

 Executive – 30 May 2012		Agenda Item No. 6B
Title	Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum: submission to Museums Accreditation Scheme	
For further information about this report please contact	Jeff Watkin / Victoria Slade	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Executive 23 July 2007: Art Gallery & Museum Acquisition & Disposal Policy 2007 – 2012	
Background Papers	Not applicable	
Contrary to the policy framework:	No	
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No	
Key Decision?	Yes	
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Forward Plan ref 405	
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	Not applicable	
Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	1 st May 2012	Andrew Jones
Head of Service	1 st May 2012	Rose Winship
CMT	1 st May 2012	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	1 st May 2012	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer		
Finance	1 st May 2012	Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)	1 st May 2012	Cllr Susan Gallagher
Consultation & Community Engagement		
<p>The following museums have been consulted: Compton Verney; Coventry Transport Museum; The Herbert, Coventry; Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery; Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum (Warwickshire); Rugby Art Gallery and Museum; the University of Warwick Art Collection; Warwickshire County Record Office; Warwickshire Museum Service.</p> <p>The report also reflects ongoing consultation with visitors to the Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum (LSAG&M) via Customer Comments Forms, Comments Books in the art gallery and temporary exhibitions gallery, Events Evaluations Forms, Visitor Survey Questionnaires and with representatives of the Friends of Leamington Art gallery.</p>		
Final Decision?	Yes	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **SUMMARY**

The purpose of the report is to seek permission to apply to renew Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum's membership of the Museums Accreditation Scheme and to ask the Council to formally adopt the associated Collections Management Framework 2012 – 2017.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Executive approves the application to renew LSAG&M's Museum Accreditation and adopts the Collections Management Framework 2012 – 2017.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Museums Accreditation Scheme now managed by Arts Council England (ACE) is the museum sector's principal quality standard, and most local authority, university and national museums seek membership.
- 3.2 The Accreditation Scheme helps assure museums' governing bodies, users, partners and potential donors that member museums meet national standards for the sector. It indicates that members provide good quality services for visitors, and well cared for and accessible collections for the benefit of the public.
- 3.3 It is usually necessary to be an Accredited Museum in order to borrow exhibits from other museums or art galleries, or to create partnerships with them. Accredited status is also recognised beyond the sector, and is a major asset when seeking funds provided by public bodies such as ACE and the Heritage or Arts Lottery distributors, or from charitable bodies such as the Wellcome Trust or the Contemporary Arts Society.
- 3.4 It is therefore advised that LSAG&M seek to renew its Accreditation in order to maintain the quality of its exhibitions and events programmes, work closely with other museums and galleries, and continue to raise external funds.
- 3.5 The new Accreditation Scheme is similar to its predecessor but requires additional information and more supporting documentation. It includes a requirement for the governing body of applicant museums to adopt a new Collections Management Framework to supersede the Acquisitions & Disposal Policy required by the previous Scheme.
- 3.6 LSAG&M's proposed Collections Management Framework 2012 – 2017 comprises four complementary policies which follow guidelines provided by ACE: 1. Collections Development Policy; 2. Collections Care and Conservation Policy; 3. Collections Access Policy; and 4. Collections Documentation Policy. The Executive have previously approved the Council's Acquisitions and Disposal Policies.
- 3.7 These four policies are appended to this report.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 The evidence collected for the Museums Accreditation submission will provide firm foundations for the Art Gallery and Museum's Fit For the Future review scheduled for April 2012 to January 2013.

