

Equality Impact Assessment: *Public Access to Images of RAMM Collections*

Background

The global open access movement is centred on the belief that everyone should be able to access and reuse cultural heritage in the public domain. Over the past decade, the cultural heritage sector has increasingly adopted open access strategies for digital collections. Millions of collections images and data globally have now been released to the public domain for any type of reuse, with that number growing weekly. Benefits range from expanded audience reach and creative reuse to user discoveries, generating deeper knowledge, appreciation, and innovation around heritage collections. As such, by adopting the proposed open access strategy, ECC and RAMM can contribute to the global movement and ensure local audiences feel included in it.

International human rights legal measures, including the UK Human Rights Act, provide a foundation for open access to cultural heritage. A number of international legal measures recognise the rights to education, to access and participation in culture, and to enjoy the arts and sciences and benefit from them. In doing so, these measures seek to conserve, develop, and diffuse science and culture, and protect and promote cultural diversity. The nature of RAMM's rich and diverse collection means that it can be used to tell stories that are of relevance to people who fall within the protected characteristic groups. RAMM has held a number of exhibitions and hosted projects using its collections that detail stories from protected characteristic groups including BAME communities, LGBTQ+ communities, deaf and disabled people and women.

International legal measures on human rights obligate states to ensure that special protections are afforded to vulnerable communities to maintain, control, protect and develop their own cultural heritage and its future manifestations. These measures can and should affect the way cultural heritage is accessed, digitised, and made available (or not); and this is particularly relevant for RAMM's world cultures collections. As such, RAMM's Open Access Strategy applies only to non-contentious 2D artworks. This strategy will also apply to any new acquisitions made in line with RAMM's Collections Development Policy.

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
	Public Access to Images of RAMM Collections	The Open Access Strategy is adopted by ECC	N/A

Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).			
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Positive	Low	Images released to ensure access to those with impairments who may not be able to access the images in person.
Sex/Gender			
Gender reassignment			
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).			
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).			
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).			
Pregnancy and maternity including new and breast feeding mothers			
Marriage and civil partnership status			

Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion

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Officer:

Date: