

Kirklees Museums and Galleries  
Collections Development Policy

*Collecting Our Past and Present  
to Inspire Our Future*



Kirklees Museums and Galleries will collect, preserve and celebrate the history and culture of Kirklees and the diverse people who live and work here. They will encourage pride in the local community and help people to understand the wider world and their place in it.

Exhibitions, outreach, education and other activities will use these collections to entertain, educate and inspire. They will help Kirklees to be an attractive place to live, work and visit.



## Contents

1	<a href="#">Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation</a>	p3
2	<a href="#">History of the collections</a>	p4
3	<a href="#">Themes and priorities for future collecting</a>	p6
4	<a href="#">Themes and priorities for review, rationalisation and disposal</a>	p7
5	<a href="#">Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items</a>	p8
6	<a href="#">Collecting policies of other museums</a>	p8
7	<a href="#">Archival holdings</a>	p9
8	<a href="#">Acquisition</a>	p9
9	<a href="#">Human remains</a>	p10
10	<a href="#">Biological and geological material</a>	p10
11	<a href="#">Archaeological material</a>	p10
12	<a href="#">Exceptions</a>	p10
13	<a href="#">Spoliation</a>	p10
14	<a href="#">The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains</a>	p10
15	<a href="#">Disposal procedures</a>	p11

**Name of museum:** Kirklees Museums and Galleries

**Name of governing body:** Kirklees Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** *Insert date*

**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:** February 2025

*Arts Council England* 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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## 1 Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation

- 1.1 The museum's statement of purpose is:  
To share amazing stories of our past and present to inspire our future. This is expanded upon in the *Kirklees Museums and Galleries Manifesto*.
- 1.2 The Collections Development Policy is one of a suite of linked policy documents produced by Kirklees Museums and Galleries, which includes the Forward Plan, Audience Development Plan and Business Plan.
- 1.3 Kirklees Museums and Galleries contributes to the Arts Council for England's [Creative Case for Diversity](#) and [Kirklees Council's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#) and strives to be fully inclusive and representative of the diverse people and communities it serves. The Collections Development Policy sets out this aim in future collecting targets.
- 1.4 The Collections Development Policy has been informed by [Culture Kirklees](#), Kirklees Council's vision document for the future of Kirklees Arts and Heritage, and seeks to contribute through the work of the Museums and Galleries service to the outcomes of [Kirklees Council's Corporate Plan](#). It also references the [Huddersfield Blueprint](#) for information regarding the cultural development of Huddersfield Town Centre, including a proposed new Huddersfield Museum and Art Gallery.
- 1.5 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, 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.
- 1.10 The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

## 2 History of the Collections

### 2.1 Collection Overview

The history of the collections is complex and comprises objects from a number of institutions that were once independent of each other. Kirklees Council was formed in 1974 and is an amalgamation of a number of smaller Boroughs. Each of the Boroughs had a museum service and some sites acquired collections from earlier institutions, particularly technical schools and colleges. Some items have also been transferred from Town Halls. Kirklees Museums and Galleries therefore holds the collections of a number of different services, each with different histories and strengths and with a certain amount of overlap and duplication. Some of the collections are strongly associated with particular sites or areas. However, some of those museums have now closed and their collections have been absorbed into the collections as a whole.

### 2.2 Collecting by Venues

All sites have collected local material of all periods and material relating to the history of the buildings and the people who lived or worked in them.

In addition, each site has or had had particular focus in certain areas:

- **Tolson Memorial Museum** has a history of natural science and technical collecting and was for a time a centre for regional archaeology collecting. There are also strong social history collections.
- **Bagshaw Museum** has a tradition of world cultures. The collections have developed through loans, gifts and transfers from the Royal Collections, the Imperial Institute, the V&A and private collectors, as well as active collecting by the Bagshaw family.
- **Oakwell Hall** is an Elizabethan manor house, furnished in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century style. Collecting has focused on appropriate furnishings and the history of the building.
- **Huddersfield Art Gallery** is the principal home of the Kirklees art collection that was formed in 1974 as a result of local government reorganisation, which brought together the art gallery collections of Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Batley and a number of small authorities merged into Kirklees Council. The art collection also includes a substantial number of artworks that were donated or acquired by Town Halls. The greatest strengths of the paintings, drawings, sculpture and print collections lie in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century work by British artists.
- **Red House** closed in 2016. It is the former home of the Taylor family and has strong Brontë connections. It was displayed as an 1830s home, with a Brontë gallery and a local history gallery in its out buildings. The collections focused on appropriate furnishings (often using collections from other Kirklees sites), the history of the Taylor family and the Brontës.
- **Dewsbury Museum** closed in 2016. Early collecting was eclectic and included natural history, archaeology, Egyptian collections (through subscription to the Egypt Exploration Fund) and social history. In more recent years the displays focused on childhood.
- **Holmfirth Postcard Museum** was opened in 1987 and operated until the mid-1990s at Holmfirth library. It was set up to showcase the collection of material relating to Bamforth and Co, publishers of lantern slides and postcards. In addition to collecting Bamforth related material, it also attracted an amount of general postcard history.

