



SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM
UTTLESFORD MUSEUM SERVICE

CARE & CONSERVATION POLICY and PLAN 2014

Contents

Policy

1. Policy & Context: Managerial, Legal and Ethical Considerations	2
2. Buildings & Security	3
3. Storage	3
4. Housekeeping	4
5. Handling and Use of Collections	4
6. Environmental Monitoring	4
7. Environmental Control	5
8. Conservation	5
9. Surrogate Copies and Digital Media	6
10. Emergency Plan	6
11. Loans Out	7

Plan

1. Policy & Context: Managerial, Legal and Ethical Considerations	8
2. Buildings & Security	10
3. Storage	11
4. Housekeeping	13
5. Handling and Use of Collections	13
6. Environmental Monitoring	14
7. Environmental Control	15
8. Conservation	15
9. Surrogate Copies and Digital Media	16
10. Emergency Plan	16
11. Loans Out	17

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1. Policy & Context: Managerial, Legal and Ethical Considerations

1.1 The purpose of the Care & Conservation Policy is to set out the principles and standards which guide and determine the care of collections in the Museum, with reference to relevant legislation, regulations, professional codes and best practice. The Care & Conservation Plan describes the procedures and actions to put this into practice within the framework of the Museum's Forward Plan 2013-18. Specific issues addressed in the Policy and Plan are the loss of in-house conservation (redundancy of Conservation Officer in January 2014 and planned vacation of Schoolroom/Lab building) and the replacement of the inadequate off-site store at Newport with a purpose-built off-site store at Shirehill, Saffron Walden, which is due to come into operation before the end of 2014.

The Museum's Forward Plan 2013-18 identifies two Key Aims relating to the care and conservation of collections, which are critical in setting the foundations for further service improvements:

1. Improve and rationalise the storage of collections in off-site storage and in the Museum, through the construction of a new off-site store and a revised collections policy;
2. Improve management, accessibility and display of collections by developing the collections database.

1.2 The collections are owned by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (charity 1123209) but are leased to Uttlesford District Council, which operates the Museum under the Management Agreement and associated Lease. The Council is responsible for management, repair and maintenance and insurance of buildings and collections, and for revenue budgets; Museum staff are Council employees. The Museum Society has funds that it applies for purchase of acquisitions and for specific projects directly concerned with the collections, their care and display.

1.3 Purchases, disposals and loans to other institutions and special care and conservation projects funded by the Society are decided by the Board of the Museum Society, after considering recommendations from the Curator and staff, and reported to the Museum Management Working Group (MMWG). MMWG considers and approves all policies relating to the Museum and its collections. Grants are sought where available to improve collections care and advance priority projects, e.g. the conservation of a fragile silk colour of the 17th Essex Volunteer Rifles was undertaken in 2013 by a specialist textile laboratory with a grant of £3,000 from the Essex Heritage Trust and the balance was funded by the Museum Society.

1.4 The Museum is committed to training its workforce (staff and volunteers) to appropriate levels in collections care for the safe and efficient day-to-day management of the collections and operation of the service. It continually seeks relevant training opportunities to consolidate and improve performance in this area.

1.5 The Museum will obtain and hold appropriate licences for objects and specimens as required by legislation, regulations and professional ethics (this includes certain firearms, drugs and natural history specimens).

1.6 The Museum will act in accordance with the Museums Association's *Code of Ethics* and ethical guidance for collections, including issues of particular sensitivity, such as cultural and interpretative issues associated with world cultures (ethnography) and human remains (archaeological collections). It will use *Benchmarks in Collections Care v2.0* and other professional guidance for specific types of collection in the care and conservation of objects and specimens. In the case of human remains, this includes *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*, The Church of England and English Heritage, 2005 and *Guidance for the care of human remains in museums*, DCMS, 2005.

2. Buildings & Security

2.1 The Museum will work with the Council to maintain its buildings, especially areas where collections are stored, displayed or used, in good condition to minimise risk of deterioration, damage or loss of collections, and with reference to its Environmental Sustainability Policy 2014 and statutory requirements for historic buildings (the Museum building was purpose-built in 1834 and is listed Grade II).

