

Wednesday, 12 July 2023

Report of the Assistant Director – Regeneration and Growth

Museum Accreditation

Exempt Information

None

Purpose

To seek Cabinet approval for the adoption and implementation of documents relating to the 2023 Accreditation review (Arts Council England) in respect of Tamworth Castle Museum and Collections.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Approval is given for the adoption of the Forward Plan for Tamworth Castle and Museum 2023 -28, and the following supporting policies and plans: Access Policy, Collections Development Policy, Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Plan, Collections Management Policy, Documentation Policy, and Emergency Response Plan.
2. Authorise the Assistant Director Regeneration and Growth in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder Entertainment and Leisure to progress the Castles Museum Accreditation process and make minor changes to the documents if required.

Executive Summary

Tamworth Castle is an Accredited Museum under the Arts Council England accreditation scheme. It's Statement of Purpose is to offer 'inspiring, entertaining, and enjoyable learning experiences for all our users. Through the collection, conservation, interpretation and exhibition of the museum's collections and buildings, we strive to maximise access to and understanding of, Tamworth's heritage.'

The museum's primary function is to collect, preserve, safeguard and make accessible the objects and archives which represent the people and places of Tamworth's diverse communities.

Tamworth Castle's 2023 Accreditation Review requires new documents to be adopted to comply with accreditation standards which were updated in 2018 (Spectrum 5 Standard for Collections Management). The adoption and implementation of such policies and plans by a governing body of a museum is a requirement of the Accreditation Scheme. This Scheme is administered by the Arts Council England.

The Forward Plan 2023 – 2028 supports the broader Corporate Plan 2022 - 2025 of Tamworth Borough Council and sets out priorities for the service. It provides key evidence of the intentions and planned resources to deliver critical museum activity.

It is supported by a number of updated policies and plans including the Collections Development Policy which represents the aims and objectives of responsible Collections Management at Tamworth Castle. The policy outlines and defines the current object collections and the ways in which we will continue to collect, care for, and manage the material. It defines the geographical area that we will collect objects from, and the themes/subject matter/type of objects we will collect, as well as the areas where rationalisation needs to take place.

The Care and Conservation Policy and Collections Management Policies outline how we care for and maintain the collections that we hold on a daily and ongoing basis.

The Access Policy defines our intention to make the museum collections accessible and sets out how we will achieve this.

The Emergency Response Plan is a key accreditation requirement and provides a toolkit for response.

A copy of the policies and plans are attached.

Options Considered

None

Resource Implications

None

Legal/Risk Implications Background

The following risks have been identified should the Council not adopt and then implement these policies:

1. Failure to maintain Museum Accreditation Standard Scheme status because of failure to meet the minimum Spectrum standards for Collections Management.
2. The loss of the Accreditation Standard will limit opportunities to access grant funding and specialist support.
3. Accreditation raises awareness and understanding of the work of museums, building credibility both for the service and the governing body.
4. Accreditation is a quality standard that serves as an authoritative benchmark for assessing performance, rewarding achievement and driving improvement. Loss of the standard has reputational implications for the service and the governing body.

5. Loss of accreditation will lead to loss of confidence amongst donors and major loan partners such as the Hoard Management Group that we are a suitable repository for objects and may impact of the viability of some agreements.

Equalities Implications

The Access Policy details the intention to increase access to the museum collections and buildings and how this will be done.

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

None

Background Information

Tamworth Castle Museum was last re-accredited in 2014. It has retained full accreditation status whilst considerable reform to the Accreditation Scheme was implemented. This, along with pandemic-related impacts on the museum sector, delayed the invitation to re-apply until December 2022

A return submission to Arts Council England, including the updated policy documents, is due by September 2023.

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

Tamworth Castle: Collections Care Review – Drakon Heritage and Conservation

Appendices

Tamworth Castle Museum Forward Plan 2023-2028

Tamworth Castle Museum Emergency Response Plan 2023

Collections Development Policy

Collections Management Policy

Collections Care Policy and Plan

Access Policy

Documentation Policy

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