



## Locomotive Engineering Conservator

**Project:** Reimagining Railways: Interpreting the Locomotive Collection at Leeds Industrial Museum

**Client:** Leeds Museums & Galleries (Leeds City Council)

**Budget:** £12,000 (inclusive of expenses; exclusive of VAT)

**Contract Period:** July 2026 – October 2027

**Location:** Leeds Industrial Museum, Armley Mills, Leeds, LS12 2QF

**Deadline for proposals:** 9am Friday 12 June 2026

### 1. Project Overview

Leeds Museums & Galleries (LMG) is delivering *Reimagining Railways: Interpreting the Locomotive Collection*, an NLHF-funded project to redisplay and reinterpret the historic Locomotive and Railway Gallery at Leeds Industrial Museum (LIM). The gallery has been closed for over a decade and will reopen in 2027 as a safe, accessible and co-curated space showcasing Leeds' world-leading locomotive heritage.

The project will conserve and redisplay a group of large industrial objects—including key examples from our Designated locomotive and machine tool collection, representing over 180 years of engineering innovation in Leeds. The new display will connect these collections to wider social, environmental and global stories through inclusive interpretation and community collaboration.

Following extensive investment through the Museum Estate and Development Fund and Leeds Flood Alleviation schemes (2023–25), the site is structurally stable and environmentally secure. The next step is to undertake specialist conservation and maintenance planning for the locomotive collection included in the display to ensure its long-term care and sustainability, and to ensure the collection looks its best for the museum's visitors as they experience this new railway gallery.

### 2. Purpose of the role

The freelance locomotive engineering conservator will provide expert conservation advice, condition assessment, and mentoring to staff and volunteers to ensure the safe, ethical, and sustainable care of the museum's large industrial objects.

Working closely with the Curatorial Team and LMG's Technical and Collections Teams, the consultant will:

- Assess the current condition of the locomotives and related machinery;
- Advise on any long-term threats posed by remaining ingress water and make recommendations on necessary actions.
- Advise on appropriate stabilisation, cleaning, and maintenance methods – also to aid public display;
- Develop practical maintenance and inspection plans;
- Support staff and volunteers through training and joint working; and
- Ensure all work aligns with the *Guidelines on the Conservation of Large and Working Objects* (ICON, National Railway Museum) and LMG's internal collections standards.

This work underpins the project's *Saving Heritage* and *Organisational Sustainability* principles and will build a lasting framework for preventive conservation across Leeds Industrial Museum.

### **3. Scope of Work – below is an indicative schedule that will provide the needed outputs:**

#### **Phase 1: Project Familiarisation and Planning (July 2026)**

- Review existing documentation including asbestos certification (2012–2013), historic conservation notes and the *Heritage Significance Statement*.
- Visit the site to inspect locomotives within the Locomotive Gallery.
- Agree scope and methodology with the Industrial History Curator (currently in recruitment) and Leeds Museums and Galleries Conservator.
- Produce a short *Conservation Work Plan* outlining tasks, risks, and proposed schedule – with a view for LMG staff and Volunteers to start cleaning objects as soon as safe and possible.

#### **Phase 2: Condition Reporting and Preventive Conservation (July 2026 – July 2027)**

- Undertake detailed condition surveys for approximately eight locomotives.
- Identify conservation priorities, stabilisation measures, and any remedial actions needed before redisplay.
- Work alongside LMG staff and volunteers during cleaning and inspection sessions, providing on-site training in:
  - Handling and moving large objects safely;
  - Assessing mechanical components for water ingress, corrosion and fatigue;
  - Basic surface cleaning and preventive measures; Environmental monitoring and pest management.
  - Ensuring the collection is ready for public display
- Create standardised digital condition report templates for integration into the TMS collections database.

### Phase 3: Maintenance Planning and Handover (August 2026 – October 2027)

- Develop **Preventive Maintenance Plans** for each locomotive and major object, specifying inspection frequency, environmental parameters, and safe cleaning procedures.
- Provide recommendations for sustainable materials, lubricants, or stabilisation methods aligned with low-carbon and health & safety standards.
- Deliver a half-day training session for staff and volunteers on implementing the maintenance plan.
- Produce a concise **Final Report** summarising condition findings, conservation actions, and long-term recommendations.

### 4. Key Outputs

1. Conservation Work Plan – August 2026
2. Condition Reports for all locomotives and major machinery – November 2026
3. Preventive Maintenance Plans and training materials – October 2027
4. Final Summary Report – October 2027

All documentation will be submitted in accessible digital formats compatible with LMG's collections management system.

### 5. Skills and Experience Required

Applicants should demonstrate:

- Proven experience in the conservation or mechanical restoration of large industrial heritage or transport collections, ideally locomotives.
- Understanding of heritage-sector conservation ethics and standards (ICON, National Railway Museum, Science Museum Group).
- Experience of producing formal condition and maintenance reports for museum collections.
- Ability to train and mentor non-specialists in safe handling and preventive conservation.
- Knowledge of materials, corrosion, and environmental management in heritage contexts.
- Commitment to low-risk, low-carbon, and inclusive working practices.

Desirable:

- Accreditation with ICON or membership of a relevant professional body.
- Experience of collaborative work within local authority or accredited museums.
- Experience of preparing large museum collection items for display

## 6. Budget and Reporting

**Total budget:** £12,000 (inclusive of expenses; exclusive of VAT)

**Payment:** Indicative invoice submission schedule for payment (Leeds City Council policy of 30 days payment):

- 30% on approval of Conservation Work Plan (August 2026)
- 30% on submission of condition reports (November 2026)
- 40% on delivery of final report and training session (October 2027)

The consultant will report to:

- **Industrial History Curator (in recruitment)** – technical lead
- **Emma Bowron (Conservator, Leeds Museums & Galleries)** – conservation liaison
- Oversight by **Sarah Murray, Collections Manager & Registrar** and **Chris Sharp (Keeper/Project Manager, Leeds Industrial Museum)**

## 8. Submission Requirements

Proposals should include:

- A short outline of approach and methodology (max. 2 pages)
- Indicative timetable for delivery
- CV or company profile demonstrating relevant experience
- Example(s) of similar heritage conservation reports or projects
- Two client references
- Fee breakdown including VAT (if applied)

Please submit proposals by 9am Friday 12 June to:

**Chris Sharp, Keeper at Leeds Industrial Museum, [christopher.sharp@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.sharp@leeds.gov.uk)**

## 9. Evaluation Criteria

- Understanding of brief and NLHF heritage context (30%)
- Relevant conservation experience (30%)
- Proposed methodology and training approach (25%)
- Value for money (15%)

If required to select the successful submission, we also may invite applicants for a conversation as part of this evaluation process.