2.2 All Museum buildings are kept locked and alarmed out-of-hours; intruder and fire alarms have a dedicated line linked directly to a monitoring station. A minimum of two staff must be present to unlock and lock up the Museum and at all times during working hours, in accordance with Fire Safety, Health & Safety and insurance requirements and Police advice. A third person (volunteer or casual-contract Museum Assistant) is needed to staff the welcome desk during public opening hours. Council / Museum risk assessments and lone working policy and procedures are applied to lone working in the schoolroom and off-site store at Newport and to evening meetings at other venues which curatorial staff travel to alone.

2.3 All offices and stores are kept locked when not occupied by staff and keys for all stores, offices and displays are kept in a locked key cabinet with access restricted to Museum staff. Procedures to account for keys and issue of keys to keyholders are maintained. For the security of collections, access to all keys (buildings, stores, displays) must be rigorously controlled with appropriate levels of key-holding and access for permanent and casual staff and volunteers. Only Museum staff have access to locked key cabinets and are responsible for key control. Volunteers and researchers must never be left unsupervised in stores.

2.4 Appropriate provision must be made for the security of collections in transit (e.g. between stores or on loan) subject to generic or specific risk assessment or loan conditions. For objects and specimens of high value and significance, or with special handling requirements (e.g. weight, fragility) the responsible member of staff should be accompanied by a second staff member or officer of the Museum Society.

3. Storage

3.1 The Museum will seek to improve the conditions in which collections are kept and cared for through providing a new off-site store at Shirehill, Saffron Walden (Forward plan Stage I) and subsequent improvements to storage and work areas in

the Museum (Forward Plan Stage II). The Museum seeks to provide adequate quantity and quality of space to store, process and use all collections safely within the Museum buildings.

3.2 Collections will be packed and supported with appropriate types of racking and packing materials, or at least raised off the floor to protect them from flooding (excepting hand-drawn and horse-drawn vehicles which cannot be palletted). Conservation and archival grade packaging materials will be used as recommended for all sensitive objects and specimens.

4. Housekeeping

4.1 All incoming objects and specimens, including potential acquisitions for consideration, will be given a condition check and all organic items carrying a risk of insect infestation (whether visible or not) will be frozen to eliminate the risk of transferring problems to other collections.

4.2 Regular checks will be carried out in all areas where collections are kept and used to guard against insect pest infestation, damp, mould, dust and other pollutants.

4.3 A programme of cleaning for all storage areas and displays will be maintained.

5. Handling

5.1 Labelling and marking objects and specimens, packaging and associated information will be carried out according to the Museum's Documentation Procedural Manual (2014).

5.2 Risk Assessments (generic, specific or dynamic) will be carried out for moving and using collections, according to the Council's Risk Assessment framework to minimise risk to people, collections and Museum property. These must take into account the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, supports and equipment, and specialist help where required.

5.3 Proper instruction and guidance will be issued to volunteers, work experience students, researchers and other users and borrowers in handling of collections. This will be part of induction for new staff and volunteers, and refresher training will be provided for long-term volunteers and Museum Assistants (casual contract).

6. Environmental Monitoring

6.1 A programme of regular environmental monitoring for Temperature and Relative Humidity (RH) will be maintained for stores and galleries and records will be kept for a minimum of 5 years to provide a long-term profile.

6.2 Light levels (lux and UV) will be checked regularly in galleries where light-sensitive exhibits are displayed.

7. Environmental Control

7.1 Target levels of Temperature, Relative Humidity (RH) and Light will be established for all areas where collections are kept or used (taking account also of the nature of activities and micro-climates provided by display cases, for example).

7.2 Appropriate measures will be taken to maintain stable and optimum levels of Temperature and RH in these areas through improvements to buildings (insulation), efficient heating controls and use of suitable equipment (e.g. dehumidifiers and humidifiers) where necessary. A programme for checking and maintaining equipment such as dehumidifiers and air-conditioning units will be maintained.

7.3 Light is excluded as far as possible from storage areas and controlled in galleries as far as practical and depending on the light-sensitivity of the exhibits and limits advised for the type of objects or specimens concerned. Improvements to lighting will be made according to the Environmental Sustainability Policy and conservation needs. For textiles and other long-term exhibits at particular risk from prolonged light exposure, a programme of rotating exhibits (every 5 years or less) should be maintained.

7.4 Improvements to buildings and procedures will be instigated to minimise ingress of particulate pollution (dust) and gaseous pollution.

