

Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting
20 March 2013

York Museums Trust Collections Development Policy Principles

Background

York Museums Trust (YMT) manages the Nationally Designated collections of three fully Accredited institutions: The Yorkshire Museum (No. 1061), York Castle Museum (No. 94) and York Art Gallery (No. 12). In order to achieve both these notable accolades, and as a matter of best practice, YMT has developed and regularly reviews a range of policies and programmes of work relating to the management and development of its collections.

YMT was chosen in 2010 to take part in a national pilot study to reform the Museum Accreditation scheme. This successful pilot laid down the groundwork for a new Accreditation Standard to be adopted by all museums in England and Wales.

As part of the Museum Accreditation cycle, now administered by the Arts Council of England (ACE), YMT will be invited to re-apply for Museum Accreditation in October 2013 with a submission deadline of April 2014. As part of this process YMT will review its collections management and care policies to ensure they comply with the revised 2012 Accreditation Standard (ACE). YMT's Collections Development Policy, which replaces earlier YMT Acquisitions and Disposals Policies will be reviewed and brought up to date as part of this cycle.

As part of the City of York Council's (CYC) Learning and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee's review of YMT the committee have requested that the collections development principles, that will form the basis of YMT's acquisition, retention and disposal of collections, be submitted to their March 2013 meeting. The committee will review YMT's full Collections Development Policy at their May 2013 meeting.

Collections Development Principles

Since 2002 YMT have actively sought to develop the City of York Council's historic, art and scientific collections in a pro-active and sustainable way in line with a set of strategic and collection specific principles that respond to and help shape YMT's collections whilst fulfilling the requirements of the sector's standard-setting and legislative bodies.

Principles for Acquisition

- Representation fulfilling specific collection development
- Exhibition
- Learning

Conditions

- Provenance
- Accompanying Story
- Legal Title
- Compliance with all relevant legislation
- Capacity and Resources for long-term preservation and documentation
- Fulfils specific Collecting Criteria for individual collections.

Principles for Disposal

- Sampling Collections
- Rationalisation of Collections outside of specific collection development
- Poor Condition – beyond the point of preservation

All new acquisitions and disposals proposed by YMT staff are measured against these principles and the more detailed collections development policy. The resources required for all acquisitions are also carefully balanced against those needed for the long-term improvements in knowledge, understanding, storage and care of YMT's existing collections which will at times include collections disposal. These disposals are similarly made in line with the Principles for Disposal outlined above.

More wide-scale collections reviews are undertaken by YMT staff and, where appropriate, subject specialists and members of interest groups to ensure their adherence to these principles.

Martin Watts - Director of Knowledge
Andrew Morrison - Head Curator