

RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Report subject	Policy and procedures for audit and damage and loss
Meeting date	3 June 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	In the light of recent high-profile losses at national museums, the Russell-Cotes is introducing new policies and procedures on audit and damage and loss to reduce risk and demonstrate accountability, in line with best practice in the sector.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Management Committee agree the policies and procedures for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit • Damage and Loss
Reason for recommendations	The Management Committee is required to act in the best interests of the museum and protect the Collection
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Andy Martin, Portfolio Holder for Property, Customer and Arts
Corporate Director	Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Sarah Newman, Manager Duncan Walker, Curator
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. In summer 2023, there was significant publicity about the theft of collection items from a national museum. Consequently, attention was focussed on policies and procedures in museums to reduce the risk of theft, increase the chances of detection

and ensure that any loss or damage was reported to the relevant authorities for appropriate action.

2. Staff at the Russell-Cotes reviewed practice and policy at the Museum in the light of the incident. It is in the fortunate position of having a basic inventory and location for every item in the collection, so it can carry out audits. Audits were carried out regularly by way of routine activities (eg in response to charity accounts, public enquiries, exhibition planning) as well as specifically for security purposes. However, the Russell-Cotes Collections Development Policy, which would normally outline the policies and procedures for audit, loss and damage, were not judged adequately detailed, so more specific policies have been drawn up. These take into consideration risk and resource available.

Policy on Audit

3. The RCAGM will carry out a formal sample-based audit of its collections every year and present the findings to the Management Committee. The audit will track objects back to their documentation and vice versa to check the veracity of the collection records. Audits will take place at the Museum and the Study Centre.

Policy on Damage and Loss

4. This policy will ensure that should any damage or loss occur, it is properly recorded, reported to the Curator, Manager, Management Committee Chair and police as appropriate, and a review is undertaken to ensure that any changes deemed necessary (eg to procedures or building security) are made.
5. When the Collections Development Policy is next reviewed by the Management committee in 2026, these policies will be subsumed into the general document.

Options Appraisal

6. N/a

Summary of financial implications

7. None

Summary of legal implications

8. None

Summary of human resources implications

9. N/A

Summary of sustainability impact

10. N/A

Summary of public health implications

11. N/A

Summary of equality implications

12. N/a

Summary of risk assessment

13. n/a

Background papers

none

Appendices (restricted)

Appendix 1 Audit Policy

Appendix 2 Damage and Loss Policy