

# **COMMUNITIES LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE COLLECTIONS ACCESS POLICY**

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## **1.0 POLICY AIM**

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to set out a framework for the development and management of collections owned by Lincolnshire County Council Libraries and Heritage, and the access to those collections.

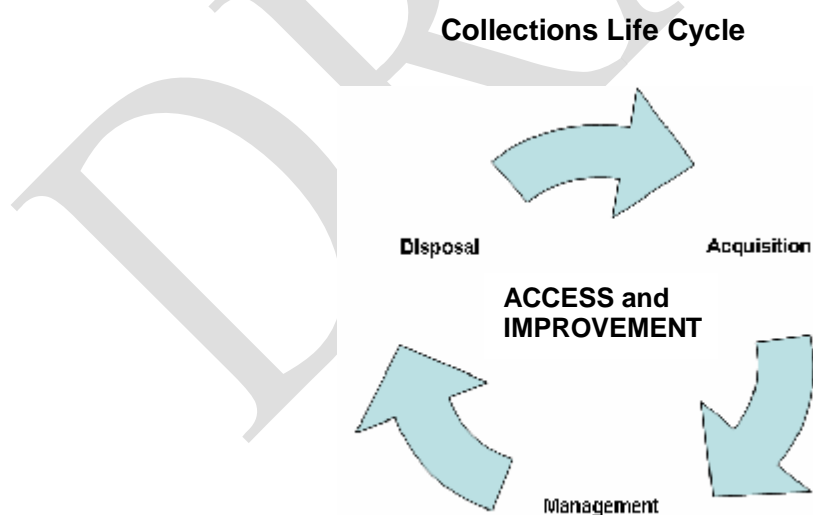
## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Lincolnshire County Council owns and is responsible for more than three million items in its collections, held across museums, libraries and archives. From steam engines to e-Books; probate inventories to archaeology; local history resources to international bestselling novels; photographs, paintings, online resources and much, much more. These collections, managed in various locations and increasingly in the digital realm, are what make Libraries and Heritage unique, and they attract over ten million visits each year.
- 2.2 Some items within these collections are individually worth millions of pounds, others are of much lower financial value. Many are unique and of high cultural significance on a national or international scale (for example Tennyson collection, Bishops Rolls and Registers); others are of particularly local interest, but nonetheless cherished by users and visitors. The county's cultural collections are, without doubt, a major asset that require careful management.
- 2.3 The county's cultural collections bring a wealth of personal enjoyment and fulfilment, educational and learning support, and a vast array of information to those living in Lincolnshire and beyond. The county is legally obliged to protect and provide significant elements of these collections but, more generally, their development and management is important because it ensures that the cultural heritage and life of the county and the country are preserved for future generations; and that the present population can access this culture and heritage.
- 2.4 The Collections Access policy replaces two previously adopted County Council policies: the Collections Policy (approved by Executive Decision Number 1338, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2008) and the Engagement and Access Policy (approved by Executive Decision Number 1335, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008). The review date of both policies is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012, and the formation of a new Collections Access Team that now encompasses both policy areas in 2011, has given the opportunity to combine these policies into a single, over-arching policy.
- 2.5 In developing this policy, evidence has been gathered from the following:
- Fundamental Library Review (2007)
  - Sustainable Community Strategy for Lincolnshire (2008)
  - Fundamental Heritage Review (2009)
  - Cultural Strategy (2010)
  - Arts Council England (ACE) Achieving Great Art for Everyone (2010)
  - Arts Council England (ACE) Culture, Knowledge and Understanding: Great museums and Libraries for Everyone (2011)
  - LCC Business Plan, Vision and Purpose (2012, emerging)

- 2.6 Key legal and strategic documents which influence collections access, development, management across the cultural sector, and have been considered in writing this policy are listed in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.
- 2.7 The Equality Act (2010) is the most significant piece of equality legislation to be introduced for many years and it underpins all access to collections. The Equality Act covers the same groups that were protected by previous legislation (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity) – these are now called ‘protected characteristics’. The Act extends some protections to characteristics that were not previously covered.
- 2.8 Central to this policy, Libraries and Heritage in general, and the work of the Collections Access team specifically, is that fair access to services and collections is provided for all our customers, whatever their individual circumstances. The impact of this new policy has been carefully considered in light of the new legislation and an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this document (see Appendix 2).
- 2.9 In difficult economic times and with limited resources, it is even more important that we understand the needs of all our customers, so that we can provide access to collections that is appropriate to people’s needs, delivered in as fair a way as possible, within the resources Libraries and Heritage have.

