

DORSET NATURAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Name of Museum: Dorset Museum

Name of Governing Body: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society

Date on which this policy was approved by the Board of DNHAS: 8 September 2022

Policy review date: September 2025

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

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

1.1. Statement of Purpose of the Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society at Dorset Museum

Vision: A museum that collects, reveals and inspires connections with the universal themes of Dorset's story

Mission: To become the prime destination to discover and enjoy the richness of Dorset's natural, historical and cultural heritage, and appreciate the impact of the county and its people on our understanding of the wider world.

1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

1.3. By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection.

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

1.5. The Museum recognises its responsibility, when developing and adding to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

1.6. The Museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

1.7. In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:

- The disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection

- The disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
- The disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored
- Extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken
- The item under consideration lies outside the Museum's established core collection

2. History of the Collections

The Museum's collections evolved from a local aspiration to protect the natural and archaeological heritage of Dorset. This was a response to industrialisation and the development of the railways which threatened Dorchester's Roman sites at Poundbury and Maumbury Rings. The Dorset dialect poet William Barnes, alongside Reverend Charles W. Bingham and Henry Moule met to discuss the formation of a new museum in 1845 – it opened in the same year. In the 19th century, the Museum was located on a number of physical sites around the town, including Judge Jeffreys' lodgings. It moved to the present, purpose-built Museum site in 1883.

In the years following the Museum's conception, objects were not only collected from Dorset, but all around the world. It was not until the turn of the 20th century that the Museum adopted the policy of collecting objects and material exclusively with a provenance linked to Dorset. In 1928 The Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club, which had similar collecting interests, merged with the Museum to become the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society (DNHAS). At present, the Society still runs the Museum. Membership of the Society stands at approximately 2,000 with the collections totalling an estimated four million objects.

In 1937, the Museum received a significant gift from the bequest of Kate Hardy, the sister of the author Thomas Hardy. This included manuscripts of his work, paintings and the contents of his study at Max Gate. This began the process of widening the Museum's collecting remit to include literary and cultural heritage. More recently, in 2020, the transfer of part of the estate of sculptor Elisabeth Frink significantly transformed the Museum's collection of Fine Art. At present, the Museum houses nine main collection areas; Archaeology, Art (including Fine Art, Sculpture, Decorative and Applied Art), Costume and Textiles, Geology, Library and Ephemera, Literature, Natural History (including a Herbarium) Photography and Local History.

3. An Overview of Collections

Archaeology

The collecting of archaeological remains contributed to the core composition of the Museum's collection in the 19th century. This collection persists as one of international significance in the study of northern Europe, particularly with regard to the Museum's collection of Prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman finds.

Existing collections comprise a broad range of materials, with some of the principal components being ceramics, stone, bone (human and faunal), metalwork and glass. All relate to the history of the geographical county of Dorset from pre-history to the medieval periods and include archaeological excavation archives. Historically, large collections, and their corresponding archives, were presented by significant antiquarians and archaeologists Edward Cunnington, Henry Moule and Charles Warne between 1880 and 1900. Charles Bean

deposited a significant collection of material in 1982.

The Museum currently collects archaeological archives and objects from the whole county of Dorset, except the unitary authority of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Previously the Museum did not collect material from the collecting area of the Museum of East Dorset, but as of 2021 that Museum is no longer collecting archaeological archives. As the foremost collecting museum in Dorset for archaeology, it works with archaeological contractors, planning archaeologists, academics and researchers to create archives that are suitable for long-term curation. This includes a notification process to encourage agreed sampling and retention strategies, which take into account the nature of the existing archaeology collection, as well as the significance of the new material.

It is important that archives deposited at the Museum are prepared in line with our conditions and guidelines, including early consultation and cooperation between the excavator and the Museum. There is usually a fee to contribute to the long-term storage and curation of the archive.

