

Exhibitions and Displays Framework

CofGâr

2021 - 2024



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Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



CofGâr

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1. Introduction

The CofGâr Exhibitions and Displays programme plays a central role in helping us achieve our strategic aims¹ to:

- 1) Manage and develop our resources, facilities, and workforce to become more resilient and build a stronger economy.
- 2) Become recognised for our innovative approach to developing and using museum collections.
- 3) Create a great user experience through excellent services and programmes.
- 4) Deliver inspiring and creative learning opportunities for all people.
- 5) Support opportunities to promote health and well-being.

And deliver our core objectives to:

- Maintain, extend, and broaden the range of audiences and increase our understanding of those audiences.
- Share knowledge and skills through partnerships, collaboration, and co-curation.
- Be accessible to all people and promote learning.
- Increase the understanding of and engagement with museum collections and subjects through research, displays and exhibitions, interpretation, education, access, conservation, partnerships, and programmes.
- Develop revenues to support the wider museum service.
- Preserve collections to ensure they remain a valued asset for future generations.

Exhibitions are developed using a Planning Tool (see Appendix 1), to ensure the selection and process is transparent and aligned to the appropriate organisational objective

This policy provides a summary of CofGâr exhibition and displays activities, outlining the criteria by which the programme is decided. At a time of significant development in museums and cultural services in Carmarthenshire, this exhibition policy underpins the quality, ambition, creativity, and uniqueness that sets CofGâr apart.

Past exhibitions have occasionally generated income through sales commission. This Policy recognises that as local government revenues continue to be pressured, all our activities must include income generation in the planning process.

Our understanding about who visits museums, and who does not, is an area for improvement. How each exhibition and display is evaluated will be part of the

¹ Carmarthenshire Museums Strategic Plan 2017-2022

planning process. The information we gather will improve the quality, range, and accessibility of exhibitions.

Consideration is given to the risks through the Exhibitions and Displays Risk Register. This is monitored by the Museums Development Manager and Exhibitions Planning Group. Presentation, sustainability, resources, and value for money are also reviewed at regular meetings.

The Museums Development Manager will prepare an annual review for the performance management framework, and provide interim updates to the Senior Cultural Services Manager and Executive Board Member as required.

2. Scope

This policy covers CofGâr exhibitions and displays at all museum sites including associated digital materials, other Council premises, and venues that we are actively collaborating with to produce an exhibition (excluding loans).

3. Definitions

The **Exhibitions and Displays Planning Group** is the forum responsible for commissioning exhibitions and displays, and content and resource management of the programme. The group also considers other projects, events and programming by season ensuring a holistic overview of activity. The Group includes Museums Development Manager, Curators, and Conservator.

Colleagues that represent retail, marketing, graphic design, learning, community outreach and front of house are invited at key stages in the planning process

Information on agreed exhibitions and displays is shared through Cultural Services, and Museums Service Team Meetings.

Permanent exhibitions – means longer-term exhibitions that usually involve extensive use of CofGâr collections and/or material borrowed from external sources.

Permanent exhibitions usually occupy most of the museum's galleries. Due to the resources required to create permanent exhibitions, they are expected to remain largely unchanged for at least two years from opening. Collections care may require sensitive materials on display to be rested or changed more frequently, for example books to have pages turned or costume to be changed every 6 months.

Displays – are smaller-scale presentations (in showcases in a minor gallery, or as part of a larger exhibition), involving CofGâr collections, new commissions, and occasionally borrowed material. These displays, interventions and projects are located at various points within the permanent collections and public areas.

At least one display a year is co-curated with our wider community to contribute to CofGâr audience development objectives. Being smaller-scale, displays are expected to be changed more frequently.

Temporary exhibitions – are usually shown in spaces at museums specifically designed for this purpose, which will determine the scale. Temporary exhibitions are an opportunity to draw in works, objects, and material from outside CofGâr collections, especially through collaboration and partnership.

