

MUSEUM POLICIES

Head of Service:	Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services
Report Author	Linda Scott
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	1- Care and Conservation Policy 2- Documentation Policy 3- Access Policy 4- Collections Development Policy 5- Forward Plan 2025-2029

Summary

The Museum Accreditation Scheme, overseen by Arts Council England, is the UK's recognised standard for museums and galleries. It ensures institutions are resilient, well-managed, and meet national standards for care, access, and governance.

Bourne Hall Museum, operated by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, is due for its accreditation review in early 2026. This is part of the Business as usual for the Museum irrespective of Local Government Reorganisation or the outcome of the options for the future of the museum which is due to come to committee in January 2026.

To support this review, four key policy documents and forward plan (listed in the appendices) must be formally approved by the Council. These documents are essential for maintaining accreditation and demonstrating strong governance and strategic planning.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve the key policy documents for the Museum Service, as set out in the appendices:**
- **Care and Conservation Policy**
 - **Documentation Policy**
 - **Access Policy**
 - **Collections Development Policy**
 - **Forward Plan 2025–2029**

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1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Approval of the policy documents is essential to ensure that Bourne Hall Museum remains compliant with the nationally recognised standards set by the Museum Accreditation Scheme, administered by Arts Council England. These policies have been updated to replace older versions, reflecting both the changes over time and adherence to the latest guidance issued by Arts Council England. These documents demonstrate the museum's commitment to robust governance, strategic planning, and high standards of care and access.
- 1.2 Formal approval by the governing body is a required step in the museum's upcoming 2026 accreditation review and will directly support its ability to maintain accredited status.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Museum Accreditation Scheme, administered by Arts Council England, is the UK's recognised industry standard for museums and galleries. It ensures that participating institutions are resilient, well-governed, and operate in line with nationally agreed standards of care, access, and organisational management.

As part of this scheme, museums must undergo an accreditation review every five years to confirm continued compliance. For Bourne Hall Museum, operated by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, the next review is scheduled for early 2026.

To support this process, five key policy documents require formal approval by the Council. These documents are essential for demonstrating the museum's commitment to best practice and maintaining its accredited status.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

- 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 The Access policy will require an equality impact assessment once it is approved.

- 3.2 Crime & Disorder

- 3.2.1 Not applicable for this policy approval

- 3.3 Safeguarding

- 3.3.1 Not applicable for this policy approval

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3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 Not applicable for this policy approval

3.5 Other

3.5.1 Failure to meet the Accreditation Standard -- ACE's scheme requires approved policies under the "Organisational health" and "Collections" requirements. If not approved, the museum cannot evidence compliance at return, which risks a deferral or inability to maintain Accredited status until approval is secured.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 Without the accreditation we are at risk of loss of eligibility for specific ACE capital programmes that require Accreditation, notably MEND (Museum Estate & Development Fund), which is for non-national Accredited museums. Without approved policies and a maintained Accreditation award, we would be ineligible to apply.

4.2 Lower confidence for other funders (ACE and non-ACE). Accreditation is positioned by ACE as the nationally agreed standard that signals a museum is sustainable. A focused and trusted lack of an approved policy undermines that assurance and can weaken bids and partnership cases (even where Accreditation is not a hard eligibility criterion).

4.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 Collections law & ethics (property/trusts/disposal): Disposals or accessions made absent an approved Collections Development Policy (CDP) can be seen as lacking proper authority and contrary to ethical guidance (which the Accreditation Standard expects museums to observe). That elevates the risk of legal challenge (e.g., breach of donor conditions, trust obligations) and regulatory/sector censure if disposals are contested or if title is disputed. The Museums Association's legal/ethical guidance underscores why disposal decisions must sit under a governing policy.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None other than as outlined in the above report

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- Future of the Museum

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6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** Not relevant

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications**
Not applicable

6.5 **Partnerships:**

6.5.1 Bourne Hall museum is an active member of the Surrey Museums Partnership, which includes collaboration with Surrey Heritage and the Surrey Museums Consultative Committee

6.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:**

6.6.1 The council is mindful of a potential transfer to a new governance model as part of EEBC's Local Government Reorganisation.

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- None