

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet - 8 October 2019

Museum Accreditation Collections Development Policy and Deaccession Process

Accountable member	Councillor Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Healthy Lifestyles
Accountable officer	Darren Knight, Executive Director of People and Change
Ward(s) affected	All
Key/Significant Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>The Wilson Art Gallery & Museum is an Accredited Museum under the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme. To comply with the requirements of the scheme, the Wilson has an obligation (every five years) to review its existing Collections Development Policy, previously known as the Acquisitions & Disposal Policy, and ensure it meets the current standard to obtain accreditation. This was last granted in 2014 and is, therefore, due to be reviewed in 2019.</p> <p>The Wilson collection is under the custodianship of the council and managed through a service level agreement by The Cheltenham Trust (TCT). The Collection Development Policy sets out the plans for development of the collection including acquisition and deaccession (removal and sale/disposal) of its items. It was last approved by Council in 2011 and has now, as part of preparation for the accreditation submission, been updated by TCT to ensure it meets industry standard. As the custodian of the collection any deaccessions need approval by the council.</p> <p>This report outlines the accreditation submission process and includes highlights of the updated Collections Development Policy. It seeks approval of the updated Collections Development Policy and the process for deaccession encompassed within it.</p> <p>There is currently no identified individual role within the council that represents the council with regard to its custodial responsibilities for the collection. This report proposes a resolution for this situation.</p>
Recommendations	<p>Cabinet to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the updated Collections Development Policy2. Approve the CBC Deaccession Approvals process3. Approve Executive Director of People and Change to undertake the role of the 'responsible officer' on behalf of CBC as the custodian of the Collection

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Financial implications	<p>All financial implications are reported throughout the report. The funding of projects post accreditation such as fundamental, fuller review of collection and future housing of these items are currently not included in the budget.</p> <p>Contact officer: Andrew Knott, Andrew.knott@cheltenham.gov.uk 01242 264121</p>
Legal implications	<p>The policy provides guidelines to ensure that the Authority remains within current legislation concerning the trade in endangered species, the disturbance of human remains and the disposal or acquisition of material without the owner’s consent. The guidelines are pre-prescribed by Arts Council England and have been appropriately applied within the policy as applicable to the museum collections.</p> <p>Contact officer: Legal Services, legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk 01684 272017</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.</p> <p>Contact officer: Carmel Togher, HR Business Partner Email: carmel.togher@publicagroup.uk Tel: 01242 264391</p>
Key risks	Appendix 1
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>The report aligns directly to the following outcome within the Council’s Place Strategy:</p> <p>Our vision is that Cheltenham is a place where culture and creativity thrives.</p> <p>Ensuring we have a museum collection that is nationally accredited and a robust Collections Development Policy is essential to support a thriving cultural offer.</p>
Environmental and climate change implications	<p>Any item that cannot be returned, gifted or sold in line with the collections development policy will be disposed of responsibly.</p>
Property/Asset Implications	<p>Contact officer: Dominic Stead, Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk 01242 264151</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 The Museums' Association definition of a museum (1998) states: "Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society." This definition includes art galleries with collections of works of art, as well as museums with historical collections of objects.
- 1.2 The Museum Accreditation Scheme sets out nationally-agreed standards, which inspire the confidence of the public and funding and governing bodies. It helps everyone involved with a museum to do the right things, helping people to access and engage with collections, and protect them for future generations. The Accreditation Scheme does this by making sure museums manage their collections properly, engage with visitors, and are governed appropriately by encouraging all museums and galleries to meet an agreed standard. The scheme is managed as a UK Partnership between Arts Council England, the Welsh Government, Museums Galleries Scotland and Northern Ireland Museums Council. It is run for museums and galleries of all sizes and types across the UK.
- 1.3 Accreditation benefits museum visitors and the users of museum services. It supports museum managers and governing bodies in planning and developing their services, and it provides a benchmark for grant-making organisations, sponsors and donors.
- 1.4 Accreditation is crucial for demonstrating to the public, stakeholders and funders that the museum is well run, sustainable, trusted and transparent. It assesses how museums are run, how they manage their collections and how they engage with their users. Reaching the accreditation standard:
 - Shows a museum is being properly managed and governed – and other museums recognise that
 - Demonstrates a museum's professionalism – which makes it easier to get funding and helps give confidence to lenders and donors
 - Means a museum is looking after their collections and managing them appropriately
 - Helps museums meet their users' needs
 - Shows the museum team that they're working to an industry-wide standard.
 - Gives access to professional advice and support, including mentors and Museum Development in England
 - Helps keep museums on track by giving them ways to formalise plans, policies and procedures and so improve services
- 1.5 The Wilson, previously known as Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, has been an Accredited Museum since 2005.
- 1.6 To comply with the requirements of the scheme, the Wilson has an obligation (every five years) to review its existing Collections Development Policy, previously known as the Acquisitions & Disposal Policy, and ensure it meets the current standard to obtain accreditation, This was last granted in 2014 and is, therefore, due to be reviewed in 2019.
- 1.7 The Cheltenham Trust's Cultural Programmes Manager has prepared the accreditation submission with assistance of TCT colleagues and support from CBC officers.
- 1.8 Two documentation officers, funded by CBC, have been engaged since June 2019 to document and catalogue items within the collection, an essential requirement for accreditation.
- 1.9 As part of accreditation, there is an ongoing requirement to maintain documentation, the catalogue of items and digital access to the collection and resource to do this should be considered, going forward.

