

# Jean F Watson Bequest Committee

2pm, Friday, 25 October 2013

## Remit amendment and valuation of the collection

Item number	6.3
Report number	
Wards	All

### Links

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# Executive summary

## Remit amendment and valuation of the collection

### Summary

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An internal audit of heritable assets held by the Council was carried out in October 2012. The Jean F Watson (JFW) Bequest Trust and the Catherine E Cowper Trust (CC Trust) were included in this audit. The Watson Bequest dates from the early 1960s and was established by Miss Watson to enable an Edinburgh municipal collection to be developed. In 1996 Mrs Catherine E Cowper established a bequest to be used by the Museum of Childhood to acquire items for its collection which has subsequently been recognised as nationally significant.

The audit made several recommendations about these Trusts to ensure that full details of their value are available each year for the Council's audited accounts.

The recommendations which are relevant to this Committee are as follows:

- exhibits, artworks and artefacts valued over £5,000 should be re-valued once every five years; and
- the Jean F Watson collection inventory should be clearly separated from the inventory of other artworks owned by the Council.

As the JFW collection was last valued in 2008, it is now time to revalue the collection. In the past this has been undertaken by curatorial staff based at the City Art Centre and it is suggested that this practice continues. A modest subscription to an appropriate online valuation tool, as used by other museums and galleries, would help to ensure the accuracy of this work.

The Museums and Galleries service is in the process of purchasing a new collections management system, called Ke Emu, which will provide curators with the facility to generate more effective reports on any aspect of collection items. Up to date separate inventory reports on the Jean F Watson collection will be able to be produced to order.

The auditor also suggested that it would improve internal governance and accountability for this Committee's remit to be expanded to cover proposed purchases by the more modest Catherine E Cowper (CC) Trust. The current balance of the CC Trust is £47,360.

The majority of items acquired by the Museum of Childhood are generally donated and usually date from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. It is proposed that the CC Trust could be used to buy contemporary items on a regular basis to keep the collection up to date.

It is anticipated that these toys, games and other childhood items would range in price from a few pounds to a few hundred pounds, and would be acquired through the Council's normal purchasing process for goods. In addition, there may occasionally be opportunities to acquire an historic item to fill a gap in the Museum's collection.

It is recommended that the above purchases be reported retrospectively to this Committee once a year. Any item that would cost more than £1,000 will be reported in advance for Committee approval or agreed in consultation with the Convener if the opportunity would otherwise be lost because of a tight purchase deadline.

As the above proposals in relation to the Catherine E Cowper Trust would alter the Jean F Watson Bequest Committee's remit, and add an entry in the Council's Scheme of Delegation, it is recommended that they should be referred to the Council for its consideration and approval, if the Committee agrees these changes in principle.

## Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Committee:

1. notes that JFW Bequest collection items worth over £5,000 each will be revalued by the curatorial team by March 2014;
2. approves in principle the extension of the Committee's remit to include the Catherine E Cowper Trust;
3. approves in principal the reporting and approval mechanism outlined above for purchases funded by the Catherine E Cowper Trust; and
4. refers these remit and Scheme of Delegation changes to the Council for its consideration and approval.

## Measures of success

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Completed valuation of the JFW Bequest collection items worth over £5,000 each by end of March 2014

Improved governance of the Catherine E Cowper Trust

Enhanced Museum of Childhood collection

## Financial impact

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The subscription cost of an appropriate online valuation tool can be contained within the Culture and Sport revenue budget.

## Equalities impact

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The actions detailed in this report are not relevant to the Equality Act 2010 general duties or human rights duties.

## Sustainability impact

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The actions outlined above will improve the management of the two collections discussed.

## Consultation and engagement

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Not applicable.

## Background reading / external references

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Report entitled [Consultation on Edinburgh Museums and Galleries Service Plan 2013 – 18](#) to the Culture and Sport Committee of 20 August 2013

Report entitled [Edinburgh Museums and Galleries: Collection Development Policy 2013 – 2017](#) to the Culture and Sport Committee of 28 May 2013

## Links

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**Coalition pledges** P31 Maintain our City's reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure

**Council outcomes** CO20 - Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens

C025 The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives

**Single Outcome Agreement Appendices**