### 3.0 COLLECTIONS ACCESS FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 At the core of this policy is the collections’ ‘Life-Cycle’ (see below). This model provides a basis for more focussed policies, strategies, operational procedures, action-planning and performance management. The model emphasises the need to consider each living stage of the cycle; in order to provide responsive and relevant collections, wide and inclusive access, and a culture of opportunity and excellence.



- 3.2 At the heart of the cycle and the framework is a focus on access and improvement. The framework, in particular, ensures that, throughout collections’ development and management, access and improvement will be delivered in line with the County Council’s vision and Service priorities and purpose.

3.3 The Collections Access Framework to deliver this model has three parts:

- Policy: setting out core structure, purpose, outcomes and principles
- Strategy / Action Plans: describing what will be done to deliver the policy and monitor progress against targets
- Operational Procedures: detailing how the policy will be implemented

3.4 As outlined above, this policy and the Collections Access Framework will be supported and, in effect, delivered through a number of more focussed policies, strategies and plans, including:

#### Policy

- Acquisition and Disposal Policy: Museums, Archives and Local Studies (2010)
- Library Stock Policy (2011)

#### Strategy

- Environmental Management Strategy (2006)
- Archives Preservation Strategy (2009-2011)
- Collections Development Strategy: Museums, Archives and Local Studies (2011)
- Digital Access Strategy (2010)
- Working Collections Strategy (2011)
- Collections Development Strategy: Libraries (emerging 2012)

#### Action Plans

- Lincolnshire County Council's Archives Self-Assessment (2008)
- Archives Preservation Strategy Action Plan (2009-2011)
- Heritage Service Accreditation Action Plans (2009 and 2011)
- Working Collections Strategy Action Plan (2011)
- Service Plan: Libraries and Heritage (2012 emerging)
- Collections Care Plan (2012, ongoing 'live' document)
- Collections Access Team Plan (2012 emerging, annual)
- Events, Exhibitions and Education programme (local site-specific plans)

## **4.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

4.1 Collections are what museums, libraries and archives are all about. They enrich people's lives and provide a means of accessing the past, engaging with the present and informing the future.

4.2 We are committed to developing, preserving and making our collections available to all through a variety of accessible locations, events, exhibitions, education, media and by answering enquiries about them and the information they contain.

4.3 Sometimes we will be unable to provide direct, or assisted access to some material in our collections. Examples include, but are not limited to, issues relating to data protection (archives, in particular), preservation (all domains, but museums and archives in particular), availability of display and storage space (all domains) and resources, be they financial, physical or human (all domains).

## **5.0 PURPOSE : *Access, Development, Management, Engagement***

5.1 Through the application of this policy and the Collections Access Framework, Lincolnshire County Council Libraries and Heritage, primarily through the Collections Access Team, are focussed on delivering the following core purpose: To -

- Ensure and improve access to all of our collections for all of our customers.
- Manage collections, access and resources in an effective, sustainable and affordable way.
- Make the best use of resources to maximise access to collections.
- Invest in infrastructure, provision of services and projects that will enhance access to collections.
- Develop collections and access to them in an ambitious, proactive and strategic way, building on the strengths of our collections.
- Preserve and manage collections, to protect them for the future and to reflect and enhance individuals' lifestyles.
- Actively respond to diverse communities' needs and characteristics; promoting, encouraging and inspiring greater engagement with collections and culture for community wellbeing and resilience.
- Support, influence and work with other organisations and individuals to maximise potential, opportunity and resources with regard to collections access.

## **6.0 PRINCIPLES : *Providing, Developing, Ensuring, Promoting***

The core principles that Lincolnshire County Council Libraries and Heritage will apply when providing, developing and managing access to, and engagement with, cultural collections

### ***Providing :***

- 6.1 Physical access to collections in a variety of locations; such as museums, libraries and archives and in other venues.
- 6.2 Digital access to collections; as a core part of universal and basic provision.
- 6.3 Information about collections, wherever appropriate. This might be general, detailed, interpreted or facilitated; in a proactive way or in response to enquiries.
- 6.4 Research services to improve knowledge and understanding; giving support to academic or general interest.
- 6.5 A wide variety of events, exhibitions, education, learning and engagement activity to enhance access to collections.