- 1.10** There has been a strong level of collaboration between CBC and TCT, working on a project to support the accreditation process and address the storage and documentation issues identified at the last accreditation review. Significant progress has been made including:
- Work to rationalise the use of store 3 at the depot is complete; work in store 8 on hold as this would require additional staffing, security and infrastructure. There are also risks associated with working in this area due to depot heavy vehicles movements
 - Move of past exhibition archive material from store 3 to depot archive store is complete
 - Ethnology collection moved from the Wilson to store 3 in line with accreditation standards relieving pressure on cramped storage conditions at the Wilson
 - Ceramics collection moved to a new location within the Wilson – office space has been made secure for this purpose
 - Identified infestation of costume collection, cost of treatment circa £15k and funding source for treatment (CBC insurance reserve)
 - Project plan drawn up for accreditation process
- 1.11** The Accreditation submission is due by 31 October 2019 and it is proposed to submit the documentation before the deadline date. This target will be met as a result of a successful collaborative project between the council and the TCT.
- 1.12** The outcome of the accreditation submission will not be known until spring (or later) of 2020. The process may involve a possible visit from the Museum Accreditation Board.
- 1.13** Following the accreditation submission, the project team is proposing that the TCT and the council undertake a more fundamental, fuller review of the collections. The extent, cost and potential external funding of this has yet to be fully explored.

2. The Collections Development Policy

- 2.1** The Collections Development Policy is a requirement of the Museums Association in order to obtain accredited museums status. It is described as: A policy, approved by the governing body, for developing collections, including acquisitions and disposals. It includes:
- the museums statement of purpose
 - an overview of current collections
 - themes and priorities for future collecting
 - priorities for rationalisation and disposal
 - information about the legal and ethical framework for acquiring and disposing of items
 - the date when we will next review the policy
- 2.2** As custodians of the collection, CBC needs to approve the Collections Development Policy. This is an update of the existing policy that was approved by Council in 2011 and brings it in line with latest national guidance and best practice. A summary of the main changes to the policy are:
- The status of the designated Arts and Crafts Movement Collections have been underlined with more detail of what we have and what we hope to collect.
 - The collections about Gustav Holst have been pulled out of the main text and given a separate header, acknowledging their separate status and the relationship we have established with the Holst Birthplace Museum Trust
 - The Wilson Family Collection has been pulled out of the main text and given a separate header and extended text to acknowledge the significance of this collection to Cheltenham Borough Council and The Cheltenham Trust

- The acquisitions sections have been reworked and in particular a different emphasis in local and social history has been flagged up to include gender issues, sports, and women's suffrage, none of which are well (or at all) represented in the current collections
- The rationalisation and disposal section now lists the items we want to consider disposing of, using the correct and approved museums association practices
- The current international trend for museums to return material from indigenous people groups is acknowledged
- References to national legislation and current museum association policies have been updated

2.3 In reviewing the policy, the TCT and the council acknowledge that they sign up to the museums associated code of ethics, in particular that we will not seek to sell or dispose of any part of the collections for financial gain.

2.4 The updated, full version of the Collection Development Policy is attached for approval at Appendix 2. If approved, it will be submitted as part of the Museum Accreditation submission to Arts Council England in October 2019.

3. CBC de-accessioning approvals process

3.1 In order to deaccession items from the collection, the TCT staff will need to follow the process outlined in the Collections Development Policy which includes disposal routes which comply with national standards and consider environmental impacts.

3.2 Since the council is the custodian of the collections, deaccessioning recommendations will need to be approved by the council. The process for approving the deaccessioning proposals, at Appendix 3, has been developed between the council and the TCT and is recommended for approval. The process sets out clear methodology for deaccessioning with thresholds and decision makers to ensure transparency.

3.3 Any requests for deaccessioning from the TCT will be detailed and give reasons for disposal, method of disposal, risk i.e. Impact, importance, value, publicity, potential etc. They will also detail possibility of repatriating to owners, other museum's etc.

4. Nominated officer for Collections

4.1 Following the creation and transfer of council staff into the TCT, there is currently no identified individual role within the council that represents the council, with regard to custodial responsibility for the collection.