## 2.3 The Collections Today

Post 1974, the service continued to collect actively and enthusiastically, especially in support of the museums sites, and their galleries and exhibitions. There were also two long running and substantial projects with dedicated staff covering oral history and digital images.

The museum collection is estimated at about 255,000 objects, with just over 118,000 catalogued on Modes, the Spectrum standard museum database. In addition there are another 250,000 media archive records.

It is clear that much collecting at all sites, especially early on, was, like many museums across the country, eclectic and indiscriminate. Collecting often reflected the curators' personal areas of interest and expertise. Collecting also took place in a social environment that did not necessarily recognise the existence or relevance of diverse peoples and cultures.

The legacy is collections of varying quality and relevance to Kirklees and its current venues and audiences. There are collections and individual objects that are outstanding in their quality, interest and significance locally, nationally and internationally. These include C20th British Art, textile industry, Egyptology, entomology, Bamforth and Co. and Mesolithic microliths. There are also large and very good more general collections of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century costume, toys, British natural history, regional archaeology and geology. However, there are also substantial collections of duplicated, poor quality or generic material that have little or no display potential or research value but which take up valuable resources.

This policy reflects the need for rationalisation, as part of good collections management, to help to make the collections more efficient, manageable and accessible. Collecting needs to be more selective, audience-focused and linked to strategic developments within the museums service and the wider council. The policy also acknowledges the need to begin redressing the imbalance in the representation of the people that make up Kirklees.

Like many local authority museums, the service has recently experienced substantial reductions in funding and staffing. The service is actively seeking to engage with partners and volunteers to help with the challenge of continuing to manage collections in a professional and ethical manner with reduced resources.

**Please see Appendix 1 for details of each collection area, including approximate numbers and collecting and disposal targets.**

### 3 Themes and priorities for future collecting

#### 3.1 General collecting principles

- The collections will be proportionate to the size of the service and resources available to support progress towards best practice in collections care and management.
- Kirklees M&G will continue to be the primary repository for the history of the towns, villages and countryside that now make up the Kirklees area. Where a lack of resources prevents Kirklees from acquiring or maintaining key local collections, the service will work with other local organisations to try and keep the collection in the public domain and in the local area.
- Kirklees M&G will maintain existing high quality special collections of non-local scientific, historic or cultural material for both display and research purposes, which widen the learning and horizons of residents and visitors.
- Kirklees M&G will support key collections and display areas by maintaining and collecting related archival, technical or other material that supports access, study and research.
- In view of recent reductions in resources, collecting will be limited until such time as resources to support major museum redevelopment are in place. We will seek to increase capacity to appropriately acquire, care for and interpret our collections through the development of our vision and masterplans and an investment strategy to achieve them.
- Proactive collecting will be restricted to very limited areas, as set out in Appendix 1. Passive collecting (i.e. accepting donation offers) must still follow rigorous guidelines and meet specific targeted collection needs. Some collections are 'closed': they will be maintained but not added to except in certain circumstances. This particularly applies to 'orphan collections', where there is currently no in-house specialist knowledge. Disposal of items from orphan collections will also be limited unless external expert review and advice is available.
- Partnership projects with special interest groups, including Specialist Subject Networks, will help inform collecting and review, especially in areas where there is no in-house expertise.

#### 3.2 Future Collecting Themes

Museum collections will focus on the Kirklees Story, especially in relation to textiles, engineering, music, sport and world cultures. These themes have been chosen following public engagement in 2016.

Collecting will also support current display needs and future display and site development plans. These are informed by *Culture Kirklees*, the vision document for the future of Kirklees Arts and Heritage, and the *Huddersfield Blueprint*, a vision for the development of a cultural quarter in Huddersfield Town Centre.

*Culture Kirklees* and the *Blueprint* have long term plans for three sites: **Oakwell Hall** will remain a centre for history of the English Civil War in Yorkshire and the story of the Brontës in Kirklees; **Bagshaw Museum** will continue to focus on local history in North Kirklees and world cultures; a proposed new town centre **Huddersfield Museum and Art Gallery**, part of the cultural quarter development, will tell the history of Huddersfield and South Kirklees' industry, innovation, culture, communities, sport and social and political causes, and showcase the Kirklees art collection.