### ***Developing :***

- 6.6 Collections on a countywide basis that reflect, champion and are responsive to the diverse and changing communities of Lincolnshire.
- 6.7 Collections, and access to them, using local, regional and national best practice.
- 6.8 Better digital and physical access to collections and innovative solutions, wherever possible.
- 6.9 Ways of engaging people with collections.
- 6.10 New opportunities for learning, achievement and improving skills through collections access and supporting economic sustainability.
- 6.11 Partnerships to enhance, diversify and maximise access to collections, and deliver more effective use of resources.

### ***Ensuring that :***

- 6.12 We comply with English Law and professional standards relating to libraries, museums and archives (see Appendix 1).

- 6.13 Collections, and access to them, supports education, learning, and personal development.
- 6.14 Resources used to develop, manage and provide access to collections are used efficiently and effectively.
- 6.15 We work in partnership where this adds value to the management of, and access to our collections.

***Promoting :***

- 6.16 Lincolnshire's collections and cultural heritage to the world to: support tourism and the economy; support learning and enjoyment; and to generally raise awareness of its local, regional, national and international significance.
- 6.17 Lincolnshire as one of England's most exciting, diverse and culturally innovative counties through collections and collections access.
- 6.18 The use and enjoyment of Lincolnshire's collections by diverse communities to enhance people's sense of identity and place; build pride in the county and support connectivity and social cohesion.
- 6.19 Digital access to collections to diversify and widen audiences; to support preservation and sustainability.
- 6.20 Physical access to collections as a means to improve people's quality of life, support awareness, learning and enjoyment.

## **7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Elected Members**

- 7.1 Review and set the policy.

### **Assistant Director**

- 7.2 Apply the principles of the policy when formulating plans and future strategies and advising elected members.

### **Head of Service**

- 7.2 Ensure that managers and staff within the service are aware of and comply with this policy.
- 7.3 Monitor and measure the impact of this policy and ensure that it is regularly reviewed.

### **Managers**

- 7.4 Ensure that staff are aware of and comply with this policy.
- 7.5 Provide information to enable Head of Service to monitor and measure the impact of the policy and to inform its regular review.

### **Libraries and Heritage Staff**

- 7.6 Actively employ the principles of this policy.
- 7.7 Be aware of this policy and apply in their day-to-day work.

## **8.0 MONITORING**

- 8.1 The impact of this policy will be monitored by officers through: the evaluation of individual services and projects; and,
- 8.2 Delivery of action plans, aligned to specific strategies.

## **9.0 REVIEW**

- 9.1 The policy will be reviewed in the light of key national and local changes.
- 9.2 This policy will be reviewed by 31 March 2015.

## **Appendix 1: Key legal and strategic documents that influence collections development and management in date order**

- Tithe Act (1936)
- Public Records Act (1958 and 1967)
- Manorial Documents Rules (1959) and Manorial Documents (Amendment) Rules (1963 and 1967)
- Obscene Publications Act (1959 and 1964)
- Tithe (Copies of Instruments of Appointment) Rules (1960) and Amendments (1963)
- Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964)
- Local Government Act (1972, Sections 224 - 229)
- Local Government Records Act (1972)
- Parochial Registers and Record Measure (1978 and 1991)
- The Treasure Act (England, Wales, & Northern Ireland) & Bona Vacantia (Scotland) (1996)
- Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (2002, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition)
- Framework for the Future – the government's vision for public libraries for the next decade (2003)
- Standards for Record Repositories (2004)
- Museums Association: Collections For The Future (2005)
- Institute of Conservation: Professional Guidelines (2007)
- Museums Association: Code of Ethics (2007)
- Museums Association: Making Collections Effective (2007)
- HM Government: Archives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2009)
- Equality Act (2010)
- The National Archives: Archives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in action (2010)
- Museums, Libraries and Archives Council: Museum Accreditation Scheme (2011)
- Museums, Libraries and Archives Council: Benchmarks in Collection Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries (2011)