4.2 The Executive Director People & Change has responsibility for overseeing the relationship with the TCT and is therefore well placed to make decisions in respect of the collections, in discussion with the Cabinet Member for Healthy Lifestyles, whose portfolio covers this area, and with advice from those with the expertise within the TCT and the council. As such, it is recommended that the Executive Director People & Change be the nominated 'responsible officer' for the collections.

5. Future storage needs

5.1 Whilst the project has made significant headway in rationalising the stores at the Depot and

dealing with some immediate issues, it has yet to fundamentally tackle the underlying issue of the future storage and access needs of the collection. This work will include identification of suitable storage for the treated costume collection.

- 5.2 Once the accreditation application has been submitted, the project team will refocus efforts on identifying the options for storage post collection rationalisation process.

6. Reasons for recommendations

- 6.1 The Wilson is due for reaccreditation and an updated Collections Development policy is required as part of the submission.
- 6.2 Failure to obtain accreditation will not only remove support from Museums Association for managers and governing bodies in planning and developing their services, but could hamper access to grant-making organisations, sponsors and donors.
- 6.3 Cheltenham Borough Council is the custodian for the Wilson collection and therefore ultimately responsible for its management.
- 6.4 Since the management of the Wilson has been the responsibility of The Cheltenham Trust, there has been no agreed specific named role within the council that has been given the mandate to lead the responsibility of collection custodianship on behalf of the council.

7. Alternative options considered

- 7.1 Do nothing would result in loss of accreditation for the museum and would impact on its ability to function as a reputable museum.

8. How this initiative contributes to the corporate plan

- 8.1 Our principles state we will provide strategic co-ordination across Cheltenham's agencies, partnerships and networks to drive the delivery of the Place Vision and we will work in ways that encourage equal collaboration at all levels and we will take time to listen, understand and respect each other to ensure what we do is appropriate and empowering. The council have collaborated with the experts within The Cheltenham Trust to produce a Collections Development Policy that meets the criteria of the Museum Accreditation Scheme.
- 8.2 A key priority of the corporate plan is to work with partners to develop a cultural strategy that will build on what is best about our current offer and make the most of future opportunities, national and international, to ensure a wider social benefit. In order to achieve this we need to ensure that the Wilson is recognised as achieving a nationally accepted standard, by means of the Accreditation scheme.

9. Consultation and feedback

- 9.1 In order to ensure the updates to the Collections Development Policy and the deaccession process meets the criteria set out for accreditation and is fit for purpose the council has collaborated with experts within The Cheltenham Trust & Drakon Heritage and Conservation, a

specialist in collection care and advise.

10. Performance management –monitoring and review

- 10.1** The Wilson Art Gallery & Museum is currently an accredited museum under the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme. The indicator of successful performance will be the retaining of its status as an accredited museum.
- 10.2** The CBC nominated officer, with the assistance of the councils TCT client officer, will monitor performance in line with the requirements of the accreditation criteria and collections development policy.

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Risk Assessment2. Collections Development Policy3. CBC Deaccession Approvals Process
Background information	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Accreditation scheme guidance

Risk Assessment

Appendix 1

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If The Cheltenham Trust fails to update the Collections Development Policy there is a risk that the Wilson will fail to retain the Accreditation Standard required by the Museums Association resulting in the museum being constrained in its current operation	LB	13.09.19	3	2	6	Avoid	Update policy in accordance with Museum Accreditation Scheme requirements and seek Cabinet approval on 8 th October 2019	8.10.19	SW/MS	N
	If The Cheltenham Trust fails to include suitable options for disposal of items as part of the deaccession process there is a risk that disposal will adversely impact the environment.	LB	13.09.19	2	2	4	Reduce	Ensure the deaccession process details requirement to dispose of items in a way to cause least harm to the environment.	8.10.19	SW/MS	N
	If the museum fails to achieve accreditation then the reputation of the TCT and the council as custodians for the museum collections will be undermined.	LB/MS	17/09	3	2	6	Reduce	Ensure that the accreditation submission is as robust as possible and meets re-accreditation criteria.	31/10/19	SW/MS	N

Collections Development Policy

Name of museum: *The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum (hereafter referred to as 'The Wilson')*

Management and Governing body: The Cheltenham Trust. *(hereafter referred to as the 'governing body')*

The collections are managed on behalf of CBC by The Cheltenham Trust (TCT) in line with national standards and as part of a Service Level Agreement.

Collection Custodian: Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC).

The Wilson collections are public collections for which the council is the legal custodian and has the ultimate responsibility to approve deaccessioning recommendations proposed by the TCT.

Date policy approved by governing body and collection custodian: *8 October 2019*

Policy review procedure: *Policy to be reviewed by The Wilson staff and escalated to The Cheltenham Trust Board and Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet for approval*

Date policy due for review: *2024*

The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed at least once every five years.

Arts Council England will be notified of any significant changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of the collections.