At least one temporary exhibition a year is co-curated with our wider community to contribute to CofGâr objectives in audience development.

Temporary exhibitions may also include activities such as touring exhibitions, exhibitions in other local authority premises, and pop-up displays as part of an event.

Virtual exhibitions – are displayed digitally and are available to audiences who may not be able to visit the museum in person. These are designed separately but complementary to physical exhibitions, recognising the role of the museums beyond their buildings. Virtual exhibitions incorporate a blended approach to display, where digital and physical approaches work together.

4. Legal basis

Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75>

Local Government Act 1972 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/contents>

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted>

5. STANDARDS

All CofGâr museums achieve the UK Museum Accreditation standard.

A long programme of museum developments, premises and operational improvements mean the GIS standard is achievable to support loans of material from UK national museums

All activity relating to exhibitions meets Spectrum, the UK museum collections management standard.

All digital content will meet WCAG2.1 accessibility standard.

All exhibitions outputs meet Welsh Language Standards.

6. Guiding Principles

Permanent exhibitions

The selection criteria for permanent exhibitions are governed by the Interpretation Plan for the museum (See samples in Appendix 2). These are strategic documents informed by research and consultation that set out a long-term action plan for permanent exhibitions. The process for Interpretation Plan development, review and revision involves horizon scanning using the REALMS model (regional, environmental, arts, learning, media, and scientific).

Permanent exhibitions have been historically developed to support key school curriculum themes. As the new Curriculum for Wales is embedded, permanent exhibitions present opportunities for testing inclusive approaches to learning through consultation, collaboration, and testing with educators and students.

Significant societal events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement highlight social injustice. Permanent exhibitions are spaces to examine contemporary matters through culturally democratic practice.

Permanent exhibitions form the main attraction for visitors. A programme of renewal is underway, employing quality exhibition design that is visually pleasing for all museum visitors, is appropriate to the setting, and effectively communicates the “big idea”.

Permanent exhibitions are informed by curatorial goals and learning outcomes, set out and documented in the Planning Tool. Outcomes are consistently measured and evaluated. Exhibitions are visually documented, and that documentation supports the CofGâr brand and learning resources produced for the exhibition.

Each exhibition is aligned with audience development goals and is informed by research that advises the needs and interests of the target audience(s).

Interpretation, programming, and learning resources are integrated into exhibition development and design. Where possible, interpretive elements are interactive and/or multi-sensory and align to digital resources.

Displays

A new display space was created at Carmarthenshire Museum in 2021 (Discovery Gallery) and spaces for displays at other museums are planned.

Displays usually run for six to nine months, but may be lengthened or shortened to accommodate other internal or external demands.

In general terms displays should be:

Opportunistic – a celebration of anniversaries and topical events.

Responsive – flexible and respond to ideas received externally that relate to the museum’s core areas of interest.

Resourceful – display new acquisitions or commissions.

Exploratory – focus on a sub-theme to the Interpretation Plan, often using sensitive material that can only be shown for a limited period.

Imaginative – to explore collections in new and engaging contexts.

Collaborative – opportunities for a range of different voices and approaches through co-curation and, on occasion, allow for the loan of high-quality objects from external sources.

Accessible – built on principles of co-design, democracy, and equality.

Temporary exhibitions

Each museum has a small temporary exhibition gallery with the capacity for up to three exhibitions a year. These are arranged on a spring (February – May), summer (June – September) and autumn (October – January) basis.

Temporary exhibitions are usually developed in the following ways:

- Organised by CofGâr as an opportunity to show collections not otherwise on display, sometimes alongside material borrowed from other sources.
- In partnership with other organisations and communities, where there is an opportunity to present new research, different voices, and access new material.
- In partnership with an individual, such as a regionally or nationally significant artist to showcase a body of new work².
- As a touring show available for hire.
- As opportunities to trial new methods of delivery for permanent and virtual exhibitions.

