

Committee: Community & Leisure Services Committee

Agenda Item

Date: 25th October 2005

Title: **Museum Education Policy**

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Item for decision

Summary

Members are asked to note and approve the Education Policy for the Museum Service which is appended to this report. The Education Policy will be submitted for Accreditation (the government scheme formerly known as Registration for museums) in 2006, and to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and possibly other potential funding bodies in respect of the Heritage Quest Centre project.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to approve the Museum Service's Education Policy

Background Papers

The following papers were referred to by the authors in the preparation of this report and are appended to this report.

1. The Education Policy.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Teachers bringing pupils to taught sessions, parents/carers and children at activities, adults participating in talks and workshops. Non-users
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Programme accommodates variety of needs
Finance	No specific implications for this policy
Human Rights	No specific implications
Legal implications	No specific implications
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	Current staff and resources

Situation

- 1 The Education Policy was developed using models from Further and Higher Education and the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 2 It is concerned specifically with formal learning programmes and activities, and the target audiences as identified in the Museum's Forward Plan 2005 and Heritage Quest Centre project.
- 3 The Education Policy is a straightforward statement of principles, which guide the delivery of educational services by the Museum. Its purpose is to demonstrate to potential service users and external organisations that the Museum has clear aims and priorities in providing an educational service, and to guide the development of educational activities.
- 4 There are no financial or other resource implications attached to the policy or to its approval.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Introduction of new activities or sessions may include new risks e.g. handling objects	High	Low	Risk assessments carried out for new activities. Objects and equipment selected and presented in ways to minimise risks to people and collections.

Education Policy

Date: September 2005

Due for revision by: September 2008

1 Education Mission Statement

'Educational provision at Saffron Walden Museum aims to provide pathways to greater understanding and enjoyment of the museum's collections. These pathways are created by learning experiences designed to be appropriate for different audiences who use the museum.'

This is the education mission statement of the Museum and this policy sets out the ways in which the mission statement is carried out by defining

- The principles which guide educational practice at Saffron Walden Museum
- The target audiences the museum wants to work with
- The resources that are available for this work
- The ways in which learning experiences are delivered

All members of staff are concerned to some extent with the provision of learning experiences. This policy has been written after a consultation process with the Museum staff, as well as Service users.

2 Guiding Principles of the Education Service

- 2.1 Learning is at the heart of the Museum Service
- 2.2 All users of the education service are treated with equal respect and sensitivity
- 2.3 Their safety and physical comfort are of primary importance
- 2.4 As a centre for lifelong learning, the Museum's education service must take differing learning styles into account by being flexible and imaginative in the ways that learning is delivered.
- 2.5 Educational activities should always be object- or specimen- based.
- 2.6 Consultation with users and non-users is constant and evaluation of educational activities regularly takes place.

- 2.7 Access to educational activities is made available to all.

3 Target Audiences

The educational provision at Saffron Walden Museum is aimed at all users of the Museum Service but with limited staffing and resources certain target groups have been identified to concentrate resources effectively. Visitor surveys and a non-user survey were used as evidence.

Target groups are subject to constant review as new opportunities or needs arise. For educational services the target groups are:

- 3.1 Family groups with children aged 3 - 12 years
- 3.2 School groups, especially Pre School, Key Stage One, Key Stage Two and home-educated children.
- 3.3 Adults with special interests in areas covered by the collections.
- 3.4 Young people aged 13 - 18 years (secondary school, Key Stages Three and Four and Sixth Form), and in general young people 16 – 29 in keeping with the Museum Service's audience development priorities.

4 Resources

- 4.1 Saffron Walden Museum holds collections that are varied and extensive. They contain significant objects from many different time periods and cultures as well as natural history specimens and local history. Artefacts selected from the reserve collections are used for object handling sessions and as visual aids.
- 4.2 Staffing - There is one full time Education Officer. Other staff are involved in the delivery of learning, especially the Curator, Natural Sciences Officer, Conservation Officer and Documentation & Exhibitions Officer.
- 4.3 Learning through Work Experience and Student Placements – the Museum regularly offers placements, e.g. to students in further and higher education and an annual Trident placement to a local school pupil. Conservation placements for mature students are a special feature of the programme.
- 4.4 The Museum has a dedicated education room, which holds groups of up to 35 adults. An area in the Museum gallery space can be used for similar sized groups.
- 4.5 Walled grounds laid to grass and trees, containing the ruins of a 12th century castle surround the Museum.

- 4.6 A loyal audience of family and school groups has been established.
- 4.7 The service is supported by funding from Uttlesford District Council.
- 4.8 New partnerships have been established with bodies such as the North and West Essex Adult Community College, Saffron Walden Archive Point, Saffron Walden Library Service.

5 Ways in which Formal Learning is delivered at Saffron Walden Museum

- 5.1 'Drop in' sessions for families held during the school holidays. These usually take the form of art or craft based activities suitable for children.
- 5.2 'Museum Minis', monthly activity sessions for 2-5 year-olds and their parents or carers.
- 5.3 Booked sessions for schools using a combination of object handling, role play and story telling.
- 5.4 Activity days with re-enactor groups, artists or performers suitable for all ages.
- 5.5 Workshops for adults with special interests led by experts.
- 5.6 Lecture series for adults with invited speakers.
- 5.7 Talks given to adult groups at venues outside the Museum.
- 5.8 Practical sessions for adults or families - e.g. how to classify pottery finds, drawing in the museum.
- 5.9 Reminiscence Loan Boxes and/or sessions on request for care homes and day centres in Uttlesford
- 5.10 Practical sessions for young people - e.g. film making, spray painting inspired by the collections.
- 5.11 Natural history based investigations in the Museum grounds.