

**CABINET  
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**MUSEUM ACCREDITATION POLICIES**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Andy Keir, Local Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval of the for the Head of Steam Forward Plan 2022-2024, the Collections Management Framework 2022-2027 and Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024 ahead of submission to Arts Council England for the re-accreditation of Museum status.

**Summary**

2. The museum is due to submit an Accreditation Return in 2023-2024 when the museum is undergoing redevelopment. The return must include commitments to standards, quality, accessibility and forward planning. The report seeks approval for the:
  - (a) Head of Steam Forward Plan 2022-2024 attached at **Appendix 1**, which outlines the vision for the museum service for the next two years
  - (b) Head of Steam Collections Management Framework 2022-2027 attached at **Appendix 2**, which includes the museum's policy for developing its collections, its documentation policy and its care and conservation policy.
  - (c) Head of Steam Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024 attached at **Appendix 3**, which outlines the museum's commitment is to accessibility for all visitors.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Head of Steam Forward Plan 2022-2024, Head of Steam Collections Management Framework 2022-2027 and Head of Steam Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024 in preparation for submission to the Arts Council England for Museum Accreditation.

**Reasons**

4. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) To prove effective and professional management of Darlington’s Museum Service so that the museum remains an accredited museum and entitled to future support from the Arts Council England (Central Government Body).
- (b) To be eligible for future funding from external bodies, e.g. Arts Council England, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- (c) To be eligible for future loans from other museums, e.g. The National Railway Museum.
- (d) To ensure that the museum remains registered and complies with the standards and ethics as set out by the Museums Association.

**Dave Winstanley**  
**Group Director of Services**

**Background Papers**

- i. Accreditation Standard (November 2018)
- ii. Accreditation Guidance (March 2019)
- iii. Head of Steam Forward Plan 2016-2019
- iv. Head of Steam Collections Management Strategy 2016-2021
- v. Head of Steam Access Policy Statement 2016-2021

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S17 Crime and Disorder	The content of this report has no impact on Crime and Disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	The content of this report does not impact on Health and Well Being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no carbon impact implications in this report.
Diversity	There is no impact on Diversity or Equality as a result of this report.
Wards Affected	Head of Steam is located in Northgate Ward.
Groups Affected	No particular or individual groups are affected as a result of this report.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no Budget and Policy Framework implications in this report.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	History and heritage of Darlington is an important aspect of Darlington as a place, the Head of Steam being one of the key locations where Darlington’s story is told.
Efficiency	There is no impact on efficiency as a result of this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. Accreditation is the UK standard for museums and galleries. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. It is a baseline quality standard that helps guide museums to be the best they can be, for current and future users.
6. One of the aims of the Accreditation Scheme is to encourage all museums and galleries to achieve agreed standards in how they are run, how they manage their collections and the experiences of their users.
7. To be Accredited, museums must (amongst other things) be committed to forward planning to improve the service for users and hold a long-term collection of artefacts.
8. The museum's Forward Plan 2022-2024 (Appendix 1) outlines the vision for the museum service for the next two years and is a precursor to the countdown to the launch of the Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter in 2024 and the 200th Anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway celebrations in 2025.
9. The museum's Collections Management Framework 2022-2027 (Appendix 2) includes the museum's policy for developing its collections, its documentation policy and its care and conservation policy. Accredited museums must manage collections effectively and make them and the information they hold about them available to everyone.
10. The museum's Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024 (Appendix 3) outlines the museum's commitment is to accessibility for all visitors.

### Financial Implications

11. If the museum does not achieve Accreditation, it will no longer be eligible for future funding from external bodies, e.g. Arts Council England, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund.