

# RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>Report on the progress of the 'Repair and Renewal 2' Project funded by Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Estates and Development (MEND) Fund Round 4</b>
Meeting date	27 October 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Russell-Cotes has received £1,500,817 from ACE MEND 4, which together with £359,317 of match funding from CIL and legacies will provide a total project grant of £1,860,134 to fund major urgent repairs to the Russell-Cotes building, services and interiors.</p> <p>Payment conditions have now been met to enable the first instalment to be paid. Conservation architects, Purcell have been appointed after an open tender and design work is underway.</p> <p>The project is due for completion by November 2027.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>The Management Committee accepts the report</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	The Management Committee is responsible for the oversight of the Russell-Cotes and is required by ACE to monitor the progress of the MEND project.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Andy Martin, Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communities and Culture
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Sarah Newman, Museum Manager
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Update

## Background

1. The building, services and interiors of the Grade2\* listed Russell-Cotes are in poor condition and until recently, have not had much significant investment since the Heritage Lottery funded refurbishment of 1999-2000.
2. In 2022, the Museum was awarded £518,000 by Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Estate and Development (MEND) Fund as part of a £974,000 total Repair and Renew project to replace the air handling systems, improve drainage and increase security and repair the Conservatory. This was completed satisfactorily in March 2025.
3. In 2024, the Russell-Cotes applied successfully for further funding under Round 4 of the same scheme.

## Grant

4. The Russell-Cotes has been awarded a grant of £1,500,817 from ACE MEND Rd 4.<sup>1</sup> The total project has a value of £1,860,134.

## 5. Income table

£1,500,817	ACE MEND 4
£250,000	Community Infrastructure Levy
£25,000	Legacy from Mrs Hart
£84,317	Legacy from Miss Stallard
<b>£1,860,134</b>	<b>Total</b>

## Scope of Work

6. The grant will enable the following work to be carried out:
  - Façade and roof repairs (sea-facing façade)
  - Fire safety protection
  - Security improvements
  - Access improvements (reinstate independent access at front door)
  - Rainwater management systems and drainage works
  - Replace end of life services (distribution board)
  - Building fabric and wall painting repairs.

## Progress

7. BCP Council procurement conducted an open tender for the Lead Design contract. Seven tenders were received and the conservation architect firm, Purcell has been selected for the contract. They started work on the project in August and have been

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<sup>1</sup> The original application was for £1,528,542 but the repair of the fountain in the Main Hall was deemed ineligible.

working closely with the museum team, BCP surveyors and procurement team since.

8. An application has been submitted for Listed Building Consent for the work which is still under review. The Conservation Officer has not identified any major concerns but there are likely to be a number of conditions to be discharged once plans are further developed.
9. Purcell are prioritising the procurement of the electrical and CCTV work as we hope this can be undertaken in January 2026 to take advantage of the museum's regular closure for conservation. The major works to the front façade are scheduled for the spring and summer 2026.
10. Further appointments of the design team are being progressed ie Quantity Surveyor, Structural Engineer and Fire Engineer.
11. Our aim is to ensure that the museum remains open for as much as possible, even if sections or rooms have to be closed off for short periods, in order to minimise impact on visitors, staff and income. The project is due for completion by November 2027. See Appendix 1 for the draft programme.
12. An introductory meeting has been held online between the Arts Council, Management Committee Chair, Lead Architect from Purcell and Museum Manager.

### **Options Appraisal**

13. N/a

### **Summary of financial implications**

14. Risks of cost inflation have been mitigated. The work has been developed to RIBA Stage 3, by specialist conservation accredited surveyors and architects, costed by a Quantity Surveyor and includes an element for inflation and contingency in line with sector expectations. The work should be completed in 2026.
15. Further repairs in the next 3 to 5 years are required (c £2million) which are subject to discussions with National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) about a phased approach to long-term capital investment, once the Russell-Cotes is independent of BCP Council.

### **Summary of legal implications**

16. BCP Council approved accepting the grant at a Council meeting on 3 June 2025.
17. The legal requirements for the grant have been fulfilled: a Deed of Covenant with BCP Council with a restriction on title over the freehold of the Project Asset for a period of 20 years and a Certificate of Title and letter of undertaking as to registration at the Land Registry.
18. When the Russell-Cotes' governance change takes place and the new sole trustee, RCAGM Sole Trustee Ltd, takes the place of BCP Council as sole trustee, the grant will be novated to the new trustee.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

19. N/a

**Summary of sustainability impact**

20. N/A

**Summary of public health implications**

21. n/A

**Summary of equality implications**

22. n/A

**Summary of risk assessment**

23. The project has its own costed risk assessment which is submitted quarterly to ACE for review. The main risk is that the project can be progressed swiftly and stays in budget.

**Background papers**

None

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – RCAGM MEND 4 Programme