8. Conservation

8.1 The post of Conservation Officer was lost due to budgetary reductions in 2013-14 and the Museum's in-house Conservation Laboratory (in the Schoolroom building on the Museum site) is currently used as a general cleaning and layout area. Within the life of the current Forward Plan 2013-18 the Schoolroom building will be vacated so that it can be rented out to raise income, and all facilities and operations on the Museum site brought within the extended Museum building. This necessitates a new approach to remedial conservation, now entirely dependent on external expertise.

8.2 Priorities for conservation will be identified during routine checks (assessment of incoming acquisitions, condition checks in stores, research and display projects, and damage sustained).

8.3 A record and timetable will be kept so that funding and expertise available can be directed to the most urgent and important work. A note of condition will be added to Modes catalogue records where treatment is required (see Documentation Plan 2014).

8.4 A training programme for the Museum workforce (staff and volunteers) will be set up to ensure everyone working with collections meets at least basic standards to an appropriate level in preventative conservation such as handling, moving, packaging and condition checking. This process will begin with training of the staff and volunteer team to effect the move to the new Shirehill store in 2014. Untrained staff and volunteers should not attempt remedial conservation work.

8.5 For advisory visits (at least once every 5 years) and conservation work, the Museum will use professionally-qualified conservators registered with ICON. Use will be made of regional conservation networks for advice and support through SHARE, the East Anglian Conservators Forum and larger museums (e.g. University of Cambridge museums).

8.6 Existing paper and card records of conservation treatments will be maintained and Lab Numbers will be recorded on Modes catalogue records. The long-term aim will be to integrate conservation records digitally with the Modes collections database by scanning paper and card records (which often include photographic prints and line drawings) and attaching these to the Modes catalogue entry.

9. Surrogate Copies and Digital Media

9.1 Surrogate copies of fragile, light-sensitive and/or heavily used collections (e.g. local history photos) and historic records (e.g. registers) will be provided wherever possible to reduce unnecessary handling. Enhancing the database of digital images will progress in tandem with the Documentation Policy and Plan 2014 (See Forward Plan Key Aim 2).

9.2 Digital reproduction will be by flash-free photography as far as possible. Scanning should be on a 'once-only' principle to create a digital record of documents and pictures. Photocopying should not be used.

9.3 The Museum will continue to obtain microfilm security copies of accessions registers as soon as each register is completed for long-term archiving, but will also investigate the feasibility of making digital copies (PDFs) of registers made for research use and specifically to aid the Documentation Plan 2014 and reduce wear by handling of important but fragile early registers. Advice will be needed on best archiving practice for digital media.

9.4 The Museum will take steps to ensure that digital media (CDs, DVDs) acquired as part of archives (e.g. oral history projects, archaeological fieldwork) are appropriately stored with records of software and file formats, and location of duplicate or printed copies. The Museum is unable to take on the task of continually migrating digital media to new formats and applications, therefore steps should be taken to ensure that significant files are either uploaded and attached to the collections database (Modes Complete) so that they will be regularly backed-up and incorporated in future upgrades, or are preserved through other organisations and/or by printed hard copy. For local and social history, the Essex Record Office and East Anglian Film archive may be appropriate sources of advice or repositories. For archaeological archives, it should be ascertained whether excavators have deposited digital records with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) and will follow the *Guidelines for Deposition of Archaeological Archives in Essex* (under revision 2014 by Museums Essex). As work on the new off-site store and Museum progresses, the museum will seek to improve the storage of digital media and reference material.

10. Emergencies and Salvage

10.1 The Emergency Plan, which includes a copy of the Council's Out-of-Hours Emergency manual, will be checked and updated annually and four copies kept: Museum; off-site store (Newport transferring to Shirehill); Schoolroom / Lab and Curator (home, Saffron Walden). When the Schoolroom / Lab building is eventually vacated this copy should be kept either by the Security Officer or at the Council Offices in Saffron Walden. The Shirehill store will initiate a review of, and changes to, emergency planning when it comes into use (by end of 2014).

10.2 Supplies of materials and equipment for salvaging collections in a disaster will be kept in the main Museum and off-site.

10.3 There will be regular liaison with Police and Fire Services with advisory visits at least once every 5 years for a security inspection (Essex Police) and for issues arising in the event of a major fire (in addition to statutory and Council inspections and in-house drill procedures).

11. Loans Out

11.1 Loans Out to other institutions are decided by the Board of the Museum Society after considering recommendations from the curator and staff, and are reported to the Museum Management Working Group (1.3 above).