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation

1.1 The Wilson's statement of purpose is:

The Wilson aims to be a regional centre of excellence for doing and making for all ages. It is friendly and curious in everything that it does and provides creative space for people to engage with Cheltenham's stories through exhibitions, displays, art, crafts and events. We do this by caring for and interpreting our outstanding collections to support discovery, enjoyment and learning for all.

1.2 Cheltenham Borough Council and The Cheltenham Trust will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

1.3 By definition, The Wilson 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 Wilson's collection.

1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

The Wilson 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 Wilson Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as financial constraints to purchasing items for the collections; and insufficient resources and /or funds to look after, store and display the collections to professional standards.

1.5 The Wilson 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 Wilson can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

1.6 Both Cheltenham Borough Council and The Cheltenham Trust will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

2. History of the collections

The **Baron de Ferrieres** started off the collections with a bequest of forty-three Dutch and Flemish paintings, along with £1,000 towards the cost of an art gallery to display them in. This was opened as Cheltenham Art Gallery in 1899.

The **fine art collection** has evolved since then to include many works by predominately British artists, particularly Gloucestershire based artists, and scenes of Gloucestershire feature strongly. The collection comprises both oil paintings and an extensive collection of works on paper which includes an important collection of original prints. Since the 1920s a significant collection of twentieth century work has been developed including works by artists such as Paul Nash, Stanley Spencer and Vanessa Bell.

Meanwhile, **Edward Thomas Wilson**, a local doctor (and father of the Antarctic explorer Edward Adrian Wilson) campaigned to add archaeology, natural history and objects of local interest to the collections, resulting in the opening of a museum section in 1907. The existing art gallery was renamed to accommodate this change to Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

The Wilson Family Collection evolved from both the founder, Edward Thomas Wilson giving flints and natural history specimens from the area, and his daughter in law, Oriana Wilson, donating the Antarctic material that belonged to her husband, Edward Adrian Wilson. Other family members have added to this, with large donations in 1995, and again in 2016 and 2018.

Natural Science Collections The Wilson holds an important geology collection of around 14,000 specimens, some as old as 600 million years, from the Cheltenham area. Its strength lies in Jurassic fossils and rocks, including some type specimens. The origins of the collection date to 1888 when Charles Peirson presented the town with a 'large collection of fossils', and after The Wilson opened in 1907 other collections such as Buckman, Gray, Wild and Mapp donated specimens. We even have minerals from the engineer, Robert Stephenson. There is also a small but significant collection of Antarctic rocks brought back from the Scott expeditions. There is also a collection of herbaria from Cheltenham, including the personal collections of ET and EA Wilson, shells, eggs and some examples of local Victorian taxidermy.

Local and social history have been key collecting areas since 1907 both by donation and purchase. The aim has been to capture the history of the town from its start as a Spa Town, through its development to the commercial town we have today. The collections include items illustrating the town's industries, shops, and households as well as education, religious and cultural backgrounds. They are made up of 3-dimensional objects, topographical prints, photographs and printed ephemera including a collection of over 5000 theatre playbills; the largest in a provincial museum. The items relate both to Cheltenham and the adjacent rural areas.

Archaeology has also been integral to the collections since 1907, with some Cheltenham, but mainly North Cotswolds material. Since the 1970s, the parishes from which each of the counties' museum services collect have been clearly defined. Material from a number of parishes within Tewkesbury District (which does not maintain a professional museum service) is collected by The Wilson. (See separate archaeology policy)

Numismatics. The Wilson holds a small but significant collection of local national and international coins and medals. The first item was a George III medal given in 1901, followed two years later by a collection of Roman coins. Since then the collection has been added to as items have been donated. Two significant hoards were purchased in 1968 and 1997, the Willesley hoard of Romano British coins, and the Winchcombe Hoard of 251 late medieval coins.

Ethnography In the early 20th century Cheltenham became a popular retirement town for colonial administrators and military personnel. They brought with them their African and Indian artefacts and these were gradually added to The Wilson collections. In 1923 The Wilson acquired on loan a large collection of Chinese ceramics ranging

from the Yuan to the Qing dynasty from Gloucester-born Stanley Berkeley Smith. This was bequeathed in 1955, and the collection rationalised and then added to develop it for earlier dynasties and contemporary ceramics.

Designated in 1998, the **Arts and Crafts Movement Collection** started in the 1920s with the curator Daniel Herdman, recognising the significance of the material, and working with designers to exhibit and add their work to The Wilson collections. He also rescued many pieces, including the Gimson archive, from certain destruction. Since the 1970s the collection has been developed to give a national overview with work by William Morris, C.F.A. Voysey, M.H. Baillie Scott, Eric Gill and many others, and includes significant archival collections.