From September 2021 archaeological contractors and community-led organisations depositing archives at the Museum will need to follow the rules and regulations outlined in the Museum's Archaeological Deposition Policy.

In recent years the Museum has also collected significant material offered via the Treasure process (Treasure Act 1996). All items offered to the Museum are assessed according to research and display value, condition, and collecting priority, and any significant purchases are approved by the Museum's Board of Trustees.

The size of the Archaeology collection is estimated as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Metalwork artefacts | 34,000 |
| Other artefacts | 2,566,000 |
| 920 Archive boxes | (c.2000 record sheets, 300 Roll boxes (8,000 large format drawings), 95% on microfiche. |
| Photographic Archive | 200,000 images |
| TOTAL | 3,000,000 |

Art

The Museum has acquired fine art since the 19th century. This was initially from donations and bequests through to purchases during the 20th century. Consequently, the existing collection of fine art is formed of works dating from between the 17th and the 20th centuries, which have been acquired to develop links and associations relevant to the Museum's other collection areas, notably the topography, geology, natural history, local history, literary archives, portraiture and archaeology of Dorset and the wider Wessex area.

The Art collection includes oils, watercolours, prints and other drawings, engravings and sculpture and houses works associated with Dorset artists and Dorset local history, people, families, collections and artists working in the county.

Notable artists represented in the collection include: George Romney; Alfred Stevens; Reynolds Stone; Sir James Thornhill; Hamo Thornycroft; Thomas Beach; Henry Moule; Sir Thomas Gainsborough; James Baverstock Knight; John Constable; Alfred Wallis; Mary Spencer Watson; Augustus John; John Everett; Christopher Wood; Francis Newbery;

Frederick Whitehead and Paul Nash. In 2020 the Museum has acquired over 300 works and associated items by Elisabeth Frink, including 31 bronzes.

The size of the Fine Art collection is estimated as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Oils | 300 |
| Watercolours | 3,620 |
| Prints & engravings | 2,540 |
| Sculptures | 131 |
| Sketches and sketch books | 2,000 |
| TOTAL | 8,591 |

Art: Decorative and Applied

The Museum maintains small collections of decorative and applied arts.

Particularly strong collections include: specimens of the work of the Dorset potteries at Poole and Verwood; other ceramics, glassware and metalwork that were made in Dorset or by Dorset craftsmen (e.g. the engraved glasswork of Laurence Whistler and the metalwork of Alfred Stevens), that illustrate a distinctive county influence, or have a particular heraldic value; a collection of clocks, watches and barometers which illustrate the particular historical significance/influence of Dorset makers or manufacturers (such as the Bastard family of Blandford Forum); pieces of vernacular or common furniture with a clear Dorset provenance and associated context; collections of musical instruments and commemorative medals that are relevant to the broader social history and literary collections; and a collection of architectural woodwork, stonework, plasterwork and glazing of a distinctive Dorset character or associated with known Dorset craftsmen.

The size of the Decorative and Applied Art collection is estimated as follows:

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Ceramics | 525 |
| Glass | 200 |
| Metal | 20 |
| Furniture | 250 |
| Clocks | 20 |
| Musical | 10 |
| Architectural | 500 |
| TOTAL | 1,500 |

Costume and Textiles

The existing costume and textile collection focuses on fashionable and middle class clothes for men, women and children from c. 1650 to c. 1950, collecting only material with Dorset origins or strong subsequent connections. Most items tend to be occasion wear, which were more likely to be saved in families than re-cycled or worn out.

Noteworthy large groups include baby robes, smock-frocks, Dorset sun-bonnets, wedding gowns, embroidery samplers, Dorset buttons and feather stitchery. Smaller groups include dress accessories (including footwear, fans, jewellery, millinery and beadwork), lace, quilts, school uniforms, and later 18th century fashionable male clothing. There are some significant individual items such as the Bond raised-work casket which dates from c.1630.