11.2 Borrowing institutions will need to meet full Accreditation standards or be able to demonstrate that they meet the equivalent and can provide evidence (e.g. facilities report) that the standards of security, care and environment will be appropriate for the objects or specimens loaned. The conditions of loan form must be signed and returned by the borrower before the loan arrangements are finalised (see Documentation Procedural Manual 2014).

11.3 All packaging, transport arrangements and display methods must be discussed and agreed with the Museum as a condition of loan, and the borrower will be responsible for providing any special packaging, transport or display materials and services. Packing will be done by Museum staff or with a member of Museum staff present. The Museum reserves the right to appoint a courier to accompany exceptional loans, at the expense of the borrower.

11.4 Loans Out will be made for specific purposes and time-periods only. Loans will not be made on a 'permanent' or unspecified 'long-term' basis but can be made on a 'renewable' basis for a maximum period of 5 years.

11.5 For small-scale loans of non-sensitive material requested by *bona fide* researchers for short-term research projects, the curator has delegated authority to agree such loans but will report them to the next Board meeting of the Museum Society (for example, loan of potsherds or animal bone from archaeological excavation archives to specialists for research projects).

CARE & CONSERVATION PLAN

1. Context : Management, Legal and Ethical Requirements

1.1 Forward Plan: Specific Objectives

The two key aims and associated objectives concerning care of collections are:

Key Aim 1 Improve and rationalise the storage of collections in off-site storage and in the Museum, through the construction of a new off-site store and a revised collections policy

- a. Acquire / build and fit out new store of sufficient capacity to appropriate standards
- b. Move collections from off-site store at Newport Depot into new store
- c. Remove the horse-drawn vehicles from temporary storage (formerly at Hempstead, now at Ashdon) to new store or display on-site
- d. Large intake of archaeological project archives (Stansted Airport, A120 and others)
- e. Specific collections from the Museum site to be re-housed in off-site store
- f. Audit and re-edit of location records for collections which have been moved
- g. Identify and research potential items for transfer or disposal or deaccessioning for handling use

Key Aim 2 Improve management, accessibility and display of collections by developing the collections database

- a. Agree an integrated IT Plan for the Museum Service to improve speed and efficiency of access to programmes and data, especially the Modes collections database, throughout all Museum buildings including the new store
- b. Digitisation of collections not yet on computer, focusing on archaeology and local history and geology (display and documentation priorities)
- c. Editing and enhancing content (including images) of records already on computer, see Objective 1f
- d. Provide an appropriate level of public access to the collections database in the Museum for specific collections where there will be a high public demand, starting with local history photographs

1.2 Care of new acquisitions including loans

(a) Incoming objects will receive a condition check from the relevant member of curatorial staff (Collections Officer Human History or Natural Sciences Officer). Objects and specimens of organic material which may harbour insect pests are to be double-bagged, labelled and frozen in the Conservation Freezer (Workshop) for a minimum period of one week to remove the risk of importing insect pests. Basic

cleaning within the competence of staff or volunteers will be undertaken as necessary and objects and specimens will be packed in appropriate packaging materials (conservation grade for sensitive objects and specimens) and marked clearly with any special instructions on risks to the objects / specimens or handler (fragile, heavy etc.).

(b) Offers for the collections and recommendations to the Museum Society board for loan requests and purchases will be determined in monthly collections meetings (attended by the Curator, Collections Officer Human History and Natural Sciences Officer). The initial location and accession number (for offers accepted) are noted on the Entry Form; the Entry Form number and store or display location allocated on entry to the collections are noted in the Accession register. Thereafter the location will be recorded and updated on the Modes database catalogue entry according to the Documentation Procedural Manual.

1.3 Training for Museum workforce

The table below assesses the training programme envisaged which takes into account the staffing restructure, the move of collections to the new off-site store and the need to involve casual contract Museum Assistants and volunteers to a greater degree in assisting with collections care.

Training	Provider / Leader	Timetable	Staff perm.	Staff casual	Vols
Manual & Object Handling	H&S Officer (UDC) and curatorial staff	For move to new store, summer 2014	LM	✓	✓
Packaging Collections	Curatorial staff	For move to new store, summer 2014		✓	✓
Condition Checking	Look to SHARE to update skills and knowledge. Curatorial staff can give basic training.	For move to new store, summer 2014	(✓)	✓	✓
Calibration & operation of environmental monitoring equipment	The Museum's former Conservator has volunteered to provide training	By end July 2014	LM, SK, SS		
Pest Monitoring	Natural Sciences Officer	By end July 2014	LM SS		
Security procedures	Security Officer, Curator	After move into new off-site store (late 2014)	✓	✓	
Emergency Plan and disaster salvage	Look to SHARE to update skills and knowledge. Security Officer, Curator	After move into new off-site store (late 2014)	✓	✓	

1.4 Licences and statutory procedures for specific collections

(a) Firearms: although most of the firearms in the Museum's collection are antique and do not need a licence, a small number of firearms and shotguns do require licences. The Curator maintains personal firearms and shotgun licences, renewed on inspection every 5 years, on behalf of the Museum and the licence costs are reimbursed by the Council. The Museum does not qualify for the Museums Licence because this is for Prohibited Weapons, which the Museum does not collect.

(b) Drugs: the Museum requires a licence for possession of opiates from the Home Office in respect of historic residues of opiates in three bottles of a Victorian doctor's travelling medicine chest. The Curator is responsible for keeping the licence up-to-date and making any necessary returns. The Museum will not loan out items which require drugs licences to supply (Museum) or possess (borrower) because of the disproportionate time and cost of applying for additional licences.

(c) Natural Science collections: the Natural Sciences Officer is responsible for ensuring that specimens are collected legally and that the Museum holds an Article 30 Licence for display of specimens on CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). The Museum will also be applying for licences to store and transport specimens of species that have European protection and / or are covered by the Wildlife & Countryside Act.

1.5 Ethical considerations for specific collections

(a) Human remains are handled and displayed sensitively with reference to DCMS Guidelines 2005 and other relevant guidelines (Collections Development Policy 2013-18). Improvements to storage of human remains from archaeological excavations will be made in the new off-site store by providing dedicated space on static shelving at one end of the ground floor storage area. The treatment of human remains as remains of people should be at the centre of their care and interpretation.

(b) World cultures: due regard will be given to cultural sensitivities in the care, handling and display of objects from world cultures, according to expert advice (e.g. through the Museum Ethnographers Group and visiting researchers).

(c) Scientific research – use of destructive techniques: occasionally the Museum will be asked to allow very small samples of objects or specimens to be taken for a research programme (examples since 2000 include the DNA testing of the 'Viking' skin from Hadstock Church and the sampling for tuberculosis of the Anglo-Saxon skeletal remains from Wicken Bonhunt). Each case must be assessed on its own merits, to establish that the wider research and public benefits through knowledge gained will outweigh the effects of any invasive or destructive process. Aspects to be considered and recorded will be the aims and instigator of the research project; the competence of the practitioner; the nature of the technique; the size and position of sample taken; the information gained (and where published) and any further remedial treatment needed to stabilise or display the object or specimen.

2. Buildings & Security

2.1 The Security & Premises Officer and Curator will make an annual inspection of Museum buildings with a Council surveyor to plan maintenance and repairs (this will

normally be timed to meet budgetary cycles each autumn). Daily checks are made on opening and closing of the Museum (weekly for the off-site store at Shirehill) and stores in the Museum are checked at least weekly during environmental monitoring and other work. The Security & Premises Officer will make regular condition inspection of buildings, at minimum once a quarter, and report any repairs and problems to the Council’s Housing Repairs and Curator. Parapet, gutters and drainage hoppers on the Museum roof (accessed by trained staff only in pairs using safety harness) will be checked quarterly by the Security & Premises Officer with trained Council staff to prevent leaves, snow or ice blocking drainage off the roof and causing leaks into galleries and stores.

2.2 The Security & Premises Officer keeps a record of all keys and issue of alarm fobs to Museum staff, and maintains locked key cabinets to house all keys to buildings, stores, offices, display cabinets and safes. Bunches of keys issued to Museum keyholders will be recorded and signed for in a book kept by the Curator. Staff must use proxy name tags when taking keys from a key cabinet, so all keys can be instantly accounted for.

2.3 Freezers used to treat or store Museum objects and specimens (conservation freezer to eliminate insect pests; natural history deadstock freezer) will be housed in more secure Museum buildings as the Forward Plan progresses. Plans are to house a new conservation freezer at the Shirehill off-site store (Stage I) and bring existing conservation and deadstock freezers from the external Workshop on the Museum site into a refurbished lean-to store in the Museum (Stage II).

