

Committee:	Cabinet	Date:	Thursday, 5 September 2019
Title:	Museum Accreditation Review 2019-20 and Collections Development Policy		
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Light		
Report Author:	Carolyn Wingfield, Museum Curator cwingfield@uttlesford.gov.uk 01799 510640	Key decision:	No

Summary

1. The Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries is the UK industry standard for museums. Accredited status is linked to eligibility for grants and funding from various sources, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and museums must re-apply every few years to maintain their Accredited status.
2. Saffron Walden Museum undergoes its next Accreditation review in January-July 2020. In preparation for this, the Museum's key policy documents and forward plan must be reviewed and formally approved by the Council, and submitted with copies of the minutes confirming approval as part of the Accreditation review.
3. This report explains the Accreditation Scheme and review procedures, and the list of policy documents with timetable for submission via the Museum Management Working Group to Cabinet for approval between September 2019 and April 2020, beginning with the Collections Development Policy 2020-25 which accompanies this report.

Recommendations

4. Between September 2019 and April 2020, Cabinet will be asked to approve a total of five Museum policies and plans recommended by Museum Management Working Group, to enable the Museum to complete its Accreditation Review successfully by the anticipated deadline of July 2020. The list and timetable is set out in paragraph 12.
5. The Museum Management Working Group is recommending to Cabinet that it approves the Collections Development Policy attached to this report.

Financial Implications

6. No expenditure is incurred as a result of the Accreditation Review. There are no fees charged for participation in the Accreditation Scheme. The Museum

will lose or restrict its eligibility for external funding and grants if it fails to maintain its Accredited status, including grants from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. This would have a major impact on the Museum's development plans and ability to improve audience engagement and income in the long-term, as well as inhibiting the Museum's participation in other medium-term projects and partnerships where full Accredited status is a requirement or expectation.

Background Papers

- The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Accreditation Standard: Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom, Arts Council England, November 2018

Accreditation Guidance: Supporting Guidance for Accreditation Standard November 2018, Arts Council England, March 2019

Impact

-

Communication/Consultation	Public confidence in the Museum service is encouraged by Accredited status. The confidence of external funding bodies and other supporting or partnership organisations is encouraged by Accredited status. Key policies and plans, reviewed for Accreditation, communicate the Museum's vision and procedures to the wider world.
Community Safety	No direct impact
Equalities	No direct impact, but Accredited status signifies that the Museum's governance arrangements and policies are generally sound, including its Access Policy.
Health and Safety	No direct impact, but Accredited status signifies that the Museum's governance arrangements and policies are generally sound, and management of collections is in keeping with Health & Safety legislation.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No direct impact, but Accredited status signifies that the Museum's governance arrangements and policies are generally sound, including legal and ethical considerations for managing, acquiring and

	disposing of collections.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	All Museum staff's work is affected by Accreditation and maintenance of the required standards.

Situation

9. The Museum Accreditation Standard is the UK industry standard for museums and galleries of all types across the UK. It is managed as a UK partnership between Arts Council England, the Welsh Government, Museums Galleries Scotland and the Northern Ireland Museums Council.
10. It helps everyone involved with a museum to do the right things, helping people to access and engage with collections, and protect them for future generations.
11. The Accreditation Scheme achieves this by ensuring that museums and galleries manage their collections properly, engage with visitors, and are governed appropriately. To achieve full Accredited status, museums and galleries must undergo a periodic in-depth review to demonstrate that they meet the agreed standard in how they are run, how they manage their collections, and how they engage with their users.
12. Saffron Walden Museum has maintained its Accredited status since the inception of the Scheme and was last reviewed in 2014-15. It is due for an Accreditation Review from January 2020, when a letter is expected from the Arts Council England (ACE) to trigger the six-month review period. During this time, the Museum will have to complete a lengthy and detailed on-line questionnaire and upload policies, plans and other evidence, including signed minutes of MMWG and Cabinet meetings concerning the recommendation and approval of principal policies and plans. The Museum must complete its Accreditation return by the deadline in July 2020. All being well, its Accredited status would then be reaffirmed later in 2020.
13. In recent years, the Museum service has undergone some significant changes. The completion of the Shirehill store and resulting improvements in collections care and access, has now opened the way for the Museum to proceed with development plans for the Museum itself, focusing on developing public engagement, income and sustainability for the service. In 2019 a grant of £52,000 was awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund under its 'Resilient Heritage' programme to fund consultancies in audience development and an options appraisal & feasibility study. It is therefore timely for the Museum to review its Forward Plan and other policies, in anticipation of Accreditation Review in 2020.

14. The list of five plans and policies which must be approved by the Council is dictated by the Accreditation Scheme. The format and content of the plans and policies are also guided by the Scheme. In order to manage the workload for officers and members, it is proposed to submit the revised policies and plans for approval gradually from September 2019 onwards to successive MMWG and Cabinet meetings, to avoid the need to consider a large number of documents all at once. The schedule allows time before the deadline for one further Cabinet meeting before July 2020 in the event of unforeseen complications or delays. These are the policies and plans which the Council is asked to approve, and the proposed schedule for presenting them to Cabinet following review by the Museum Management Working Group:

Collections Development Policy	Cabinet 5 September 2019
Access Policy Statement	Cabinet 26 November 2019
Collections Care and Conservation Policy	Cabinet 26 November 2019
Documentation Policy	Cabinet 1 April 2020
Forward Plan	Cabinet 1 April 2020

15. Accreditation represents a standard which the Museum service should meet if it is functioning properly. The Accreditation review is an opportunity to run a 'health check' on the service and provide reassurance to the Council and Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd that there are no significant problems with the operation of the service.

16. The Museum needs to maintain its Accredited status to be eligible for grants from heritage-sector organisations such as the National Heritage Lottery Fund and many others. Access to external funding from such bodies is essential for the Museum's development plans and some activities.

17. Loss of accredited status would also be likely to impact on the Museum's image and public confidence. This in turn would make it difficult for the Museum Society to raise funds in support of the Museum from charitable donations and grants, including grants towards purchase of important new acquisitions for the collections and displays (the Museum Society owns the collections and therefore all funds for new acquisitions are provided through the Society and not by the Council).

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Museum fails to complete Accreditation return in time	2	3	Begin work on policies and plans in 2019 and agree timetable for submissions to MMWG and Cabinet,

			to ensure all are approved ahead of July 2020 deadline.
Museum fails to meet Accreditation standard	1	3	Working through policies and plans will help to identify any weak areas, and address these either immediately or in development plans.
Museum development plans, including associated fund-raising strategy to achieve them, are deferred or halted	2	3	Maintaining Accredited status ensures the Museum is eligible to apply for grants and support from external funding organisations
Public confidence in the Museum falls	2	2	Maintaining Accredited status is a mark that the Museum is well-run

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.