The size of the Costume and Textile collection is estimated as follows:

All categories 5,000

Geology

Existing geological and paleontological collections were gathered from across the geographical county of Dorset (the coastline of which is now designated as the UNESCO 'Jurassic Coast' World Heritage Site due to its geological significance) and are of national and international importance.

The collections contain important vertebrate material, such as the Weymouth Bay Pliosaur (*pliosaurus kevanii*) and the Swanage Crocodile (*goniopholis kiplingi*), including type and figured specimens. This is especially so for the Purbeck Limestone Formation. The Corallian collections are also important, having been used by W.J.Arkell for the Palaeontographical Society monographs, and there are significant collections of dinosaur trackway material. The invertebrate collections are also of merit and there are 22 holotypes in the collection as a whole. Mansel-Pleydell also gave a number of geological specimens, but there are few large individual collections on the geology side other than Lang (1950s), Brokenshire (1980s) and Ensom (1980s).

The size of the Geology collection is estimated as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Fossil specimens | 20,000 |
| Rocks and Minerals | 500 |
| TOTAL | 20,500 |

Library and Ephemera

The library naturally divides into two sections; as a working reference library and as a collection of historical material. The Museum has historically acquired standard reference works and journals to aid work on the collections in all subject areas, as well as books and pamphlets on Dorset matters (both reference and fiction) and by local authors.

In addition, a significant archival collection has developed. The Museum holds a sizeable collection of printed ephemera, transcripts from the National Archives (papers by Pope and Fry), pamphlets etc. on local subjects and Dorset people, as well as biological and geological field notebooks, archaeological excavation reports etc., often, but not always associated with the collections. It should be noted that newspaper collections, such as the Sherborne Times, are now deposited at the Dorset History Centre.

The size of the Library and Archives is estimated as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Books | 20,000 |
| Dorset biography | 1,400 |
| Journals etc (runs of) | 120 |
| Maps | 1,100 |
| Printed ephemera | |
| - Places | 116 boxes |
| - Subjects | 92 boxes |
| Nat.hist MS colln. | 1,600 boxes |
| Geology MS colln | 650 |
| Excavation MSS | 2,150 |

TOTAL **30,000 plus**

Literature

The existing literary collections are formed mainly of books, papers and letters but also include small numbers of personal items, furniture and other effects. These collections reflect the importance of Dorset's major authors in the history of the county. Of particular importance are particularly Thomas Hardy (memorial collection presented in 1937), William Barnes (collection was presented 1900 and 1957), Sylvia Townsend Warner (collection presented 1980), John Meade Falkner and the Powys family. The majority of the Literature collection is now largely on long term deposit at the Dorset History Centre. The number of objects in the Literature collection is estimated as follows:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Thomas Hardy Memorial collection | 8,300 |
| Additional Hardy collection | 8,000 |
| William Barnes | 1,500 |
| Sylvia Townsend Warner | 18,000 |
| Powys collection | 2,350 |
| Muntz collection | 3,000 |
| Others (inc.J.Meade Falkner, TE Lawrence) | 200 |
| TOTAL | 41,350 |

Local History

The existing local history collection has, as its main area of importance, objects relating to trade, industry, transport, schooling, public life, popular belief, domestic life, rural crafts and agriculture in the geographical county of Dorset between c. 1800 and the present day. The Skyrme collection of agricultural tools and domestic implements forms the basis of these collections and was donated in 1970. Other notable items in the Local History collection include two farm wagons, a working steam traction engine, a hand-operated fire pump, the Eldridge Pope Brewery Collection, and the Lott and Walne Foundry Collection. There is also a considerable ceramics collection, and one of medals and medallions, and numismatics. This collection requires a focussed effort on rationalisation and is a key area for development.