3. Storage

The Forward Plan describes the sequence of improvements to the care and management of collections through the provision of a new off-site store (Stage I, Key Aim 1a and 1b) and improvement of storage spaces in the Museum (Stage II). The new off-site store at Shirehill, Saffron Walden will allow for the evacuation of the old and unsatisfactory off-site store at Newport (Stage I, Key Aims 1b and 1e) and provide a much more secure and buffered environment, greater storage capacity with mobile racking and superior facilities for working on collections, including cabling for computers and internet access. Subsequent extension and improvement of the Museum in Stage II will also permit the evacuation of the Schoolroom building on the Museum site where there is a store for some social history (Organics). This will bring all collections and facilities into the Museum building and allow the old Schoolroom building by the driveway gates to be used to raise income for the service through commercial letting.

In summary, collections storage will change as follows:

Collection	Current Storage	Improved storage	Stage of Forward Plan and priority within stage
Geology	Off-site Newport	Off-site Shirehill, 1 st floor	Stage I a
Natural History	Museum roof-space	Off-site Shirehill for most	Stage I a

	store (overcrowded)	collections, 1 st floor. Specimens which are frequently used and checked for pests (birds, mammals, insects) retained in Museum with a more accessible layout in the store.	
Archaeology	Off-site Newport and with contractors awaiting deposition.	Off-site Shirehill for all archaeology collections and archives.	Stage I a
Archaeology – metal finds	Currently in small overcrowded store at Museum	Transfer to new low humidity storage room at Shirehill.	Stage I b
Social History – Agriculture, tools and large objects	Off-site store at Newport	Ground floor at Shirehill	Stage I a
Social History – horse-drawn vehicles	Temporary off-site accommodation nr. Ashdon till 30/09/14	Essex Hay Wagon to be retained at Shirehill. Disposal process under way for others which are non-local and cannot be accommodated.	Stage I a
Social History – 2D store (photos, prints, documents etc)	Museum, cramped 2D store	Shirehill off-site store, 1 st floor	Stage I b
Social History – maps in plan chests	Museum workroom, access to plan chests difficult	Shirehill off-site store, 1 st floor	Stage I b
Social History – Schoolroom store (currently 'Organics')	Store in Schoolroom building	Mostly to Shirehill, domestic and personal items to Museum	Stage II a
Social History – Ground floor store (currently 'Inorganics')	Store in Museum, ground floor	Refit store to improve capacity with mobile racking and some hanging space for costume. Use this store for domestic, civic and personal objects. Move any tools and large items to Shirehill.	Stage II b
Social History – Costume and Textiles	Small overcrowded store in Museum 1 st floor, all boxed with no hanging space	Hang larger items in improved ground floor store. Re-organise existing store for small items and accessories.	Stage II c
Firearms and Edged Weapons	Stored in Museum in a tiny room with very low ceiling and poor access	Upgrade security of former metals store (Police advice 2014) to take firearms and edged weapons	Stage II a
Ceramics and Glass	Museum 1 st floor, next to Costume, stored on open shelves	Consider improving storage of glass and figurines in glazed cabinets.	Stage II c
Ethnography	Museum – 2 nd floor store (which has mobile racking)	No urgent priorities following recent work and return of stored historic loans from Cuming Museum. May	Stage II c

		consider transferring some weapons to Firearms and Edged Weapons store in Museum	
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4. Housekeeping

The restructure of staffing and new off-site store (2014) has prompted a revision of procedures for routine preventative conservation measures: cleaning and inspection for agents of decay such as insect pests, dust or ingress of damp (especially in the Museum building which is an historic building with public access). Other basic and regular cleaning tasks, such as cleaning marks from glass on display cases, are undertaken by Museum Assistants (Casual Contract) at weekends and volunteers during the week. Public areas of the Museum, the kitchenette and offices are cleaned daily during the week by Council agency cleaners, but cleaning of all other areas including stores, and displays, is organised by Museum staff.

