

## **Cabinet Member Delegated Decision Form**

### **Decision Title**

To seek approval for the transfer of an item from the Staffordshire County Museum collection

### **Decision Required**

The Archive and Heritage Service includes the County Museum which is an Accredited museum under Arts Council England's accreditation scheme. This means that it delivers a certain standard of care, management and access to its collections and ensures its policies meet best practice guidelines as defined by Arts Council.

The Museum Service continually reviews its collections and disposes of items which do not meet the Museum Service's Collections Development Policy. This may include items which were collected under previous collecting policies but which do not meet the criteria of the current Policy.

This current review is part of a review of long-term loans of large industrial items. When it opened in 1966, the Staffordshire County Museum aimed to be encyclopaedic in its scope, and industrial history was part of its remit. Since then, specialist industrial history museums covering the West Midlands, such as Ironbridge Gorge Museums and the Black Country Museum, have opened, alongside a number of heritage railway museums. Therefore by 1978, the County Museum had ceased collecting industrial history items and at this point these collections were either returned to their lenders, or transferred to or placed on loan at other museums and heritage organisations.

In accordance with the Museum Service's Collections Development Policy, permission must be sought from the museum's governing body before any item is de-accessioned (i.e. sold or transferred to another museum or appropriate organisation, or as a last resort, destroyed). This report seeks a Cabinet Member delegated decision to approve the transfer of a locomotive from the County Museum collection as detailed in Appendix 1.

### **Decision Date**

31 January 2023

## Decision Summary

The Museum Service reviews its outgoing loans on an annual basis. The railway item described in Appendix 1 has been on loan to a non-Accredited museum since 1978. Changing this long-term loan into a permanent transfer would have been considered sooner, but as the borrowing body is not an Accredited museum we have not done so.

Due to recent changes in circumstances the current borrowing organisation does not wish to renew the loan and an opportunity has arisen for the item to be permanently transferred to a fully Accredited museum in Staffordshire, in accordance with the terms of the Museum Service's Collections Development Policy and Museum Association guidelines.

The transfer of these items will enable the Service to have higher levels of care for the remaining collections and make better use of our finite collections storage space. It will also ensure that this collection item will be with a museum which has the specialist skills needed in order to care for large industrial items.

## Member Delegated Function

General Delegation to Cabinet Member – Section 6 of the Constitution

### Specific Delegation to Cabinet Member

*If 'Specific Delegation to Cabinet Member' is selected above, please complete this section.*

### Public

*If the decision is exempt, please identify the relevant paragraph number from the list below.*

### Public / Exempt

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the local authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employee of, or office holders under, the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes
  - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Exemption Paragraph:

## **Options Considered**

The disposal process being undertaken complies with procedures defined by the Museum Service's Collections Development Policy which complies with Arts Council England's Accreditation scheme. These procedures meet standards defined by the Museums Association Code of Ethics, 2015, <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1155827> and the Museums Association Disposal Toolkit – Guidelines for Museums, 2015, <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1075416> ).

Permission must be sought from the museum's governing body before any item is de-accessioned (i.e. sold or transferred to another museum or destroyed). These items have considerable historical, technical, or geographical relevance to other museum collections within, and outside, the region. Therefore, in line with disposal guidelines, all items listed at Appendix 1 will, in the first instance, be offered for transfer to other museums.

## **Consultation Process**

County Councillor Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

County Councillor Charlotte Atkins, Opposition Leader

Catherine Mann, Interim Assistant Director - Culture, Rural and Safer Communities

## **Electoral Divisions Affected**

Not applicable - items are from the county wide collection.

## **Name of Cabinet Member Making Decision:**

Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

## **Community Impact Assessment**

### *Key Issues*

The objects proposed for disposal fall into these categories:

- Items do not meet the criteria defined by the Museum Service's Collections Development Policy which sets out the basis for collecting

items. This policy emphasises connection to Staffordshire, provenance, condition, rarity and filling gaps in the collection.

- The Archives & Heritage no longer has the storage space, curatorial skills or financial resources to be able to care for these items.

### *Resource and Value for Money Analysis*

This process will enable better care of Staffordshire County Council's museum collections through more efficient use of storage space, staff resources and conservation material resources. It will also assist in planning for future collections storage solutions across Archives & Heritage as part of the Staffordshire History Centre project. Storage space will be available to acquire items which meet the priorities in the Collections Development Policy.

### *Risk Analysis*

To ensure public confidence in the disposals process, the Museum Service will be adhering to sector guidelines and standards and have undertaken a rigorous and proven method of assessing collection objects for disposal. Original donors of collections will be consulted as part of the disposals process. Where possible, alternative places for the objects will be identified or sale at auction with proceeds reinvested to improve collections storage or to undertake remedial conservation on collection items. Destruction will only be considered when all other options have been exhausted. As part of the Collection Development Policy, it is required that the final decision to dispose of items is taken by a Member to ensure transparency of decision making.

### *Legal Analysis*

Staffordshire County Council has ownership of all items identified in Appendix 1. The Museum Service will be following approved policies and the process will be fully documented.

### **Implementation**

*Is any implementation action required?*

Yes

To be implemented by: Chris Copp, Collections Manager

### **Implementation Status**

Work to commence on:

16 January 2023

Work in progress: 23 January 2023  
Work completed on date below: 31 January 2023

### **Report Author**

Name: Chris Copp  
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### **Submission on Mod.Gov**

Uploaded by: **Vicki Sandells**  
Date uploaded: **06/12/2022**



## **Appendix 1 – Railway item for transfer**

1. **Petrol Locomotive** 0-6-0, No.800. (Accession number 68.005.0001) Built by Baguley's, Burton-upon-Trent, 1920. Donated to Staffordshire County Museum in 1967 by the London Brick Company.

On 20 year renewable loan to Tylesley Locomotive Works (formerly Birmingham Railway Museum) from 1984.

