

**Decision proposed to be taken by the
Portfolio Holder for Finance, Improvement and IT and the
Portfolio Holder for Customers, Access and Property
on or after 24th August 2012**

**De-accessioning Items from the Social History, Natural
Science and Archaeology Collections at Warwickshire
Museum Service**

Recommendations

That the Portfolio Holders approve the disposal of the items listed in Appendices A, B and C in accordance with the Museum's Acquisition and Disposal policy, the Museum Association Code of Ethics and the associated Disposal Toolkit.

1.0 Key issues

- 1.1 Warwickshire Museum Service safeguards, manages and develops collections which illustrate Warwickshire's rich and diverse past. The collections were originally assembled by the Warwickshire Natural History and Archaeological Society which founded the Museum in 1836. The Society collected from all over the world, aiming to show the world to Warwickshire people. The Museum Service has been run by Warwickshire County Council since 1932 and its collections cover Natural History, Social History, Geology and Archaeology. Today, the service focuses on Warwickshire people and places and their stories.
- 1.2 "Museums meet their responsibility to future generations by ensuring that collections are well managed and sustainable. There is a strong presumption in favour of the retention of items within the public domain. Sometimes transfer within the public domain, or another form of disposal, can improve access to, or the use, care or context of, items or collections. Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal takes place as part of a museum's long-term collections policy, in order to increase public benefit derived from museum collections".¹
- 1.3 Curatorial staff at Warwickshire Museum Service undertake collections audits which seek to improve the care and management of the museum's collections. These audits periodically identify objects for potential disposal in

¹ Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association

accordance with the Museum Association's Code of Ethics and Warwickshire Museum Service's Acquisition and Disposal Policy.

1.4 Items may be identified for potential disposal for the following reasons:

- Duplication –the service holds other similar examples?
- Provenance –the object has a weak or no Warwickshire connection or relevance?
- Condition – the object is in poor condition or (see Appendix B) is too hazardous to have pragmatic display or interpretation potential.
- Misidentification – the objects have been the subject of specialist scrutiny and are no longer deemed to be artefacts.

1.5 The term "disposal" means *"to select the most suitable method of disposal to reach the desired outcome"* (taken from the Museums Association Disposal Toolkit for Museums). These methods are:

- free gift or transfer to another accredited museum
- exchange of items between museums
- free gift or transfer to another institution / organisation within the public domain
- return to donor
- sale of item to an accredited museum (it is recommended that this is only considered in exceptional circumstances)
- transfer outside the public domain
- sale outside the public domain (this course of action must only be undertaken if it has been established that no museum or public organisation is able to take the item. it is not recommended as the first course of action)
- recycling of item
- destruction of item

2.0 Proposal

2.1 Appendices A, B and C comprise lists of objects from the Archaeology, Natural Science and Social History collections which have been identified as priorities for potential disposal. This report seeks approval for curatorial staff to take appropriate steps in accordance with the Museum Association Code of Ethics (Section 6) to dispose of these objects.

Background Papers (Please list below, with electronic links where applicable)

Museum Association Code of Ethics

<http://www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics>

Warwickshire Museum Service Acquisition and Disposal policy

Hard copy available upon request

	Name	Contact details
Report Author	Caroline Sampson	01926 412738
Head of Service	Mark Ryder	01926 412811
Strategic Director	Monica Fogarty	01926 412514
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Colin Hayfield Cllr David Wright	