

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	24/10/2016
Subject: Approval of Arts Council of England accreditation documentation for Guildhall Art Gallery	Public
Report of: David Pearson, Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Decision
Report author: Vicky Carroll, Acting Head of Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre	

Summary

As an Accredited Museum, Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London Heritage Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre (hereafter referred to as "the Gallery"), is required to submit an Accreditation Return every three years to the Arts Council of England. Maintaining accredited status demonstrates that the Gallery is run professionally and sustainably; many funding bodies only accept applications from Accredited Museums.

This paper presents five reports which require approval by the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee as the Gallery's governing body ahead of submission to the Arts Council as part of the Accreditation Return. They are:

- A Forward Plan, which sets out the Gallery's strategic aims and objectives for the period up until March 2020, and describes how they will be resourced and achieved;
- A Collections Development Policy, which sets out the Gallery's approach to acquiring and (where appropriate) deaccessioning collection items;
- A Collections Care and Conservation Policy, which explains how the Gallery team ensures that collection items are preserved for future generations;
- A Documentation Policy, which explains how information about collection items is gathered, recorded and stored; and
- An Access Policy, which explains how the Gallery makes the collection available to the public for their enjoyment and education.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Gallery Forward Plan;
- Approve the Gallery's Collections Development Policy;

- Approve the Gallery's Conservation and Collections Care Policy;
- Approve the Gallery's Documentation Policy; and
- Approve the Gallery's Access Policy.

Main Report

Background

1. The Museums Accreditation Scheme is managed by Arts Council England (ACE). ACE set out the purpose of the scheme as follows:

“We want all museums to be sustainable, focused and trusted organisations, which offer their visitors a great experience. The Accreditation Scheme sets out nationally-agreed standards, which inspire the confidence of the public and funding and governing bodies. It enables museums to assess their current performance, as well as supporting them to plan and develop their services.”

2. Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre achieved Accreditation in 1989.

Current Position

3. In order to maintain its Accredited status, the Gallery must submit an Accreditation Return to the Arts Council England. This includes five documents which must be approved by its governing body, namely through the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.

Options

4. The five documents are provided in full as appendices to this report. Summaries and key points for each are provided below

Proposals

5. Forward Plan (appendix 1)

This is a new requirement for Accreditation.

The Forward Plan has been developed by the Acting Head of Guildhall Art Gallery in consultation with the permanent Head (currently on maternity leave), the Gallery team and the Head of Cultural and Visitor Development.

In line with ACE requirements it provides details of the following, for the period up until March 2020:

- Strategic aims and objectives;

- An action plan, explaining how and when these aims and objectives will be achieved;
- A resource plan, providing details of human and financial resources which will be needed to deliver the forward plan;
- Details of how the Gallery will continue to improve access; and
- Details of the Gallery's commitments to environmental sustainability.

6. Collections Development Policy (appendix 2)

ACE have produced a new Collections Development Policy template and require that this is used by all Accredited Museums going forward.

The areas covered by this policy are:

- Relationship to other policies/plans;
- History of the collections;
- Overview of the current collections;
- Themes and priorities for future collecting;
- Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal;
- Collecting policies of other museums;
- Acquisition;
- Human remains;
- Biological and geological material;
- Archaeological material;
- Exceptions;
- Spoilation;
- Repatriation and restitution of objects and human remains; and
- Disposal procedures.

The majority of the policy statements (those shown in bold in appendix 2) are standard clauses required by ACE.

The areas which are specific to the Gallery are the history and overview of the collection, and the themes and priorities for future collecting. These have not changed since the Gallery's Acquisition and Disposal Policy was last approved by this Committee on 21 October 2014.

7. Conservation and Collections Care Policy (appendix 3)

This document sets out the Gallery's policy on the care and conservation of its collection and defines an overall framework which the Gallery adopts to ensure that the Collection is cared for to the highest appropriate professional standards while, at the same time, balancing the needs of access and long-term preservation.

The policy was last reviewed and approved by the Head of Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre in January 2013. It is a new requirement by ACE that the policy is approved by the governing body. The

Acting Head and Senior Paintings Conservator have reviewed the existing policy and no amendments have been identified as necessary.

8. Documentation Policy (appendix 4)

The aim of this policy is to ensure that documentation meets industry standards (SPECTRUM), and for each object in its collection the Gallery has:

- Documentary proof of legal and ethical ownership;
- Accurate records in the collections management system;
- A unique accession number, which is marked on the object; and
- Accurate location records.

It is a new requirement by ACE that the Documentation Policy is approved by the governing body. The Acting Head of Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre and Senior Curator have reviewed the existing policy and no substantive amendments have been identified as necessary.

9. Access Policy (appendix 5)

This document sets out the Gallery's policy for providing physical and intellectual access to its collection and information resources.

It is a new requirement by ACE that the Access Policy is approved by the governing body. The Acting Head of Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre and Senior Curator have reviewed the existing policy and no amendments have been identified as necessary.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. Maintaining Accredited status is vital for the Gallery as many of its activities, including obtaining external funding and securing loans from other institutions, are dependent on this.
11. The Gallery is a valuable and highly-regarded asset within the City Corporation's cultural portfolio; it is a vital part of the City's leisure offer to workers, residents and visitors and plays an important role in delivering the aims and objectives of our Visitor and Cultural Strategies.
12. Last month, the Gallery was assessed for the first time as a Quality Assured Attraction by VisitEngland, recognising its importance for visitors to London and the good management under which it operates.
13. The Gallery is a major component of the Guildhall Galleries collective (which also includes St Lawrence Jewry, Guildhall Library, Guildhall Great Hall and the soon-to-be-opened City of London Police Museum) and is a key driver of audiences between these attractions.

Implications

14. All resources required for delivering the plans and processes outlined in the appended documentation are identified under relevant sections. The majority are achievable through existing local risk budget allocations and staffing. Any activity requiring additional funding is clearly marked and will be subject to that funding being secured.

Conclusion

15. Guildhall Art Gallery strives to maintain the highest standards in the planning of its activities, and in managing, caring for and providing public access to its collections. The documents appended to this report state how the Gallery will achieve this, with reference to best practice in the museums and galleries sector, and in the formats required by Arts Council England for Accreditation.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Forward Plan
- Appendix 2 - Collections Development Policy
- Appendix 3 – Conservation and Collections Care Policy
- Appendix 4 - Documentation Policy
- Appendix 5 - Access Policy

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