



The Moray Council Museums Service

Collections Management

Collection Care Strategy and Plan

February 2010

Updated November 2012

Review date – February 2014

Collections Management – Collections Care Strategy and Plan

Context

The Collections Care Strategy and Plan is part of the Collections Management Strategy for the Museums Service. It includes strategy documents covering Collections and Disposal; Conservation; Access and Education; Documentation.

The Key Purpose of the Museums Service is:

To collect; record; care for; promote understanding and appreciation of; and support the history, culture and heritage of Moray for the benefit of local communities, schools, and tourists.

The Council adopts the IIC definition of Conservation:

“All actions aimed at the safeguarding of cultural property for the future. Its purpose is to study, record, retain and restore the culturally significant qualities of the object with the least possible intervention”.

1 Background

1.1 The Council has in place a Strategy for the care of its museums collections. The Strategy is subject to regular review and update, at least every five years.

1.2 This Strategy recognises the provisions of the Collection and Disposal Policy.

1.3 The Council meets or exceeds current standards of conservation and professional practice for museums collections, including museum archives, measured against appropriate standards such as the National Accreditation Scheme for Museums.

1.4 The Moray Council upholds the principle that all objects in the museums collections are held in perpetuity.

1.5 The Council takes measures to slow deterioration and prevent damage to objects, and carries out remedial approaches only where preventative measures have failed.

1.6 The Council provides systems to monitor, and takes measures to improve, the conditions of objects, and the environments and buildings in which they are housed whether for storage or display and interpretation.

1.7 The Council provides collections care advice and support to other organisations.

2 Procedures

2.1 Buildings

2.1.1 The Council provides suitably constructed and well-maintained buildings to secure fundamental protection of its museum collections. It maintains appropriate levels of care of building fabric and structure, undertaking essential repairs and maintenance.

2.1.2 The Council assesses and maintains appropriate levels of security and insurance, on all such buildings used for the storage, interpretation, research and conservation of museums collections.

2.1.3 Key control, security, fire and other protection systems are in place and regularly tested, inspected and serviced.

2.1.4 Arrangements exist, when necessary, for restricting access to all or parts of museum buildings to designated staff and volunteers; or for implementing appropriate supervision arrangements.

2.2 Storage

2.2.1 The Council applies high standards of professional practice to all museums storage areas, equipment, materials and systems. It ensures that storage areas are kept clean; well organised and managed; and pest free; and where necessary protects collections with appropriate conservation-grade packaging and systems in the most cost-effective way to reduce damage arising from physical handling and environmental conditions.

2.2.2 Appropriate professional level advice is taken regarding the design and operation of storage areas, systems, materials and equipment.

2.2.3 Designated museums storage areas are not used for any other purpose.

2.3 Housekeeping and cleaning

2.3.1 The Council applies effective management and monitoring procedures, and carries out appropriate cleaning to high standards, to minimise the potential damage from pests, dust, and other environmental factors.

2.3.2 The discovery of any active threat is treated with highest priority, to remove or minimise the risk of damage to collections.

2.3.3 Any chemical treatments carried out in relation to cleaning and housekeeping comply with the relevant health and safety legislation.

2.4 Handling and use of collections

2.4.1 The Council ensures that all museum objects are subject to careful and appropriate handling, to minimise the risk of physical damage and to contribute to future accessibility, applying high standards of practice and supervision at all times.

2.4.2 All staff and volunteers working with or handling the collections are made aware of their responsibilities regarding the care of the Museum's collections. Written guidelines are made available to all staff and other users engaged in the handling, transportation, packaging, labelling, protection from the environment, research, loan, display, use and interpretation of museum objects.

2.4.3 Objects from the collections are loaned only to borrowers who can satisfy the appropriate conditions for their safe and secure storage, study, interpretation or display.

2.5 Environmental Monitoring and Control

2.5.1 The Council takes the necessary steps, through use of appropriate monitoring and control practice, materials and equipment, to ensure that museums collections are not subjected, while in store or in use, to unsuitable environmental conditions in respect of temperature, relative humidity, light, and gaseous and particulate pollutants.

2.5.2 Monitoring and control equipment is inspected and tested, serviced and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

2.6 Surrogate Copies and New Media

2.6.1 The Council undertakes to provide, where possible and most appropriate, surrogate copies of original items and material to reduce the level of handling and risk of physical damage to originals. Copies so provided are of the necessary quality for their intended use.

2.6.2 The production of copies of any object is subject to prior assessment of the capability of the object to withstand the copying process.

2.7 Emergency Preparedness

2.7.1 The Council maintains advance plans, appropriate to the collections and buildings, to provide an effective emergency response and salvage of collections following a disaster such as fire, flood or other major incident.

2.7.2 All incidents which threaten the collections or buildings, however small, are recorded and reported, with recommendations, to inform future response planning.

3 Conservation Plan

3.1 Principles of Conservation

3.1.1 The Council undertakes to stabilise all museums objects both chemically and physically, to contribute to their continuing survival and the accessibility of its collections.

3.1.2 Suitably trained and qualified professionals assess and document the condition of museum objects, and make recommendations as to their future care and treatments.

3.1.3 A combination of preventive and interventive treatments, by suitably trained and accredited staff, is used to stabilise objects.

3.1.4 All conservation treatments, and materials used on objects, are recorded, including before and after photographs where appropriate, and constitute a part of that object's permanent record.