The size of the Local History collection is estimated as follows:

All categories **30,000**

Natural History

Existing collections relate to the natural history of the geographical county of Dorset and include the Mansel Pleydell herbarium containing specimens dating from the mid-19th century, the Richardson entomological collection containing type material, acquired in the 1930s, the C.D.Day collection of insects, acquired in 1952, Dorset Underwater Survey material and the Alfred Russel Wallace collection of bird skins. Although this last collection is of foreign origin, Wallace was a Dorset inhabitant and the collection is of great historical importance.

The collections of Dorset botanical and entomological material, especially Lepidoptera, are very good. Some local bird species are represented in the collection, though on the whole British bird populations are more widely represented. The mollusc collections are adequate,

and not all specimens relate to the county and the mammal collection is small.

The size of the Natural History collection is estimated as follows:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Mammals | 200 |
| Birds | 1,100 |
| Eggs (clutches) | 3,000 |
| Osteology | 200 |
| Entomology | 130,500 |
| Molluscs | 40,000 |
| Marine specimens | 1,500 |
| Herbarium | 30,000 |
| Misc. | 500 |
| TOTAL | 219,000 |

Photography

The Museum began collecting photographs in the late 19th century and its existing large collection of photographic prints, slides and negatives forms an important archive of information on Dorset's landscape and history. The two collections of aerial photographs by John Boyden, Richard Atkinson and the RAF are particularly noteworthy. Many of the 48,000 prints are organised by parish of which a large proportion has been digitised.

A breakdown of the photography collection is estimated as follows:

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Prints | 48,000 |
| Aerial photos | 8,000 |
| Glass slides | 4,300 |
| Slides | 3,000 |
| TOTAL | 63,000 |

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Collection gaps

The collection that exists at the Museum is, inevitably, the result of historic collecting practices and the particular interests of former curators, reflecting the dominant attitudes and values of society at particular points in time. The governing of the Museum by a learned Society has also influenced the nature of material being collected.

During the 20th century, the founding collections of archaeology, natural history and geology were complemented by active collecting of literary and artistic heritage. In the 1970s, a social history collection was established. As with many Museum collections, there is limited material originating from after the Second World War period, and little that reflects or represents the changing nature of Dorset and its communities in the 20th and 21st century.

Limited acquisition budgets also mean that the nature of collecting at the Museum has been largely passive, with little opportunity to collect, for example, fine art when it comes on to the market.

Collecting priorities

The Museum has identified three collecting areas that they will particularly focus on during the lifetime of this policy:

- **Local communities**
The Museum will seek to better reflect the history of living and working in the county during the late 20th century and early 21st century. In particular we will prioritise the stories of diverse communities who have been previously excluded or neglected, and develop our historic collection to recognise their experiences where possible. We will collect through specific engagement projects working with our partners in the Wessex Museums Partnership, or through Rapid Response collecting, such as our Covid-19 collecting campaign in 2020.
- **Contemporary art and craft**
The Museum will seek to develop its growing fine art and craft collection with significant examples of art produced by artists living and working in Dorset in the late 20th and early 21st century.
- **The environment and climate change**
The Museum will seek to update its natural history collection by acquiring objects that speak to the work carried out by conservation charities, and by collecting responses to the Climate Change emergency.

The Museum will also continue to actively fill gaps in our archaeology collection (e.g. prehistoric metalwork and items related to the early medieval period) through engagement with the Treasure process, and seek to acquire new fossil specimens from the Jurassic Coast Trust where finances allow. Where appropriate, we will also seek to acquire objects that relate to special exhibitions developed by the Museum.

The Museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as costs, staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1** The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 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** Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal takes place as part of a Museum's long-term collections policy in order to increase public benefit drawn from the Museum collections. Key priorities for disposal, during the lifetime of this policy, include archaeological material, the library collection and the local history collection. We will be mindful of the duplication of objects across all collections and act to rationalise duplicate objects and dispose of them appropriately where they lack provenance or are a physical hazard to other objects or personnel.