In the meantime Tolson Memorial Museum and the current Art Gallery will remain open and options for the future of Tolson Memorial Museum will be explored.

### **3.3 To support the development of these sites and display themes, collecting targets will include:**

- Local sport and music
- Good quality Yorkshire-made C17th furniture for display at Oakwell Hall, to improve authenticity, interpretation and quality and to reduce reliance on loans.
- Material that reflects the experiences of the diverse communities of Kirklees
- Kirklees industry, especially textiles
- Items that support or fill gaps in specific exhibitions

## **4 Themes and priorities for review, rationalisation and disposal**

4.1 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.

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.

### **4.2 General Disposal Principles**

- Disposal will take place as part of strategic collections management planning. The main reasons for disposal are to make the collections more manageable with the current available resources and to enable best practice in collections care and access.
- Collections review and disposal will respect the integrity of discrete collections and not deal with objects on an individual basis when they are part of a larger group.
- Collections of historical, cultural or scientific significance that cannot be found a home elsewhere, even if the collections are outside the current collecting policy, will be retained until a suitable home can be found.

### **4.3 Disposal Process**

A Collections Review Board (CRB) considers all objects that are proposed for disposal.

The processes for submitting and processing proposed disposals is set out in the Documentation Procedural Manual.

## **See Appendix 2 for CRB Terms of Reference**

### **4.4 Current Review/Disposal Targets**

The service is now operating with greatly reduced resources following budget reductions in 2017 and two site closures. To be manageable, the collections also need to be reduced so that remaining collections can be cared for properly and meet the needs of future development plans.

Immediate targeted areas for review, with the possibility of disposal are:

- Remaining non-relevant material from Dewsbury and Red House museums, particularly duplicated items and generic (non-local) social history items that were used for display purposes but have no direct links to the local area or the sites where they were displayed. However, significant items have been retained in the permanent collections and continue to be used to tell the stories of Kirklees.
- Long case clocks (non-local) – these are bulky and unsuitable for future display needs
- Generic furniture as part of an ongoing review
- Material that is stored inappropriately and likely to be suffering deterioration

Longer term targets for review are:

- Toys, games and children's books - a very large collection of mostly non-local material that could be reduced in volume
- World culture collections from the Americas and Europe - poor quality material, especially compared to the African, Asian and Australian collections.

In addition, as part of ongoing curatorial work, we will review when found:

- Duplicated material
- Generic and low quality social history material
- Material that is more relevant to other museums
- Hazardous material
- Objects in poor condition, actively deteriorating or degraded beyond reasonable repair

**Please see Appendix 1 for more details of review and disposal targets in different collection areas.**

## **5 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

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

## **6 Collecting policies of other museums**

- 6.1 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.

6.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums/organisations:

- Bradford Museums
- Calderdale Museums
- Hepworth Gallery
- Huddersfield University Heritage Quay
- Leeds Museums and Galleries - Temple Newsam
- National Coal Mining Museum
- Wakefield Museums
- West Yorkshire Archives
- West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service

## 7 Archival holdings

- 7.1 The service holds different kinds of archives. Small amounts of material of either personal or business archives are collected when they form part of, or support, a collection of 3D material. Any substantial archives offered to the service are directed towards West Yorkshire Archives or other appropriate bodies.
- 7.2 The service maintains two substantial media archives: the Kirklees Image Archive, which comprises negatives, slides, prints and scanned (electronic) images, and an oral history archive of recorded interviews. These are described in more detail as part of Appendix 1.
- 7.3 As the service 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 (third edition, 2002)

## 8 Acquisition

- 8.1 It is the policy of Kirklees Museums and Galleries to collect artefacts for the permanent collections that support the service in the delivery of its aims as a museum service and contribute to the outcomes of the Kirklees Council.
- 8.2 The service only collects material where there are the appropriate resources to manage and care for the collections.
- 8.3 The service will abide by Kirklees Council financial procedures and all legal requirements.
- 8.4 The service 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).
- 8.5 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, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences)

Act 2003, 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.

## **9 Human remains**

- 9.1 As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

## **10 Biological and geological material**

- 10.1 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.

## **11 Archaeological material**

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

## **12 Exceptions**

- 12.1 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.

## **13 Spoliation**

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.

## **14 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

- 14.1 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 museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), 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.
- 14.2 The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

## **15 Disposal procedures**

- 15.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 15.2 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.
- 15.3 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.
- 15.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 15.5 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.
- 15.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, 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.
- 15.7 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.
- 15.8 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).

- 15.9 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.
- 15.10 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 the Arts Council England.
- 15.11 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.
- 15.12 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.
- 15.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.
- 15.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 15.15 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.
- 15.16 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.
- 15.17 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.

15.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.