The selection criteria for individual exhibitions should support the Interpretation Plan and tell interconnected stories about the heritage and people of Carmarthenshire by including and exploring the following themes/areas:

Culture, art, society, and language – the history of traditional crafts, music, art, language, and literature, telling the story of self-expression and identity through intangible and material culture.

The people of Carmarthenshire – educators, artists and writers, inventors, sportspeople, kings, nobles and saints, rebels and leaders; history from different perspectives with stories of people brought to life.

Working life and industry – a tangible story of transport, working life, rural life, agriculture, industries, jobs and trade, global connections and the transformations brought by the ongoing changes to how we work.

Religion and politics – a key story for a county that has seen its share of conflict, war, rebellion, riots, and religion, shaped by different rulers and forms of government.

Carmarthenshire life – the story of everyday life, endeavour and challenge, health and wellbeing, sports, celebration and commemoration, education, and cultural life.

Nature – the formation of the landscape through geology and fossils, landscape, coast and waterway, the fragile environment and conservation and the diversity of wildlife, flora and fauna within the county and the people who help us understand the natural world.

Worldwide connections – looking outwards or bringing world culture to Carmarthenshire and international inspiration and impact³.

² Careful consideration will be given to the potential impact on other galleries in the area.

³ For historic reasons, CofGâr collections reflect international themes and universal ideas, past, present and future. This policy promotes engagement with these little-used collections in a positive

In general terms, the programme will:

Support the CofGâr brand and promote a reputation for quality, interest, and equality.

Encourage ideas, expertise, and curatorial involvement from across and outside the museum service.

Cover popular subjects, as well as academic or specialist topics.

Reflect and attract a broad range of audiences in terms of age, social and cultural background.

Encourage innovative interpretation that enhances an engagement with history, contemporary issues, and our communities.

Maximise its impact and economic benefit.

Meet recognised museum standards (security and environment), follow Conservation Guidelines for Exhibitions (Appendix 3), and be responsible for developing documented best practice or guidelines in exhibitions and displays for supporting the curriculum, accessibility and interpretation, co-curating, decolonisation, and more.

7. Responsibilities

The Exhibitions Planning Group determines overall policy and comments on the combined programme of exhibitions and displays at its regular meetings. Individual responsibilities are then managed as follows:

- The Museums Development Manager (MDM) has overall responsibility for CofGâr strategy, resource management and programme.
- The Curator/s lead the exhibition project in all curatorial aspects - researching and establishing the concept for an exhibition, developing interpretation and learning resources, and ensuring accessibility. Co-curation or collaboration with an external curator is facilitated by the lead curator.
- The Conservation Officer (CO) advises and oversees collections preservation, conservation treatment, and technical display considerations.
- The Business and Retail Officer (B&RO) identifies and implements opportunities for maximising income generation.
- Communications are coordinated between the team and Carmarthenshire County Council Marketing and Media.
- Museum Attendants (MA) are the public face of CofGâr and are responsible for providing an excellent visitor experience.

and structured way. As global citizens, our exhibitions will explore Carmarthenshire's impact on the world – from well-known connections to opportunities to acknowledge, celebrate and be inspired by world cultures and the global environment.



8. Procedures for proposal

Temporary exhibitions are agreed 18-24 months in advance. Displays are usually planned 12-18 months in advance.

- Proposals are accepted from both internal and external sources. A Planning Tool must be completed when preparing exhibition proposals.
- All exhibition proposals are considered first by either the Museums Development Manager or Curator. The Exhibition Planning Group considers proposals that meet the CofGâr Exhibition and Displays Policy.
- The Museums Development Manager or Curator will communicate all successful and unsuccessful proposals.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or as required in the event of any significant service changes.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – CofGâr Exhibition Planning Tool

Appendix 2 – Museum of Land Speed Interpretation Framework, and Carmarthenshire Museum Interpretation Strategy.

Appendix 3 – Conservation guidelines for exhibitions