Procedure	Method	How Often	By Whom
Insect Pests	Insect traps, contents recorded, visual inspection. Spray suspected pest areas with Costrain and freeze any items suspected of infestation.	Every 3 months	Natural Sciences Officer, Collections Officer (Human History) assisted by Security Officer
Cleaning Exhibits on Open Display	Inspection and thorough dusting with clean anti-static dusters or gentle brushing with vacuum (nozzle netted) to remove dust.	Every 3 months	Natural Sciences Officer, Collections Officer (Human History) assisted by Casual staff
Cleaning Displays (case interiors)	Remove or lift exhibits as far as possible, dust with clean anti-static dusters or gently brush with vacuum (nozzle netted).	Annual clean	Curatorial staff assisted by Casual staff, trained volunteers and work experience placements
Cleaning Stores	Dust and vacuum all floors, exposed shelves and box tops, check dust sheets over large items.	Annual deep clean	Curatorial staff assisted by Casual staff, trained volunteers and work experience placements
Regular Gallery Checks	Tick-box sheet for recording anything in need of attention to be introduced (Collections Officer)	Weekly	Casual staff and trained volunteers

5. Handling

5.1 Labelling and Marking kits and procedures for making paraloid have been instituted by the Collections Officer (Human History) April 2014 and will be maintained in the museum for use by staff and Museum Assistants (casual contract) and volunteers who have been trained to help with marking and labelling (See Documentation Procedural Manual).

5.2 Supplies of frequently-used packaging materials and PPE, which are currently split between various locations in the Museum, Lab and offsite store at Newport, will

be rationalised and redistributed to new storage locations in the new store at Shirehill and the Museum as the Forward Plan improves provision of space. Appropriate equipment for handling and supporting different types of objects and specimens will be upgraded to reflect improved storage and access to collections for the Museum workforce and researchers at the Shirehill store. Priorities will be:

- a) Stepladders and heavy-duty trolleys for moving collections between storage areas and the store's workroom
- b) Archival supports and accessories for viewing historic books, documents, prints and maps (but see also 9 below on use of surrogate copies)

5.3 Training in safe handling of collections for Museum Assistants (casual contracts) and volunteers will be instigated with the move to the new Shirehill off-site store (2014) and annual refresher training provided thereafter (see Training schedule in 1.3 above). Expert advice will be sought in moving objects and specimens which present special hazards on account of weight, size, fragility or other factors.

6. Environmental Monitoring

6.1 Environmental monitoring equipment consists of a number of thermohygrographs and a digital hand-held probe for measuring **temperature** and RH, and a light meter. A radio-telemetric Hanwell system was acquired for the off-site store at Newport some years ago, but subsequent problems with the transmission of data between the store and Museum have rendered this unusable at present. This system needs transferring to the new store at Shirehill for reassessment so it can be put to use, upgraded or replaced as necessary. Collections meetings will periodically review recent results of monitoring to determine control measures necessary. The Museum will investigate and invest in time-saving and accurate digital monitoring systems as storage plans and budgets available allow, with priority given to new storage areas and stores where sensitive collections are kept.

6.2 Monitoring of all areas where collections are kept for temperature, RH and light levels, and calibration of monitoring equipment will be undertaken by the Security & Premises Officer, supervised by the Collections Officer (Human History) and the Natural Sciences Officer according to the following timetable:

Area	Frequency	Method
Museum galleries	Once a month	Probe and light meter
Special exhibitions gallery	Weekly, continuous record	Thermohygrograph (on top of case) and light meter on installation
Museum stores	Weekly, continuous record	Thermohygrograph
Schoolroom Organics store	Weekly, continuous record	Thermohygrograph
Offsite store Shirehill	Continuous from commissioning in summer 2014, to monitor building's behaviour and establish environmental controls required.	Thermohygrographs until Hanwell system can be set up or replaced.

6.3 Each storage area will have a store summary sheet giving the target range of temperature and RH for that storage area. Records will be retained for a minimum of 5 years to establish and check long-term profiles and show where improvements are needed.

6.4 Light levels (lux and UV) will be monitored whenever exhibitions or exhibits of light-sensitive nature are changed. Blinds, adjustable lighting and UV film are already in use and will be re-assessed as galleries are re-displayed (Forward Plan Stage II).

7. Environmental Control

7.1 The Museum has a fixed air conditioning unit and a humidifier in the Natural History Store and 7 dehumidifiers (+ 2 in 2014 at Newport) operating in the following stores:

Museum: 2D with duct to Archaeological Metals; Ethnography, Inorganics, Natural History, Schoolroom / Lab: Organics store.

Off-site store Newport: 2 (plus 2 additional on loan from Council to correct environment after flood in February 2014).

These will be re-located as the new off-site store comes into operation and other storage areas are changed or refurbished during the course of the Forward Plan, guided by results of environmental monitoring and target environments.

