

Falkirk Community Trust

To: Chief Executive, Falkirk Council
Subject: Museum and Library Collections Policies
Date: 24 October 2012
Author: Culture and Libraries Manager

1. Introduction

- 1.1 You will recall that a Collections Agreement defining the ownership and management of the Museums, Archives and Libraries collections was reached as part of the Transfer Agreement for the establishment of the Trust. Under this Agreement, the Trust is required to submit to the Council all of the policies relating to the Collections and the Libraries' Collection. None require Council approval except the Collections Development Policy. The Council can, of course, from time to time, acting reasonably and in consultation with the Trust, propose amendments to the policies or propose additional policies to be prepared.
- 1.2 The Trust is required to prepare a return for Accreditation of its museums. Accreditation is a renewable status and Falkirk's museums are currently accredited under the 2004 standard; the return must be submitted by 14 January 2013. Accreditation requires that the Council approves the Collections Development Policy (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 The Trust's commitment to the appropriate care of and access to the Museums, Archives and Libraries collections is reflected in the Trust's Business Plan objective "To embed integrity, equality of opportunity, and social and environmental responsibility in how we undertake our business." Conservation and Collections Care (Appendix 2), Collections Documentation (Appendix 3), Access policy statements (Appendix 4) and the Libraries Collections Policy (Appendix 5) are required to demonstrate how the Trust intends to address this objective in the context of museums, archives and libraries management.
- 1.4 As such, this report seeks the Council's approval of the Collections Development Policy and submits the remaining policy statements for the Council's perusal.
- 1.5 These documents were approved for passing to Falkirk Council by the Board of Falkirk Community Trust at its meeting of 30 August 2012.

2. Background

- 2.1 Accreditation is a UK-wide scheme that sets nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK. In Scotland, the scheme is administered by Museums Galleries Scotland. It demonstrates that the museum has met a national standard, which strengthens applications for public and private funding.
- 2.2 Under the terms of the Collections Agreement, Falkirk Community Trust was scheduled to prepare a definitive list of all of the policies relating to the Collections. The policies were scheduled for submission to the Council on or before 1 January 2012. However, the revised standard for Accreditation was only published in December 2011 and focuses on the issues relevant to museums in the 21st century, including collections development. It puts a greater emphasis on visitors' needs, encouraging museums to develop new and imaginative ways for visitors to interact with collections, and acts as a more focused development tool for museums aiming to

improve. As such, the policy documents and Collections Development Policy have been prepared to reflect these new requirements.

- 2.1 The Libraries Collections' Policy covers all policy and operational matters relating to the acquisition, sale, lending or disposal of items forming part of the Libraries' Collection as well as the selection and management of the libraries lending and reference stock. The Libraries' Collection means all local history books, local history newspapers, local history published and local history unpublished items such as maps and photographs and other local history items. The Policy updates an earlier internal operational document which reflected best practice in the sector and ensured consistency of approach across the service.

3. Policy Statements

- 3.1 The Access Policy Statement is applicable to all Trust services and expands on the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy particularly in respect of physical, sensory, intellectual, cultural and financial access to Trust events, programmes and services. It will be an internal policy document which will be helpful when considering equality implications of decision making. By its nature it is succinct and cannot detail how the Trust will address all the issues. The statement will therefore provide a guide for the development of the Business Plan.
- 3.2 The Documentation and Conservation & Collections Care Policy Statements are operational documents and do not represent a substantive change to the approach to collections care since the inception of the Trust.
- 3.3 The papers will be published on the Trust website. Timescales for review of the statements will be determined by future Accreditation arrangements.

4. Collections Development Policy

- 4.1 This policy regulates the acquisition and disposal of items by Falkirk Community Trust Museums and Archives in respect of those collections the Trust manages on behalf of Falkirk Council. This policy supercedes the previous Falkirk Council Acquisitions and Disposal Policy 2006-11.
- 4.2 The policy identifies the purpose of the Trust's museums and archives as: to engage the public with heritage by encouraging and enabling learning and by collecting, recording, preserving, interpreting and making accessible the material culture and archival record of the Falkirk Council area.
- 4.1 The document outlines themes and priorities for collecting, although there is no change in this from the previous Acquisitions and Disposal Policy other than the addition of collecting 'born digital' material; this follows the best practice principle of acquiring records in their original media and context.
- 4.2 The policy also takes a more robust approach to rationalising and disposal of collections in line with good practice for a sustainable approach to collections management in line with standards expected under the new Accreditation standard.
- 4.3 The policy details the procedures in respect of both acquisition and disposal in line with the International Council of Museums Code of Ethics, and the UK Museums Association Code of Ethics which was formally ratified by Falkirk Council in 2006.
- 4.4 The Team Leader Heritage as the Trust's senior museum professional will normally have delegated authority and responsibility for acquisitions whether actively sought for the collection or offered as gifts or bequests. Responsibility for disposal remains with Falkirk Council as the owner of the collection acting through the committee process and on the advice of the Team Leader Heritage.

- 4.5 This policy is subject to review and renewal within five years of formal approval. Once approved, it will also be published on the Trust's website

5. Libraries Collection Policy

- 5.1 This policy relates to both the selection, acquisition and management of the lending and reference stock, and the acquisition, care and conservation of the Libraries' Collection. It is both a policy document and an operational manual to guide librarians in all aspects of resources management. The policy identifies the range of services delivered by the eight public libraries and Library Support and outlines the Libraries' aims which are:

- To deliver locally determined high quality library services to individuals and communities for learning, recreation and information;
- To encourage learning and literacy and stimulate the intellect and imagination;
- To promote access to Scotland's cultural heritage;
- To encourage participation in the regeneration of communities through social inclusion and skills development;
- To support and progress the strategic vision and objectives of Falkirk Community Trust.

- 5.2 Although the Libraries' Collection is a discrete entity as detailed in 2.3 above, many of the aspects of responsible acquisition, selection, management, care and conservation relate to both the lending and reference stock and the Collection itself. There is a clear distinction between the Libraries' Collection, which acquires mainly published material, and the Archives which acquire unpublished material.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Collections Development Policy, the Libraries Collections Policy and accompanying Policy Statements are important documents which highlight the Trust's commitment to the protection of, and providing access to and understanding of the Council's museums, archives and libraries collections, and to the provision of a locally relevant, high quality library service. The Museums and Archives Policies are important elements of the Trust's application for Museum Accreditation but, as a suite of documents, all demonstrate to Falkirk Council that its collections are being managed with all reasonable skill and care; in a proper, diligent, expeditious and professional manner and in compliance with all relevant statutory obligations and professional good practice.

7. Recommendation

7.1 Falkirk Council is asked to:

- a) Note the Access, Documentation and Collections Care Policy Statements, and the Libraries Collections Policy for Falkirk Community Trust; and**
- b) Approve the Collections Development Plan.**

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Appendix 1 – Falkirk Museums and Archives: Collections Development Policy

Appendix 2 – Conservation and Collections Care Policy Statement

Appendix 3 – Collections Documentation Policy Statement

Appendix 4 – Access Policy Statement

Appendix 5 – Libraries Collections Policy