

RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Report subject	Approval of allocation of funds generated for the restoration of the Russell-Cotes Conservatory to the ACE MEND 'Repair and Renewal' Project
Meeting date	22 October 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The conservatory of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, which is a Grade 2* listed building, is in desperate need of repair and renewal and at the point of collapse. The cost of repair has been estimated at c. £120,000 plus fees. Plans were made in 2011 to repair the conservatory but the Council was unable to afford the cost and the work was never done.</p> <p>From 2015, the Museum has been raising funds specifically to fund the repair and renewal of the Conservatory and been identifying additional sources of funds that could enable the work to be undertaken.</p> <p>These funds have been held in a restricted fund for the purpose of restoring the conservatory and now amount to £29,953.</p> <p>Arts Council England (ACE) has established a new grant fund in June 2021 – the MEND fund – specifically to address the backlog of urgent repairs needed in the Museum sector. Russell-Cotes has applied for £974,000 of work, has passed the EOI stage and is making a formal application on 18 October.</p> <p>Its application includes the complete restoration of the Conservatory and it has identified £30,000 as necessary match funding from the restricted Conservatory fund to support the project (as well as £426,000 from BCP Council (subject to Cabinet approval).</p> <p>The outcome of the application to the ACE MEND fund will be heard in Feb 2022 and work will start by 25 April 2022 for completion by 31 March 2025.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The RCAGM Committee agree to the allocation of all funds raised to support the restoration of the Conservatory (£30,000) and held in the Restricted Conservatory fund as match funding</p>

	for the ACE MEND project (should the grant application be successful)
Reason for recommendations	<p>The Restricted fund was established to generate donations for the restoration of the Conservatory and the grant from the ACE MEND fund for the 'Repair and Renewal' project will enable the museum to draw in the remaining funds needed to undertake and complete this restoration.</p> <p>The RCAGM Management Committee, as the governing body, must formally agree for the allocation of this fund to meet the requirements of the MEND fund application.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Mohan Iyengar, Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Leisure and Culture
Corporate Director	Kate Ryan, Chief Operating Officer
Report Authors	Sarah Newman, Museum Manager
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Russell-Cotes is a Grade 2* listed Victorian villa on Bournemouth clifftop. The museum has had little investment in its fabric or services since 1999 and is in desperate need of investment to ensure that the building (a historic object in its own right) survives and provides a safe and secure environment for its collection. Built into the cliff top it has problems of water ingress, whilst its exposure to the sea and salt laden winds puts it at risk from increasingly ferocious storms due to climate change.
2. The original 1901 conservatory of the Russell-Cotes is at particular risk. Plans were made in 2011 to repair the conservatory but the Council was unable to afford the cost and the work was never done.
3. From 2015, after a significant donation of £15,000 from NFU Mutual, the Museum has been raising funds specifically to fund the repair and renewal of the Conservatory which is now facing imminent collapse. It has been identifying additional sources of funds that could enable the restoration work to be undertaken.
4. These funds have been held in a restricted fund for the purpose of restoring the conservatory. The fund stands at £29,952.73.
5. The cost of repairing the Conservatory is estimated to be c. £120,000 plus fees.

Arts Council England MEND fund

6. In June 2021 Arts Council England announced a new fund to undertake vital infrastructure and urgent maintenance backlog work to non-national accredited museums.
7. The Russell-Cotes applied for a project to tackle urgent and essential issues namely repair the conservatory, improvements to the roofs and gutters to stop water penetration, improvements to drainage and the replacement the air handling units which are at end of life.
8. Its application passed the EOI stage in July. The required site visit by Historic England has given feedback which confirms that the application is eligible, viable and deliverable. So the Museum is submitting its final application on 18 October 2021 for work to start by 25 April 2022, with completion by 31 March 2025.

9. The ACE final decision on funding will be made in February 2022. Lead design contractors and permissions will need to be in place in advance of the decision.

Match funding from BCP Council and Conservatory Fund

10. The Russell-Cotes has requested a grant of up to £518,000 from the ACE MEND fund, which will be matched by a contribution of up to £426,000 by BCP Council (subject to Cabinet approval) and £30,000 from the restricted Conservatory fund. The approval of the Management Committee to the allocation of this restricted fund is sought.
11. Further fundraising is taking place to support the project, wherever possible.
12. It should be noted that authority from the Council for this capital expenditure is still being sought.

Options Appraisal

13. Do Nothing - The Russell-Cotes could opt not to apply for funding from the ACE MEND fund and seek other funding for this project, however the conservatory is already falling down and any delay risks further damage to this Grade 2*listed building. £30,000 has been raised from the public for this very purpose and it would be difficult to justify not taking advantage of this scheme.

Summary of financial implications

14. The funds are held in a restricted fund and can only be used for the Conservatory restoration.
15. The project will support financial sustainability by reducing ongoing energy and maintenance costs and reduce the Council liability for the repair and maintenance of the building.
16. The funds will only be applied if the grant bid and matched funding from BCP Council are approved.
17. For the £426,000 contribution by BCP Council, no funding sources have yet been approved for the earmarked local contribution. As the contribution is for capital works the Council retains the potential to use prudential borrowing. Annual borrowing repayment is estimated at £28.6k (principal and interest). Alternative funding sources (for example the used of Futures Fund or CIL) will be explored should the ACE MEND bid be successful.

Summary of sustainability impact

18. The work identified in the project will support environmental sustainability through the reduction of energy consumption which is a key driver to the priorities, as required by the Grant Objectives.

Summary of Legal implications

19. Under the terms of the grant, ACE will ensure that the buildings and equipment will be used for the grant purposes. Legal commitments will need to be in place prior to the release of any grant funding.

20. Grant funding awarded must be compliant with any legislation on subsidy control applicable at the time the grant is awarded.

21. Financial provision for legal advice to ensure compliance has been included on the advice of the Council legal team.

Background papers

None

Appendices

None