- 4.2 LSAG&M's submission provides an overview of the service and its relationship to the council. As required by the ACE application form, it is in three sections: 1 – Organisational Health; 2 – Collections; 3 – Users and Their Experiences.
- 4.3 Collecting the evidence has necessitated a wide ranging review of the LSAG&M's current services, staff structure, resources and collections, and customer experiences. This has been supplemented by additional work, including the production of the new Collections Management Framework and a SWOT review of the service involving staff and representatives of the Friends of Leamington Art Gallery.
- 4.4 This data will provide a strong starting point for the Fit For the Future review, making it easier to explore the scope for improving customer focus, identify efficiencies and make savings, and provide leadership to carry out organisational change.
- 4.5 However, it should be recognised that although LSAG&M achieved immediate full accreditation in the current Scheme, the uncertainties about future resources and funding implied by the Fit For the Future review may have an impact on ACE's assessment of the application for the new Accreditation Scheme.
- 4.6 The work associated with Accreditation and Fit For the Future will help ensure that LSAG&M continues to have the capacity to play its part in the Warwick District Sustainable Community Strategy. In particular it will continue to make direct contributions to the following:
- **Jobs, Skill and Economy** - provide work opportunities in a customer-focused environment for residents and students as volunteers and as casual paid staff; contribute to a thriving tourist economy by helping attract tourists to the Royal Pump Rooms
 - **Safer Communities** –provide diverse opportunities for all sectors of community through the exhibitions and events programmes.
 - **Health and Well Being** – contribute to learning opportunities, including for children and young people.
 - **Sustainability** - contribute to the understanding and preservation of the historic environment for future generations through exhibitions and care of collections.
 - **Involving Communities** - provide support for volunteers and maintain close links with the Friends of Leamington Art Gallery and other community groups.
 - **Narrowing the Gaps** – all exhibitions and most events for children and families are free.
 - **Supporting Families** - 'Haddie's Gallery' and many of the events and activities are specifically for families.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications resulting from seeking to renew LSAG&M's membership of the Museums Accreditation Scheme.
- 5.2 However, failure to achieve Accreditation does have a potential negative impact as it is likely to impede access to the external grant funding which has in the past supplemented the council's own funding of the service, especially the exhibitions, events and conservation programmes. As an indication of the

amounts at risk, external funding totalling £144,000 was raised between 2009/10 and 2011/12.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

- 6.1 There are no alternatives to Accreditation as this is the only nationally recognise accreditation Scheme for Museums in the United Kingdom.
- 6.2 Failure to achieve Accreditation would significantly undermine confidence in LSAG&M within the museums sector. It would have a direct impact on LSAG&M's exhibitions and events programme because it would become very difficult to borrow exhibits or work with other art galleries and museums.
- 6.3 Failure to achieve Accreditation would also impair LSAG&M's ability to raise external funds to supplement the council's own funding of the exhibitions, events and conservation programmes.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 LSAG&M was accepted as an Accredited Museum under the Scheme managed by the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA). The Accreditation was valid for five years (2007 – 2012).
- 7.2 In 2011 the responsibilities of the MLA were transferred to ACE. This has introduced a revised Accreditation Scheme for museums, to which existing members are invited to apply. LSAG&M is in a group of museums for which ACE has set an application deadline of 6 June 2012.
- 7.3 ACE state that: 'Once a museum has been awarded Accredited status, it must prove that it continues to meet the requirements of the scheme by sending an Accreditation return to the assessing organisation every two to three years, as required.'
- 7.4 The new Accreditation Scheme is described on the ACE website:

'The Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK. There are currently just under 1,800 museums participating in the scheme, demonstrating their commitment to managing collections effectively for the enjoyment and benefit of users.'

'Accreditation has recently been developed to keep pace with the times, to help museums develop their resilience through effective forward planning, to balance aspects of collection management and to encourage all museums to be responsive to user needs and expectations.... It helps with:

Performance

A quality standard that serves as an authoritative benchmark for assessing performance, rewarding achievement and driving improvement.

Profile

It raises awareness and understanding of museums, so building confidence and credibility both within the governing body and among the public.

People

It helps museums to improve their focus on meeting users' needs and interests and developing their workforce.

Partnerships

It helps museums to examine their services and to encourage joint working within and between organisations.

Planning

It helps with forward planning by formalising procedures and policies.

Patronage

It demonstrates that the museum has met a national standard, which strengthens applications for public and private funding and gives investors confidence in the organisation.'