In 1990 a further development was made to the Designated Arts and Crafts Movement Collection with the acquisition of **The Emery Walker Library**, the best surviving intact library relating to the Private Press Movement. The library includes Emery Walker's own books, including a complete run of Kelmscott Press books, Doves Press, Ashendene Press letters, photographs and items relating to his career in printing as well as handwritten manuscripts by William and May Morris, and John Ruskin.

The Wilson holds a significant collection of other **decorative arts**, including English ceramics, metalwork, furniture, clocks and glass from the 18th to 20th century, with the earlier focus of collecting on the earlier period, but from the 1930s onwards collecting has also had a contemporary and local focus, particularly of Gloucestershire-based makers and companies. In 1976 a significant collection of 17th and 18th century pewter and treen was acquired from the estate of local antiques dealer and collector AH Isher. In 1989 19th and 20th pieces were acquired through the 1989 Summerfield bequest. The studio pottery collection has focused on the Winchcombe Pottery and the subsequent careers of associated potters. More recently work by contemporary makers that corresponds to other areas of the collections has been acquired, including Felicity Aylieff and Edmund de Waal.

The **textile** collection started in 1907– the bulk of the collection has been given to The Wilson and is primarily domestic, reflecting home life and pastimes. It is mainly 19th century and first half of the 20th century. The collection includes a small but significant collection of 19th century quilts and coverlets. Textiles by Arts and Crafts Movement designers were added to the Arts and Crafts Movement Collection from 1984 including Morris and Company (including May Morris), Selwyn Image, Walter Crane, Barron and Larcher, Theo Moorman Gordon Russell and others contributing to The Wilson's focus on this significant collection.

Gustav Holst Collection Cheltenham Borough Council hold a highly significant archive of material relating to Gustav Holst and his family including autograph manuscripts, letters, photographs, scrapbooks, furniture and musical instruments. The bulk of the collection was donated to Cheltenham Borough Council in the years following Holst's death by his widow and daughter, particularly following the opening of the Holst Birthplace Museum in 1974, in which Imogen Holst, Holst's daughter, was closely involved. The Holst Birthplace Trust, now a separate independent museum, holds this collection which is on loan from The Cheltenham Trust.

Costume The Wilson started collecting costume in 1900, a year after the art gallery opened and 13 years before The Wilson opened as an extension of the then art gallery. Most of the collection has been given to The Wilson, with very few purchases. The collection reflects Cheltenham's history as a fashionable spa town, and its colonial past, in particular its connections with 19th century India. Some nationally significant examples have been given to The Wilson by families with these stories including the Whinyates family who lived in Cheltenham and India during the 19th century. Prior to the Costume Museum opening in the early 1980s there was a focus on collecting in areas which were required to provide a comprehensive history of dress at The Wilson including menswear and dress from Cheltenham shops. The costume museum opened at the Pittville Pump Room in 1983 and closed in 1999. There is very little in the collection post 1980s.

Education and Handling Collection From 1973 occasional loans were made to local schools, and the County Council contributed an annual small amount to enable county schools to participate. A new post of Museums Education Officer was created in around 1974, to establish an extensive **school loans service**. This collection has been continually developed since the 1970s with aspects relating to all collecting areas of the art gallery and museum, and linking to the National Curriculum. From the early 2000s the collection broadened its reach to other users including universities colleges and residential care homes.

3. An overview of current collections

The current collections are listed below. The collections now number c. 250,000 objects across all material types, including most recently digital artwork and oral history records.

The Wilson holds for Cheltenham Borough Council significant core collections in the following areas –

- **Fine Art:** British and foreign paintings, drawings and prints from the 16th century onwards, notably a major collection of 17th- and 19th- century Flemish, Dutch and Belgian works and English watercolours from the 18th century to the present day, sculpture from the 18th century to the present day and modern media from the 20th and 21st century
- **Decorative Art:** British and Continental European ceramics; British furniture and clocks, glass, metalwork and treen. In terms of date, these collections span a period from the 16th century to the present day, a particular strength being the late 18th- to early 19th-century, reflecting Cheltenham's history as a regency town.
- **Asian Art:** Ceramics, costume, armour and artefacts relating mainly to China (including Chinese ceramics exported to India and the Middle East), India and Japan from prehistory to the present day.
- **Costume:** Women's, men's and children's main garments, underwear and accessories from the 17th century onwards, with a particular strength in women's 19th-century dress and a particular emphasis on items from Cheltenham shops and Cheltenham's colonial past including women's early 19th century dress and men's uniform.
- **Textiles:** Patchwork quilts from the early 19th century to the early 20th century; lace, mostly 19th century, and a mixture of machine, bobbin and needle laces; samplers ranging from mid-17th-century to the 18th–20th centuries and other hand and machine embroideries; Arts and Crafts Movement textiles; and textiles by Gloucestershire-based studio designer/makers.
- **The Arts and Crafts Movement:** Books, ceramics, furniture, metalwork, woodwork, paintings, drawings and prints, jewellery, glass, plaster, textiles and other decorative, fine and building arts relating to the English Arts and Crafts Movement from the 1860s to the present day, the associated Private Press Movement, and with an associated collection of archives, designs, drawings and personal records such as letters, diaries, photographs etc. In 1998 this collection was Designated as being of national importance.
- **Archaeology:** Prehistoric, Romano-British, Saxon and Medieval archaeology from Cheltenham and selected parishes of North Gloucestershire. There are a small number of Egyptian and Greco-Roman artefacts giving international context, but no further collecting is taking place in this area.
- **Local History:** Printed ephemera, photographs, postcards, topographical prints and objects relating to the history of Cheltenham, including over 5000 theatre playbills. The collection is particularly strong on the Regency period, the development of the town in the 19th century, important local industries such as H H Martyn, UCAL, and Andy's Candys and the slum clearances in the early 20th century.
- **Gustav Holst:** material pertaining to the composer and his family (majority on loan to Holst Birthplace Trust)
- **Wilson Family Collection:** material (archival, art and artefacts) relating to the Antarctic explorer, Edward Adrian Wilson, his father Edward Thomas Wilson and Uncle Sir Charles Wilson and their families. Also wider Antarctic material with a direct relationship to Wilson.