3.1.5 Interventive and destructive techniques of study are undertaken only when no suitable alternatives exist.

3.1.6 There is a conservation plan to improve the long-term care and condition of the collections

3.2 Rolling programme of inspections

3.2.1 There is a rolling programme of collections inspection, as specified in MLAC standards for curation and conservation, under the supervision of the Officer(s) with responsibility for collections management.

3.2.2 When the condition of any object gives rise to concern, this is noted and the advice of an appropriate conservation specialist sought for report, recommendations and cost for treatment and / or storage.

3.2.3 Objects identified as requiring treatment are listed, prioritised, and (subject to financial and other resources) entered into the rolling programme of conservation treatments.

3.2 Rolling Programme of conservation treatments

3.2.1 Objects requiring conservation are prioritised according to a number of factors, including but not restricted to:

- nature and severity of their current condition and stability
- possible threat to rest of collections
- requirement for loan, display or interpretation
- requirements for research
- conservation cost in relation to availability of budget and other resources.

3.2.2 When an object is identified for conservation, it is passed to an appropriately experienced and qualified conservator for up-to-date detailed survey and costs.

3.2.3 As and when all resources are in place, including external and matching funding where appropriate, conservation work is instructed, and reports sought, during and after completion, in accordance with best conservation practice.

3.2.4 Following conservation treatment, objects are returned to the appropriate storage or display environment, and details of conservation treatments recorded as part of the object's permanent record.

3.2.5 Objects continue to be monitored, following conservation, through the rolling programme of inspections.

Appendix I
Conservation Plan – Timetable for Implementation.

Activity	Expected Outcomes	Start date	Completion Date	Staff / volunteers responsible	Costs other than time	Completion / progress
Rolling programme of inspections	Identify & agree areas for inspection (store and display areas)	October 2008	November 2008	MOs, SMO		completed
	Create an object condition reporting template	October 2008	October 2008	SMO		completed
	Schedule inspections	November 2008	November 2008	MOs; Volunteers (training may be required)		completed
	Begin routine inspections and data / condition recording	December 2008	Ongoing 2012	MOs, Volunteers (for data input?)		begun
	Note any housekeeping or maintenance defects on survey forms; pass to Maintenance or otherwise rectify	December 2008	Ongoing 2012	ALL staff and volunteers,		ongoing
	Monitor progress and adjust inspection programme accordingly	February 2009	Ongoing 2012	MOs		ongoing
	Create lists of objects at risk / needing conservation	September 2010	June 2013	MOs		ongoing
	Pass lists to rolling programme of conservation work	September 2010	Ongoing 2012	MOs		ongoing
	Agree and schedule repeat surveys of collection at regular intervals	September 2010	November 2010	MOs		ongoing

Activity	Expected Outcomes	Start date	Completion Date	Staff / volunteers responsible	Costs other than time	Completion / progress
Plan and implement rolling programme of conservation	Assess prioritised lists of objects requiring conservation, from rolling programme of inspections	September 2010	ongoing	MOs		
	Reconcile along with object lists for forthcoming exhibitions	September 2010	ongoing	MOs		
	Identify highest priority objects for conservation	July 2013	August 2013	MOs		Completed/Tomintoul Coat
	Identify / assign conservators; commission surveys where appropriate	September 2013	November 2013	MOs		completed
	Re-evaluate priorities against costs and budget	September 2013	October 2013	MOs		
	Identify and agree cost and budget for each conservation job, including grant applications where appropriate	January 2010	ongoing	MOs	Conservation budget; grant aid; matching funding and external sources as appropriate	
	Agree objects for conservation; commission work	January 2010	ongoing	MOs		
	Document conservation treatments from conservator records	January 2010	Ongoing	MOs, Volunteers (Data input?)		
	Evaluate progress and re-prioritise programme	March 2010	Ongoing	MOs		
	Establish regular cleaning programme for Museum Store	March 2011	Ongoing	MOs		

Activity	Expected Outcomes	Start date	Completion Date	Staff / volunteers responsible	Costs other than time	Completion / progress
	Undertake basic cleaning where appropriate	June 2011	ongoing	MOs, volunteers (training given)		
Review pest monitoring and control contract etc	Review RENTOKIL contract for pest monitoring and control in store	October 2012	November 2012	MOs	Conservation budget Provision by Environmental Health	Rodent control added to Greshop, contracts in place and operating
	Identify any revised arrangements necessary; implement	October 2012	ongoing	MOs	Conservation budget; property maintenance if appropriate	See above re. Rodent controls.
	Monitor effectiveness	Ongoing and annually; look for evidence of pests during routine inspections and condition reports		All staff and volunteers	Conservation budget	Rentokil continue to monitor regularly. No serious infestation being found – see Rentokil report sheets.
Review environmental monitoring systems and data	Review current implementation in museums and stores	April 2012	November 2012	MOs		ongoing
	Identify and agree any changes and improvements to equipment and procedures; identify cost	April 2012	September 2012	MOs	Conservation and equipment budgets	Implement Tinytag in Falconer Store.
	Carry out any agreed changes	October 2012	November 2012	MOs		Tinytag system increased to include Falconer Store.
	Monitor incoming data from systems	November 2012	Ongoing	MOs		Data flow from Tinytag systems monitored on a monthly basis. Some on-site work still needed in Tomintoul.

Activity	Expected Outcomes	Start date	Completion Date	Staff / volunteers responsible	Costs other than time	Completion / progress
	Analyse data, and identify / carry out any environmental adjustments required	November 2012	Continuous	MOs		Ongoing