

Management Committee

18 April 2017

Progress report on Weymouth Museum

For Decision

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Jason Osborne – Tourism, Culture & Harbour

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Report Author:

T. Hurley, Leisure Commissioning Manager

Statutory Authority

Localism Act 2011 – ‘general power of competence’.

Purpose of Report

1. To present to the committee an update progress with the establishment of permanent museum for Weymouth and to seek committee endorsement of Weymouth Museum Trust’s Collections Development Policy.

Officer Recommendations

2. That Management Committee;
 - a) notes progress being made towards the establishment of a permanent museum for Weymouth;
 - b) endorses Weymouth Museum Trust’s Collections Development (Acquisition & Disposal) Policy (Appendix A);
 - c) gives delegated authority to the Strategic Director to determine requests made by Weymouth Museum Trust for the disposal of any aspects of the borough collection as defined by the schedule attached to the Museum Development Agreement (dated 11 November 2016).

Reason for Decision

3. Council endorsement of the Trust’s Collection Development Policy is required to enable the Trust to apply for accredited museum status with Arts Council England and to enable the efficient management of the collection.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

a) Background

4. Following the conclusions of negotiations in 2016 between Weymouth Museum Trust, Brewers Quay Investments and the borough council, a Museum Development Agreement was signed. This provided both for the temporary housing of the museum collection (curated and managed by Weymouth Museum Trust) in Brewers Quay and also a permanent home for the museum within the redeveloped listed buildings. This Agreement was attached to the Section 106 agreement relating to the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Brewers Quay site for housing and retail. The location of the museum within the development contributed to the policy requirement in the Local Plan for the site to host a 'wet weather attraction'.
5. As part of this new arrangement, the borough council's collection is to be loaned to Weymouth Museum Trust whilst it is in temporary accommodation (awaiting the completion of redevelopment) and this will be gifted to the Trust for long-term safe-keeping once it has moved to its long-term location within Brewers Quay (in accordance with a draft lease contained in the Museum Development Agreement). The collection is defined by a schedule of artifacts attached to the loan agreement and to be attached to the gift agreement.
6. However, as part of the day-to-day operation of the museum, the Trust needs to keep the collection under constant review and dispose of items that are of no historic value to Weymouth and the surrounding district as defined in the map included in the attached Collections Development Policy in accordance with nationally recognised and defined practice (in which the priority is to offer the items to other accredited museums and galleries). The Policy makes it clear that items may not be disposed of for financial gain. Under the terms of the Loan Agreement the borough council needs to approve of any disposals from its collection.
7. To guide the management of its collections, Weymouth Museum Trust has adopted a Collections Development Policy and which informs acquisition, management and disposal of objects. This Policy was agreed with the borough council when presented to Management Committee in 2011. However, the Trust is currently applying to Arts Council England (the government agency that oversees museum issues) for 'accredited status'. By acquiring such status, Weymouth Museum Trust would gain official recognition as a well-managed museum and be eligible to apply for specific sources of project funding.
8. As part of the application process for accreditation, the Trust has submitted all its policies and procedures to the Arts Council for scrutiny and this has led to the need for minor revisions to the Collections Development (Acquisition & Disposal) Policy, in particular. There is a need, therefore, for the borough council to formally endorse the revised Policy (**Appendix A**) via a resolution of Management Committee. Evidence of council endorsement is also required by the Arts Council to complete the Trust's application for accredited status.

9. The agreement which relate to the transfer of the council's collection to the Trust require council approval before any items are disposed of (see section 5 of appendix A). However, as any such disposals are likely to be artifacts of limited value, it is likely to prove overly burdensome on both the Trust and the council if committee approval is required in each case. It is recommended, therefore, that the delegated authority is given to the Strategic Director to determine all requests by the Trust for disposal.
10. The proposals set out above, are intended to improve the effective operation of the museum and help Weymouth Museum Trust to develop further as well-run and highly competent charitable organisation.

Implications

11. **Corporate Plan.** *Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities.* The council's support will enable Weymouth Museum Trust to operate effectively for the benefit of the community.
12. **Financial.** There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. A budget of £88,000 is held in council reserves to assist with the establishment of a permanent museum at Brewers Quay.
13. **Equalities.** When permanently established, Weymouth Museum should be both accessible and affordable for all the community.
14. **Economic Development.** Cultural attractions can make a significant contribution to economic growth.
15. **Risk Management (including Health & Safety).** No implications.

Consultation and Engagement

16. Consultation on the recommendations in this report has been undertaken with the briefholder for Tourism & Culture and the council's nominated representative to the Trust (Cllr James Farquharson).

Appendices

17. Appendix A - Weymouth Museum Trust's Collections Development (Acquisition & Disposal) Policy.

Background Papers

18. Museum Development Agreement – Brewers Quay, Weymouth. Signed by Brewers Quay Investments LLP, Weymouth Museum Trust and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council. Dated 11th November 2016.

Footnote

19. Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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