen. Also in the 1930s, plans were made to restore and refurbish "Cumberland House" a fine 16<sup>th</sup> century town house in Guestrow. Following the war the building was opened in 1953 by HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother as Provost Skene's House. The early 1960s saw further developments at the Art Gallery with the opening of the James McBey Print Room and Art Library in 1961. This fitting tribute to a famous local artist was thanks to the generosity of his widow, Marguerite, who left another substantial bequest when she died in 1999.
- 2.6. In the 1970s James Dun's House, situated on Schoolhill diagonally

- across from the Art Gallery, was acquired as space for exhibiting social and domestic collections, very much at the forefront of museological practice of the time. At this point a Keeper of Social and Domestic History was appointed. This marked a period of significant pro-active collecting in this area. The building continued a programme of small-scale exhibitions ranging in topics from the Spanish Civil War to local archaeology until budgetary restraints led to its closure in the 1990s.
- 2.7. 1984 saw the opening of Aberdeen Maritime Museum in Provost Ross's House on the Shiprow by HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. The museum was designed to tell the story of Aberdeen's maritime history and quickly proved popular with visitors. The building was expanded in 1997 with an innovative award-winning glass link building that joins two historic buildings, Provost Ross's House and Trinity Church. This transformation facilitated extensive displays of maritime exhibits, including paintings and artefacts telling the story of the North Sea, which for centuries has influenced life in Aberdeen, from fishing to the oil and gas industries. The building has benefited from a number of sponsorship opportunities from oil-related businesses; most recently a new education suite and 3D cinema experience. The next phase – the renovation of the Oil and Gas Galleries – opened in 2013, with sponsorship from Oil and Gas UK.
- 2.8. Over the same time period, the natural history collections were transferred to the University of Aberdeen.
- 2.9. Restricted storage facilities has meant the focus for the development of the collections from the 1980s to 2000s has been on smaller ephemeral and archival material, particularly for industrial history - although Aberdeen also escaped the marked industrial decline in other parts of the UK which spurred on heritage salvage during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.10. Analogue and digital oral histories have been acquired over the last 30 years.
- 2.11. The Council continued to expand its museum provision when the Tolbooth opened in 1995. One of the oldest buildings in Aberdeen, which includes 17<sup>th</sup> century gaols, this museum explores stories of crime, punishment and Aberdeen's civic history.
- 2.12. The Art Gallery closed for redevelopment in 2015 at which point all collections were removed, including those in various storage areas within gallery spaces. At the same time a new publicly accessible storage facility was developed, opening in the Northfield area of Aberdeen in 2016.
- 2.13. Aberdeen Treasure Hub will eventually hold the vast majority of collections not on display, with an additional store holding industrial history, out-sized items, furniture and some smaller domestic history and archaeology collections. A long term aspiration is to relocate this outlying store alongside the Treasure Hub.
- 2.14. Provost Skene's House was closed to the public in 2013 whilst the surrounding site was demolished and developed. In 2016, when access was possible, a building survey was carried out identifying essential repairs to maintain the historic fabric of the building. Collections were removed and plans for redisplay were commenced. Expected reopening in 2019-2020.
- 2.15. The Art Gallery is expected to reopen in 2019.

### 3. An overview of current collections

- 3.1. Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums possesses collections of outstanding importance and quality. The entire collection was awarded Recognised Collection of National Significance status in 2007.
- 3.2. The fine art collections are wide-ranging and are of local, national and international stature, with particularly rich holdings of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Scottish art, early 20<sup>th</sup> century English art and a growing collection of 21<sup>st</sup> century artists of international standing. Artists' portraits and self-portraits form one important collection area. Our holding of work by local artists include George Reid and William Dyce and the world's largest collection by James McBey . We also hold an expansive archive of artists as diverse as William Hogarth and Ian Hamilton Finlay.
- 3.3. The rich and diverse decorative art collection covers all aspects of the discipline, with principal collecting areas of ceramics, glass, metalwork, jewellery, costumes and textiles and a strong presumption towards Scottish work. Strengths include an important group of historic Aberdeen silver, local costume, including the Bill Gibb archive, Chinese lacquer, the Cochrane Collection of ceramics and innovative contemporary metalwork. Participation in the National Collecting Scheme for Scotland has enriched the collection with important acquisitions of contemporary metalwork.
- 3.4. The history collection relates to the social and industrial history of North-East Scotland and beyond. The collection consists of ship models, maritime paintings, shipbuilders' drawings, and artefacts relating to fishing, shipbuilding harbour development and internationally important offshore oil and gas industries. Under the nationally-recognised UK Maritime Collections

Strategy, Aberdeen Maritime Museum is designated "Lead Museum for UK Offshore Oil and Gas Industries". Scotland's industrial and scientific heritage is reflected in the science, industry and local history collection, which focuses on working life in Aberdeen and its environs, with key subject collection areas of medicine, granite, engineering and photography, which are integral to understanding Scotland's national story.