- **Numismatics:** British and foreign coins from the Roman Empire to the 21st century; British tokens, medals and military decorations from the 17th century onwards with a direct relationship to Cheltenham.
- **Firearms and edged weapons:** A small collection of British and Continental European examples from the 18th to early 20th century; and a much larger collection of Asian and African weapons (see the Ethnography section). No active collecting is undertaken in this area unless it fits into the Wilson Family Collection.
- **Natural Sciences:** Geology, herbaria, eggs, shells and examples of taxidermy. No active collecting is made in this collecting area unless it fits under another category e.g. Cheltenham Local History, or the Wilson Family Collection
- **Social History:** objects relating to English domestic, personal and working life from the 17th century to the present day. No active collecting is made in this collecting area unless it is from Cheltenham.
- **Ethnography:** Non-European domestic, military and ritual items, in particular from West Africa, the Middle East, the Indian sub-Continent, and Australasia. No active collecting is made in this collecting area.
- **Education collections:** Separate handling collections are maintained by The Wilson Learning Team, for use with schools and other groups, and by the 'Museum Take-Away' Service, for loan to schools, care homes and other organisations. These collections mainly comprise social, ethnographic and natural history specimens, and are used specifically to enhance learning and reminiscence opportunities. They are not part of the accessioned collections. .

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The Wilson will maintain all its present collections and enhance them by building on present strengths and filling gaps, by purchase, gift or bequest. No new collection areas will be embarked on, and in some areas, we will stop collecting except in exceptional circumstances.

4.1 Fine Art

- 4.1.1 Acquire examples of the work of artists of all periods with a connection to the historic county of Gloucestershire, having due regard to the collecting policies of other Accredited museums.
- 4.1.2 Acquire British art of the 20th and 21st century, particularly that which fills gaps in the existing collection and brings the collection up to date.
- 4.1.3 Acquire paintings and drawings showing views of Cheltenham from the 18th century to the present day.
- 4.1.4 Acquire preparatory drawings and paintings for works already held in the collections.
- 4.1.5 Acquire paintings, watercolours, drawings, prints and other media by artists of the British Arts and Crafts Movement – see 4.5.3 for more detail.

4.2 Decorative Art

- 4.2.1 **Ceramics:** develop the collection of British ceramics from the 16th century to the present day, with particular reference to art pottery and studio pottery of the 19th- to 21st- century, and work by local ceramics companies and ceramicists.
- 4.2.2 **Furniture:** develop the collection of British, including colonial, furniture and clocks from the 16th century to the present day, with particular reference to Cheltenham.

- 4.2.3 **Glass:** develop the collection of British and Continental European glass from the 17th century to the present day with particular reference to Cheltenham, and continue to develop the collection of local glassmakers.
- 4.2.4 **Metalwork:** develop the collection of British metalwork from the 16th century to the present day with particular reference to Cheltenham, with particular reference to the collection of pewter.
- 4.2.5 **Treen:** develop the collection of British treen from the 17th century to the present day with particular reference to Cheltenham.

4.3 Asian Art

Develop the collections of Chinese ceramics from prehistory to the present day, with particular reference to contemporary ceramics, and other decorative arts and textiles from China, Japan, the Indian sub-continent and other countries within the area, with particular reference to the China/India connection from the 14th to 21st century.

4.4 Costume and textiles

- 4.4.1 **Costume:** only acquire significant examples pertinent to Cheltenham (people and shops) and our key collections: The Wilson Family and Arts and Crafts Movement.
- 4.4.2 **Textiles:** only acquire significant examples pertinent to our key collections: The Wilson Family and Arts and Crafts Movement including contemporary makers.