6. Legal and Ethical framework for rationalisation and disposal

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

7. Collecting Policies of Other Museums

- 7.1** The Museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following national / county-wide museums and archives:

- Dorset History Centre, Dorchester
- The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester
- Poole Museum
- Bridport Museum
- National Trust sites in Dorset
- English Heritage sites in Dorset
- The British Museum, London
- The Natural History Museum, London

Specific reference is made to the following local / community museums in Dorset:

- Beaminster Museum
- Blandford Fashion Museum
- Blandford Town Museum
- Bournemouth Natural Science Society
- Corfe Castle Museum
- Durlston Castle
- Etches Collection, Kimmeridge

- Gillingham Museum
- Gold Hill Museum, Shaftesbury
- Grove Prison Museum, Portland
- Langton Matravers Museum
- Lyme Regis Museum
- Museum of Design in Plastics, (MoDiP)
- Nothe Fort, Weymouth
- Portland Museum
- Scaplen's Court Museum, Poole
- Museum of East Dorset, Wimborne Minster
- Red House Museum & Garden, Christchurch
- Royal Signals Museum, Blandford Forum
- Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth
- Shaftesbury Abbey Museum & Garden
- Shaftesbury Town Museum
- Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum
- Sherborne Museum
- Sherborne Steam and Waterwheel Centre
- Sturminster Newton Museum
- Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre
- Swanage Steam Railway Trust
- The Tank Museum, Bovington
- Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum
- The Tudor House Museum, Weymouth
- Wareham Town Museum
- Weymouth Museum

7.3 We intend to strengthen our relationship with local museums and will work to negotiate offers for objects which hold geographical pertinence to particular areas or parishes.

8. Archival Holdings

Dorset Museum owns archival material on long term deposit at the Dorset History Centre. Negotiations will be made between DNHAS and DHC in order to develop and catalogue these collections. The collections include the archives of Thomas Hardy, Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland, William Barnes, the Powys Family and Elizabeth Muntz.

9. Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

The Museum has a Collections Development Working Group. This group comprises members of staff from the Collections and Public engagement team. Where applicable external advice will be sought if it is deemed beyond the expertise of the group to comment on potential acquisitions.

The group will oversee the application of the Collections Development Policy in respect of new acquisitions, ensuring that all the relevant procedures and policies are applied. It will consider each proposal for acquisition on its own merits, taking account of the advice of the Museum's professional curatorial staff, and make recommendations for acceptance (or otherwise) to the Board of Trustees as applicable.

No new acquisition, either by gift, purchase or other form of transfer, will be accepted for accessioning unless it is first reviewed and approved by the Collections Development Working Group. The Museum will acquire items originating from, used in, or with connections to the county of Dorset (1974 boundary or as statutorily redefined).

The Museum will not normally seek to acquire any item which is likely to be beyond its financial and conservation capabilities and resources to preserve properly, conserve and store appropriately. Any object acquired by purchase will be of especial significance to the history and development of Dorset, or is classified as Treasure. Any objects acquired over a certain financial cost will need to be approved by the Board of Trustees.

9.2 The Museum 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).

9.3 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 museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10. Human Remains

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

11. Biological Material

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12. Archaeological Material

12.1 The Museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

12.2 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).

13. Exceptions

- 13.1** Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases the Museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The Museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14. Spoliation

14.1 The Museum will use the statement of principles ‘Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period’, issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15. The Repatriation and Restitution of Human Remains and Objects

15.1 The Museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the ‘Guidance for the care of human remains in museums’ issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

15.2 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’.

16. Disposal procedures

16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum primary procedures on disposal.

16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

16.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the Museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort – destruction.

16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the Museum’s collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or

destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.

- 16.7 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.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the Museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Arts Council England.
- 16.11 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.
- 16.12 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.
- 16.13 Disposal by exchange. The Museum will not dispose of items by exchange.
- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it
- 16.15 Disposal by destruction. If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.16 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.

16.17 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.

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