7.2 Dehumidifiers will be checked and emptied at least once a week by the Security & Premises Officer and Natural Sciences Officer. The Natural Sciences Officer will arrange annual servicing of the air conditioning unit in the Natural History store by contractors.

7.3 Priorities for reviewing light exposure for, and rotation of, light-sensitive exhibits during Forward Plan 2013-18:

Exhibits / Gallery	Date	Forward Plan
Local History – gallery re-display with extension of displays through Foyer to special exhibitions area	2018	Key Aim 3b
World Cultures	2018	Key Aim 3d
Costume and textiles, first floor	Not prioritised in current Forward Plan (costume selection recently changed) but due for consideration from 2018	
Tapestry fragments, first floor landing		

7.4 Measures to reduce ingress of dust and particulate pollution, in addition to housekeeping routines (4 above) are:

- a) Dusting / wiping down of all boxes and free-standing objects before moving into new or refurbished storage areas, to prevent import of dust
- b) Improving sealing of storage areas (e.g. seals on doors) with new-build and refurbishment projects as the Forward Plan progresses
- c) Continued improvements to packaging and boxing of collections as work through storage projects proceeds

8. Conservation

8.1 It is intended to maintain the Conservation Lab in the Schoolroom building as a general layout and cleaning room until the Schoolroom building is made redundant by the provision of the new Shirehill store, which includes a Cleaning Room and Workroom, and the extension of the Museum to provide a new Learning & Activity Room. The collections in the Organics store will be re-housed to Shirehill with elements being retained in refurbished storage in the Museum (Forward Plan Key Aims 1a and 1b).

8.2 A list of ICON-registered conservators in the region, including those previously / regularly consulted or used by the Museum for specific projects (e.g. textiles, works on paper, taxidermy) will be kept and updated by the Collections Officer (Human History) and Natural Sciences Officer.

8.3 An inspection by a qualified conservator will be arranged once every 5 years, the first to be due in 2019.

8.4 A programme of training will be instigated with the move to the Shirehill store (Forward Plan Key Aim 1e) to involve casual staff and volunteers in basic condition checking and collections care tasks, under the supervision of curatorial staff. The longer-term aim after the store move is to create and foster a 'collections care team' of staff and volunteers for tackling store projects and cleaning of stores and displays.

9. Surrogate Copies and Digital Media

Specific measures to enhance collections care through surrogate copies and use of Digital Media will be:

9.1 Addition of digital photos / scans to Modes collections database as backlog documentation and audit of existing records progresses (Documentation Plan 2014).

9.2 Project to investigate the digitisation of accessions registers, starting with 19th century historic registers, subject to budget available (Collections Officer).

9.3 Update policy and procedures regarding retention and use of digital media according to external specialist advice and guidelines, starting with a revision of *Guidelines for the deposition of Archaeological Archives in Museums in Essex* (Museums Essex archaeological curators group considering this issue from June 2014).

9.4 Consider storage needs (volume and specifications) for digital storage media such as CDs, DVDs and provide suitable storage equipment such as data safes in the off-site store at Shirehill and in the Museum.

10. Emergencies and Salvage

10.1 The Emergency Plan and location of copies will be reviewed by the Security & Premises Officer with curatorial staff after the move to the new off-site store at Shirehill (by end of 2014). Thereafter, the Security & Premises Officer will review the

Emergency Plan annually and incorporate a copy of the latest edition of the Council's Out of Hours Emergency Manual.

10.2 The Collections Officer and Security & Premises Officer will maintain salvage kits on both sites (Museum and Shirehill) from 2014 onwards and from 2015 onwards arrange an annual training exercise, which may be combined with other training refresher sessions for the collections team (curatorial staff, casual staff and collections volunteers).

10.3 In addition to statutory and regulation inspections of the Museum by Fire Service and Council officers, the Curator and Security & Premises Officer, in liaison with the Council's Health & Safety and Fire Safety officers, will arrange the following:

- a) Fire Service familiarisation visit every 5 years (last visit February 2012, next due no later than 2017)
- b) Security advice inspection by Essex Police (last visit 2013, next due no later than 2018)

The planned extension and improvement of the Museum within the next 5 years allows for fire safety and security advice to be incorporated into the design therefore the Museum will be seeking advice on fire and safety issues within the next few years.

11. Loans Out

11.1 Loan Out requests will be considered as they are received. During the life of the Forward Plan 2013-18, there may be times when loans out have to be suspended due to the priority of major storage and display projects.