4.5 The Arts and Crafts Movement and Emery Walker Library

- 4.5.1 Develop the collection of books, building arts, ceramics, furniture, metalwork, paintings, woodwork, jewellery, glass, plaster, textiles, archives, designs and drawings and personal records and other decorative arts relating to the English Arts and Crafts Movement from the 1860s to the 1940s. The emphasis will be on filling gaps in the collections, particularly work by Philip Webb, A. H. Mackmurdo and the Century Guild, May Morris, Alexander Fisher, Arthur Simpson, W. Anning Bell, the Keswick School of Art, and the Newlyn School and other Homes Arts and Industries Associations, as well as continuing to collect key works relating to key designers related to the English Arts and Crafts Movement and in particular the Cotswolds. Please see Documentation Plan for further detail.
- 4.5.2 Develop the collection of relating to the English Arts and Crafts Movement.
- 4.5.3 Develop the collection of fine art relating to the Arts and Crafts Movement with particular emphasis on artists associated with the Cotswolds and artists associated with William Morris and the Kelmscott Press. Please see Documentation Plan for further detail.
- 4.5.4 Develop the collection of 20th century and contemporary work in the Arts and Crafts spirit.
- 4.5.5 Develop the collection to include comparative examples of Scottish, Irish, Continental European, North American and Japanese work. Do we have room? We presumably want the other items first! Where is focus?

4.6 Archaeology

The Wilson signed up to the Gloucestershire Archaeological Archive Standards Policy in 2017, reviewed 2018. Next review due in 2023. For further information about these standards please see **Collections Development Policy Appendix 1**. This 2018 version is the current working document, used by all the

Gloucestershire museums who accept archaeological deposition. It has streamlined and clarified our working practices.

Refer to this document for details of the parishes The Wilson collects from, the material collected (and finds not to be retained), and the process of decision making between the units and this museum; and The Wilson and the four other Gloucestershire museums that collect excavated material. ie Corinium Museum, Cirencester; Dean Heritage Museum; Gloucester City Museum & Art Gallery and The Wilson in the Park, Stroud.

The Wilson will not collect non-local archaeological material, including Egyptian and Greco-Roman objects.

4.7 Local and Social History

- 4.7.1** Develop the collection of topographical prints, photographs and postcards relating to Cheltenham from the late 18th century onwards.
- 4.7.2** Develop the collection of 18th to 21st- century printed ephemera and theatre playbills relating to Cheltenham.
- 4.7.3** Develop the collection of three-dimensional items telling the history of Cheltenham from the 17th century onwards; particularly items relating to women's suffrage, GCHQ, gender issues, sport and horseracing.
- 4.7.4** Develop the collection of material relating to notable inhabitants of Cheltenham from the 17th century onwards (prior to 17th century collecting moves into Archaeology)

4.8 Social History

The existing collections will not be added to unless they specifically enhance a story about Cheltenham that we wish to tell (and then they would fit into Local History rather than Social History)

4.9 Gustav Holst

As the Holst Birthplace Trust actively collects material relating to Gustav Holst and his family The Wilson will no longer collect material from this area.

4.10 Wilson Family Collection

Our focus is primarily on the Wilson family, the aim is to develop and enhance the collection we have in full consultation with the existing family members. In particular material from Edward Thomas Wilson and Edward Adrian Wilson and their families, with an emphasis on building the Cheltenham context, exploration, and their personal stories. Material illustrating the role of the women in the Wilson family would be particularly welcomed. Wider Antarctic material would not be added except in exceptional circumstances and only in full consultation with other institutions that collect such material e.g. *The Discovery*, Scott Polar, Natural History Museum etc.

4.11 Numismatics

The only additions to the collections for consideration would be tokens, medals and military decorations relating to Cheltenham and its inhabitants. No other material to be collected.

4.12 Firearms and edged weapons

The existing collections will not be added to unless under very exceptional circumstances e.g. an item relating to one of Cheltenham's key figures or manufacturers who is core to a story we wish to develop for display.

4.13 Natural Sciences

The existing collections will not be added to except under exceptional circumstances e.g. a taxidermy item by Whites.

4.14 Ethnography

The existing collections will not be added except under exceptional circumstances.

4.15 Museum learning

Occasionally, new material is obtained by purchasing items from outside sources, and by accepting donations from members of the public, to develop the service so it remains relevant to the National Curriculum and learning offer at The Wilson.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1. The Wilson recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections or areas of 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.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. Items that are in poor condition, have no resonance with our key collections and stories, or are duplicates will be considered in the first instance. Areas proposed:

Social History

Sewing machines (duplicate, unprovenanced, poor condition)

Agricultural equipment (duplicate non provenanced, not local, not relevant to local stories)

Large social history items (duplicate, unprovenanced, non-local poor condition)

Uncollected loans and identifications

Material over 5 years old that has not been collected and we have no contact details for, or have tried more than 3 times to contact the owner, and is of low financial value.