- 3.5. The history collection includes high quality archaeological collections that help to tell the City's history and to reflect the rural and urban identities of Aberdeen and Scotland for many thousands of years from the Mesolithic period, 8000 or more years ago, until medieval times. Their particular strength is in excavated material from the medieval burgh of Aberdeen. This grouping is second to none in Scotland and of European significance.
- 3.6. The large numismatic collection contains examples of coins from most countries of the world and from most periods of history, from Ancient Greece and Rome to the present day.

For more detailed collection descriptions please see **Appendix A: Collection Descriptions**.

#### 4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

##### 4.1. ART: DECORATIVE ART

This is a diverse and comprehensive collection covering all aspects of decorative art: design, craft, costume and textiles. The prime collecting areas are functional ceramics, glass, metalwork, jewellery, costume and textiles which includes Scottish, British and International work. An extensive contemporary craft collection has been developed, and is now recognised as one of the most important of its kind in Britain. We will continue to augment this collection by acquiring work by UK and International makers.

##### 4.2. ART: FINE ART

When choosing works to collect, the founders of Aberdeen Art Gallery looked to their contemporaries. This interest in collecting recent work has been a theme through most of the gallery's history. Without limiting the range of possible acquisitions, a process of prioritisation has taken place in recognition of financial challenges, and Fine Art will continue in their vein and restrict purchases largely, though not exclusively, to contemporary art. Works which explore our four main collecting themes will be prioritized, regardless of which area of the Fine Art Collection they sit in: cross-overs, identity, place, and comparative works. We will seek to enhance other thematic areas of the collection through mainly gifts and bequests.

##### 4.3. HISTORY

The history collections tell the story of the history and development of the city of Aberdeen, through the stories of individuals, communities, trade and industry. Material is collected and preserved to provide opportunities for learning and inspiration but also as a record of local life. Local provenance is

crucial for future development of these collections, although items with no recorded provenance may be retained within the collections in order to illustrate significant aspects of history which are otherwise missing. The majority of these collections have been acquired through gift or bequest and it is anticipated that this will continue to be the case.

For more details on future collecting priorities please see **Appendix B: COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN: Priorities for Future Collecting**

#### 5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.
- 5.3 Collection reviews will focus on themed groups of material, and where possible, will relate to wider projects such as gallery refurbishment and redisplay, special exhibitions and engagement projects.
- 5.4 Priority areas include: social history (where previously no dedicated curator was identified), costume, furniture, plaster casts, and fine art reproductions.

For more details on collections reviews and rationalisation priorities please see **Appendix C: Collection Review and Rationalisation Plan**

## 6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

## 7 Collecting policies of other museums

7.1 The museum 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.

7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

- Large museum and heritage services based in the north east of Scotland: particularly in Dundee and Perth.
- Local authority, university, independent and national museums and galleries within Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray.
- Specialist collection related institutions e.g. Scottish National Portrait Gallery, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish National Maritime Museum.

7.3 Alphabetical listing of those organisations we routinely consult (not exclusive):

- Aberdeen City Council Library and Information services
  - Aberdeen City and Shire Archives
- The Council's recognised place of deposit for information scheduled for permanent preservation is Aberdeen City & Shire Archive, a service the Council shares with Aberdeenshire Council. The Council has an **Archival Transfer and Acquisition Policy** which sets out the commitment to information

preservation. See the Records Management Plan Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 published January 2015.

