

Documentation Plan 2022 – 2024

1. Purpose

1.1 Statement

Our collections are central to our vision and purpose, and we endeavour to look after them according to the terms of our Documentation Policy. This Plan sets out the current situation regarding documentation of the collections and our forward plan which is committed to best value.

Following an FOI request in 2021 relating to the number of objects in the collection recorded as “missing”, a major Audit project originally scheduled to take place following the completion of all mass location moves and store unpacking has been brought forward and prioritised. As directed by ACC Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee decision, the audit will take precedent over all documentation projects and needs until completed.

This Plan should be read in conjunction with our Documentation Policy.

1.1.2 Service Plan commitments

The Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP – Council Service Plan) sets out a series of commitments relevant to the care and conservation of collections:

- **Foster creative, innovative and future based thinking in our work, our collections, our programmes and our venues (2.2)**
- **Maintain excellence in museum and archive practice (3.4)**
- **Ensure the City’s collections are fit for purpose, relevant, well looked after, safe and secure for future (3.5)**
- **Be open in our practices, where we are legally able to be, and protective of the vital records we hold on behalf of current and future agencies and customers (4.2)**
- **Maintain and develop documentary archives, acting as a repository of trusted information to support democratic process in the City (4.4)**

2. Review

The Action Plan of Section 3 outlines the schedule of work adjusted to the major Audit project. AAGM remains committed to enhancing collection documentation to SPECTRUM management standards across areas previously identified for development in conjunction with this work. This review highlights identified objectives and priorities for future action plans.

2.1 Inventory

- Undertake a yearly export of the digital accession report for secure upload to Preservica
- Ensure that all items discovered during the Audit without a clear accession number or status have temporary numbers allocated to them and corresponding TMS records created.
- Upgrades and developments to TMS will continue to be explored for potential user access improvements and IT cost savings

2.2 Reconciliation

- Continue reconciliation of items assigned temporary numbers during Art Gallery and Kittybrewster moves (e.g. TEMP, AGBS, SCS) with their accession numbers. Some of these objects may be “missing” objects disassociated with their original identity.
- Cataloguing of the AAGM institutional archive that began in 2018-19 with a focus on historic acquisition documentation continues. 1,000s of documents are now arranged and catalogued in an accessible format for staff to access physically or digitally to aid with provenance research and object identification

2.3 Backlog

- Newly acquired objects are regularly catalogued; however the rate of acquisition sometimes outpaces the rate of cataloguing. With more regular on-site working patterns in place following the COVID-19 pandemic this backlog should decrease to a naturally manageable level
- All objects located during the Audit of archaeological material at the Torry store are being photographed and having their TMS records created or enhanced at the same time

2.4 Audit

- Audit multiple sites using spreadsheets generated from TMS and following SPECTRUM audit advice: “verify the physical presence of each object and the accuracy of core inventory information [...] - The accuracy of the number marked on the object. - The accuracy of the object description [...]. – The accuracy of the location information”. Record number of objects for each record.
- Create Summary Reports following the conclusion of each Audit highlighting the results and any significant discoveries or new insights into past activity in the stores

3. Action Plan

Action	Outputs/outcomes	Link to Service Plan	Additional Resource	Lead officer	Target date
Establish a rolling programme to research, document and share our collections	Up to date work programmes Collection object records more content/ meanings Improve audience experience of the collections	Foster creative, innovative and future based thinking in our work, our collections, our programmes and our venues		Team Lead Collections	June 2023
Review and embed bi-annual documentation improvement plan for the museum and gallery collections	Current, relevant and achievable plan	Maintain excellence in museum and archive practice		Lead Curator Collections Management	June 2023
Fully audit targeted areas of collection	Paper Store (drawers only) audited Loans in audit completed. Long terms loans out and short term loans out audit completed by confirming all loan agreements are up to date. Maritime Museum ground floor store 2000 objects audited Torry store – Metal store (600 objects) audited	Maintain excellence in museum and archive practice	Kick Start & Long Term Unemployed interns to support curators and Loans Officer	Lead Curator Collections Management	On-going, scheduled for completion Dec 2022

Action	Outputs/outcomes	Link to Service Plan	Additional Resource	Lead officer	Target date
	Torry store mezzanine (2400 objects) audited Fine Art temporary number reconciliation - 186 temp numbers audited				
Review the Collections Management Manual, including processes, procedures and good practice guides	Current, relevant and meaningful manual	Maintain excellence in museum and archive practice		Lead Curator Collections Management	2022 review completed Next full review 2024
Re-instate monthly spot-check audits	Demonstrate high standards in location control	Ensure the city's collections are fit for purpose, relevant, well looked after, safe and secure for the future		Team Lead Collections	Done
Clearly indicate the number of objects on display vs. in storage	Improve audience understanding of the collections	Be open in our practices where we are legally able to be, and protective of the vital records we hold for current and future generations		Documentation Officer	Number of objects on display visible via simple e-museum search Full number of objects in storage visible when all records are published

Action	Outputs/outcomes	Link to Service Plan	Additional Resource	Lead officer	Target date
Clearly indicate via e-museums collection objects that are historical losses, stolen and location currently unknown	Improve audience understanding of the collections	Be open in our practices where we are legally able to be, and protective of the vital records we hold for current and future generations		Documentation Officer	Done
Publish full catalogue of museum & gallery collections online	Improve audience understanding of the collections Stimulate research	Be open in our practices where we are legally able to be, and protective of the vital records we hold for current and future generations		Documentation Officer	To be completed by end of 2022
Review and update the delivery mechanism / portal for the museum database	Improved user experience Build greater sustainability into digital record keeping	Maintain and develop documentary archives, acting as a repository of trusted information to support democratic process in the city	ACC budget	Documentation Officer	On-going, to be completed March 2023
Catalogue the historic institutional archive (pre-1886 to present)		Maintain and develop documentary archives, acting as a repository of trusted information to support democratic process in the city	Long Term Unemployed intern support	Documentation Officer	Ongoing, to be completed March 2024

Action	Outputs/outcomes	Link to Service Plan	Additional Resource	Lead officer	Target date
Make accessible the historic institutional archive		Be open in our practices where we are legally able to be, and protective of the vital records we hold for current and future generations		Lead Curator Collections Management	Ongoing
Annual staff re-fresher training for documentation processes		Maintain excellence in museum and archive practice		Lead Curator Collections Management	Due April 2023
Annual review of <i>Object Movement Forms</i> and process		Maintain excellence in museum and archive practice		Documentation Officer	Due April 2023
Finalise the printing and binding of the full physical accession register (c. 40 volumes)	A future-proofed, permanent, physical record of the collections	Maintain and develop documentary archives, acting as a repository of trusted information to support democratic process in the city	Supported by Friends of Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums	Lead Curator Collections Management	Due March 2023

4. Review Date

This action plan will be reviewed by the Lead Curator (Collections Management) in June 2023 and renewed in June 2024