Costume and Textiles

Parts of garments, reticules in poor condition and duplicate; baby gowns, duplicate and no stories; women's dresses in poor condition without a local story. Rationalisation project with the lace collections

Decorative Arts

Large decorative arts items (duplicate, unprovenanced, non-local, poor condition, not relating to the Designated Arts and Crafts Movement collection)

Archaeology

Material collected prior to the organisation of collecting areas; especially material from the Forest of Dean that Dean Heritage Museum have on long term loan.eg Alfred's Cave material

Work with units to assess value of bulk material especially unstratified objects, bulk animal bone, slag etc. with a view to reduction and disposal of unnecessary bulk

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

- 6.1. The Wilson recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of The Museums Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7. Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1 The Wilson 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.

- 7.2 **Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):**

Other accredited Gloucestershire museums holding similar collections
(The local agreement regarding the deposit of archaeological finds and archives is noted in section 4, above)

Holst Birthplace Museum with regard to material relating to Gustav Holst and his family

The Gloucestershire Archives if archives are in question

The Discovery, Scott Polar Research Institute, the Natural History Museum and other appropriate museums for Antarctic material

Other museums holding Arts and Crafts Movement collections within Britain including but not exclusively the Emery Walker Trust; Leicester Museums; V&A; National Trust (ref. Stoneywell, Leicester in particular).

Fine Art - other galleries and museums with significant collections of Dutch 17th century painting; the Gloucestershire and Cotswold landscape and artists associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement collection.

8. Acquisition

- 8.1 **The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:**

An acquisition must meet the terms of this policy.

An item that meets the above criteria but needs special care requiring long term resource implications will only be accepted with the additional agreement of the relevant museum staff; this decision may be referred to the responsible officer at Cheltenham Borough Council for their approval.

An acquisition will only be accepted on the authorisation of the relevant collection curator, with the professional agreement of another curator from a different discipline.

In all cases a signed justification will be made and placed in the object history file/on AdLib.

8.2 The Wilson 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).

8.3 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 Wilson 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. The Wilson does not hold or intend to acquire human remains under 100 years old.

9.2. As The Wilson 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. See the guidelines in the Gloucestershire Archaeology Archive Standards 2018 [**Collections Development Policy Appendix 1**] for the role of The Wilson and the archaeological units in the deposition of human remains.

10. Biological and geological material

10.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, The Wilson 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 Wilson 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 It is not intended that there should be any exceptions to the above clauses. The Wilson does not intend to act as an externally approved repository of last resort for material for local (UK) origin

12.2 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because The Wilson 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 Wilson 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 Wilson will document when these exceptions occur.

13. Spoliation

- 13.1 The Wilson 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 Museum and Galleries Commission.

14. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 14.1 The Wilson's governing body, acting on the advice of The Wilson's professional staff, 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 Wilson 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 15.1-5 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 the collection custodian 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 Wilson 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, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 15.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the collection custodian only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal.

Other factors including public benefit, the implications for The Wilson'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 Wilson 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 collection custodian acting on the advice of the governing body .
- 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 as 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 Wilson 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 collection custodian 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 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.

Disposal by exchange:

- 15.13 The nature of disposal by exchange means that The Wilson will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 15.13.1 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 15.13.2 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 15.13.3 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, The Wilson will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in The Museum Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites as appropriate.
- 15.13.4 Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in The Wilson's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Disposal by destruction:

- 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 Wilson 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.

CBC Deaccession Approvals Process

- 1 The Council’s collections are managed by The Cheltenham Trust in accordance with a service level agreement dated 30/9/2014 and any variations subsequently agreed.
- 2 The Executive Director of People and Change, is proposed to be the council’s ‘responsible officer’ for the collections.
- 3 The Collections Management Policy states:
 ‘The Trust shall not dispose of items from the collections or the third party loaned collections without prior written authority from the council or the third party as appropriate. ‘ and
 ‘The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons’
- 4 The TCT must follow the comprehensive process for disposals is outlined in the collections management policy (appendix 1 – see section 15) to be approved by Cabinet on 8th October 2019.
- 6 On completion of the prescribed process, all items recommended for disposal require approval by CBC. A detailed list of the items recommended for disposal – whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction – and giving full details of the reasons for disposal, will be provided by the professional curatorial staff. The proposed process for CBC approval of disposals is as follows:

Criteria	Decision maker
Items of value estimated at over £250k	Cabinet
Items of value £50k - £250k or single items of particular public interest	Cabinet member for Healthy Lifestyles
Items of value £0k - £50k	Responsible officer in discussion with Cabinet member for Healthy Lifestyles

Accreditation scheme guidance

https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Accreditation_Guidance_Mar_2019_0.pdf