- Aberdeen Football Club Heritage Collection
- Aberdeenshire Museums Service
- Grampian Health Arts Trust
- Grampian Transport Museum
- National Galleries of Scotland
- National Museums Scotland
- National Trust for Scotland (particularly Drum Castle and Crathes Castle)
- Police Scotland Museum
- Robert Gordon's University Historic Collections
- St Peter's Heritage Trust
- The Blairs Museum
- The Gordon Highlanders Museum
- University of Aberdeen Museum Collections
- University of Aberdeen Special Collections

7.4 The Museum acknowledges the Concordat **Developing the Collections of Museums in North East Scotland** (see **Appendix I**). The principal purpose of the Concordat is to minimise competition and duplication of collections of the partner museums of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and the University of Aberdeen, along with those of the Moray Council and Angus Council. The Museum also recognises the North East Museum Partnership, formed by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and the University of Aberdeen to deliver its Regional Development Challenge Fund-supported project with the aim of augmenting and developing the work of the museums sector in the North East of Scotland.

- 7.5 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy should 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.
- 7.6 Co-ownership of new acquisitions will be considered. The Museum recognises the advantages that joint acquisitions can provide, such as enabling the purchase of high value works and strengthening links between partners.

## 8 Archival holdings

As the Museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2002).

## 9 Acquisition

- 9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:
- 9.2 The Art Gallery and Museums Manager, as Aberdeen City Council's senior museum professional, will normally have delegated authority and responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of potential gifts or bequests to the Museum, for soliciting gifts of material for the collections within the terms of this policy, and for making recommendations and taking action on the purchase of material in accordance with this Policy and within Aberdeen City Council's normal standing orders.
- 9.3 Items offered to the Museum as gifts or bequests will not normally be accepted if they are subject to any restrictive covenant or special conditions, such as that they be displayed in a particular way. In exceptional circumstances, if the Art Gallery and Museums Manager feels that the item(s) in question are of overriding importance, the Council may be asked to approve the acquisition of a

specific item to which conditions are attached. A general exception to this rule will be deemed to exist in respect of restrictive covenants or conditions intended only to assure the permanent protection of the item concerned in the Museum's collections, such as restrictions placed upon any legal powers of disposal that the Museum may have; under such circumstances, the Art Gallery and Museums Manager may reasonably recommend that the Council accept the gift or bequest in question.

- 9.4 The Collecting Area for the Museum will be principally the City of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Some specific collecting themes are of national and international artefacts or are governed by association (for example the Bill Gibb archive) and these specific collecting areas are defined in this policy statement.
- 9.5 The period of time to which the collection relates will be from Prehistoric times (archaeological material) to present day.
- 9.6 Items made in, at some point used within, or otherwise provenanced to the Museum's Collecting Area, may be acquired, regardless of their location at the time of acquisition. Where this involves the collection of items from a place within the geographical sphere of influence of another museum, a principle of open actions and good communications will apply.
- 9.7 In an emergency, and to ensure the preservation locally and in public ownership of important material, the Art Gallery and Museums Manager is exceptionally authorised to collect material from outside the museum's stated collecting area, relating to those parts of Aberdeen City not yet covered by any museum service. Such material is acquired on the understanding that it may be transferred to other museums at a future time.

- 9.8 Where the Museum seeks to collect the work of 'local' artists, or to acquire 'local' views, the area defined above will normally be used as the basis for decisions.
- 9.9 Acquisition decisions will be guided by this Collections Development Policy and by the aims set out in Aberdeen City Council strategic plans, such as the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and City Centre Masterplan.
- 9.10 Internally all offers of acquisition will be reviewed by the Acquisition and Disposal Panel comprised of Lead Curators, Learning Manager, Head of Collections and Art Gallery and Museums Manager. Four members of the panel must be present to be quorate.
- 9.11 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object 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).
- 9.12 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, the museum 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 Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

## 10 Human remains

- 10.1 As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human

Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

## 11 Biological and geological material

- 11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum 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.

## 12 Archaeological material

- 12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (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.
- 12.2 In Scotland, under the laws of *bona vacantia* including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities, although such material as human remains and environmental samples are not covered by the law of *bona vacantia*. Scottish material of chance finds and excavation assemblages are offered to museums through the treasure trove process and cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums by the Crown. However where the Crown has chosen to forego its title to a portable antiquity or excavation assemblage, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of Aberdeen City Council can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

### 13 Exceptions

- 13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
  - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
- In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

### 14 Spoliation

- 14.1 The museum 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.

### 15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the "*Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums*" issued by MGS in 2011), 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 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

- 15.2 The disposal of human remains from museums in Scotland will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

### 16 Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3 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.
- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5 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 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. 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.
- 16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, 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, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 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.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the 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 Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 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 SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

*Disposal by exchange*

- 16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

*Disposal by destruction*

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate

member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.