

RUSSELL COTES ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Report subject	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
Meeting date	1 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Russell-Cotes has a £1,860,134 project (part funded by ACE MEND 4) to fund major urgent repairs to the Russell-Cotes building, services and interiors.</p> <p>Conservation architects, Purcell, have been appointed as lead designers and have commenced Stage 4 design work for the building project including significant opening up works in the basement area to better understand the construction, extent of the problems and identify the best course of action. Stage 4 design is expected to be completed by the end of June for the tender process to start later in the summer.</p> <p>Tenders for the CCTV replacement have been received and are being evaluated.</p> <p>Design work for fire protection is underway by IDF.</p> <p>The supporting team of structural engineers, fire specialists and quantity surveyors have been appointed.</p> <p>Listed building consent has been received subject to the discharge of conditions.</p> <p>The project is due for completion by November 2027.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Management Committee accepts the report</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. 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, increase security and repair the Conservatory. This was completed satisfactorily in March 2025.
2. In 2024, the Russell-Cotes applied successfully for further funding under Round 4 of the same scheme for a project with a budget of £1,860,134.

Scope of Work

3. 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

4. Purcell were appointed in August 2025 as lead designers. They were new to the building and the project which is complex and significant. Although we are behind the original draft schedule, a new programme has been drawn up (Appendix 1) which is still well within the funding timeframe.

Appointments

5. IDF Fire Engineers has been appointed for the fire safety protection works
6. Mann Williams has been appointed as Structural engineers

7. NT Surveying has been appointed as Quantity/Cost Surveyors.
8. CDM Principal Designer appointment is currently being tendered.

Façade and Roof Repairs

9. Purcell are working on the detailed Stage 4 design of the façade and roof repairs, particularly the veranda balustrades, floor waterproofing and canopies. A first round of opening up works has taken place in the basement offices with the removal of false ceilings to further understand the construction, the structure of the concrete slab, the beams and the extent of the corrosion and for the structural engineer to then advise on the programme of work. So far they show multiple ceiling layers, many historic repairs which are often around the beam ends which is of concern, as they may require more repair than is in the project's cost plan or has been approved in the Listed building Consent.
10. Further opening up works are scheduled for the end of May to ensure that the condition of the floor structure is understood as much as reasonably possible before concluding Stage 4. This is to ensure cost control and minimise the risk of unavoidable and unexpected additional works in Stage 5. The Conservation Officer has been included in discussions, but it is looking likely that repairs to the beams or additional supporting beams will require a new Listed Building Consent application.
11. This work has had an impact on staff who have had to clear and vacate offices but provides a good pilot for the building works in due course.
12. We are expecting the completion of Stage 4 at the end of June, the issue of the tender information in August, the contract let in November for work to start in January taking advantage of the museum's annual closure period.

Fire Safety Protection

13. IDF are drafting a proposal to improve fire compartmentalisation in the building and fire safety. Full compliance will be impossible because of the nature of the building but we hope to identify some proportionate improvements, notably the fire separation of the building and galleries. As there is a change to the proposals from those submitted for Listed Building Consent (LBC), this will probably require a further LBC Application.

Security Improvements

14. The replacement of CCTV has been subject to Listed Building Consent. Tender information was sent out to four contractors in December, but requested time extensions and invitations to further companies have resulted in delays. However five tenders have now been received and these are being assessed currently with a view to work starting in the summer. Detailed discussions will need to be held with the successful tenderer because of the complexity of the works in the highly significant building and to ensure the user interface is appropriate for operations.

Drainage Improvements

15. Initial surveys have started to look at improvements to drainage from the building.

Planning and Listed Building Consent

16. Listed Building Consent has been received for the work subject to detailed conditions which will need to be satisfactorily discharged. Further consents will probably be needed.

Budget

17. To end of March 2026, expenditure has been on budget ie £46,000 on fees.

Options Appraisal

18. n/a

Summary of financial implications

19. The project is funded by a grant of £1,500,817 from ACE MEND. £250,000 has been provided by the Community Infrastructure Levy and £109,317 from Legacies.

Summary of legal implications

20. n/a

Summary of human resources implications

21. n/a

Summary of sustainability impact

22. n/a

Summary of public health implications

23. n/a

Summary of equality implications

24. n/a

Summary of risk assessment

25. The main risk is that the project is not delivered to the timetable and that costs increase with inflation. The Museum is endeavouring through regular meetings with the lead designer to keep up the momentum and to support the designers through the often lengthy and challenging Council processes.
26. NT Surveying are working closely with Purcell to control costs. As part of the tendering process for the main work, the team will agree value engineering as needed and/or elements which can be priced 'below the line' subject to instruction and eliminated if necessary to control costs, but ensure priorities are met.

Background papers

None

Appendices

Draft Programme