

MUSEUMS IN ESSEX MEMBERSHIP

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members agreement to Rochford District Council joining the Museums in Essex Service.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A report was submitted to Community Services on 2 October 2001, seeking agreement to join the Museums in Essex Service. A decision was made that joining should be dependent on a successful lottery application for the Windmill.
- 2.2 The bid submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in May 2002 was rejected in March 2003, on the grounds of insufficient costings for the works and for the lack of development of the museum within the Rayleigh Windmill. The HLF had decided that the most sustainable project for the use of the Windmill was in providing a quality museum. This was confirmed at a meeting between the HLF Officers and RDC Officers.
- 2.3 Following rejection of the bid, a Windmill Sub-Committee has been set up and is considering the way forward. Meetings have been held with Officers from the Museums in Essex Service, who have advised RDC Officers on the possibilities of developing the bid to a more successful conclusion.

3 THE WAY FORWARD

- 3.1 In developing a new bid to the HLF, advice from the HLF Officers needs to be taken into account, if a successful outcome is to be achieved. It has been made clear that well developed plans for a museum need to be provided, with the support of a professional museums organisation.
- 3.2 The Museums in Essex Service provides its member museums with training, assistance with grant applications and investment through challenge funding, as well as the advice of its Officers. The Museums Service also provides travelling exhibitions that would be able to visit suitable venues in Rochford, once Rochford has become a member.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 Strategic Risk

4.1.1 The Windmill is currently maintained through revenue budgets and capital bids from RDC resources. A successful HLF bid would have the potential to reduce short term maintenance implications.

4.2 Resource Risk

4.2.1 If a successful bid is not forthcoming in the short term, then an alternative source of funding will be required in the future, to carry out the major refurbishment required to the brickwork of the Windmill.

4.3 Operational Risk

4.3.1 Should the major refurbishment work not be carried out, then continued deterioration of the external brickwork, especially around the windows, poses a significant risk to the current content of the Windmill, which belongs to the Rayleigh Historical Society.

4.4 Reputation Risk

4.4.1 Refurbishment of the Rayleigh Windmill to provide additional public access has been included in the Council's Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan. Should this HLF bid not be successful, there is a risk to the Authority in terms of delivery of the Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan objective.

4.5 Third Party Risk

4.5.1 Although the exterior of the Windmill currently poses no immediate risk to the public, should the brickwork be allowed to deteriorate in the long term, the risk to the public would inevitably rise.

4.5.2 Water ingress from failure to maintain the windows poses a potential risk to the current contents of the Windmill, owned by the Rayleigh Historical Society.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No budget provision for joining the Museums in Essex Service has been made in the current financial year. However, should Members be minded to join the organisation, funding can be met from the £65,000 capital money set aside for this project. The cost of joining is in the order of £1,500 per year. This sum will have to be included in the annual budget process to maintain membership of the Museums in Essex Service.

6 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That Members consider whether or not this Council should join the Museums in Essex Service, in order to help develop a quality bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a museum within Rayleigh Windmill. (CD(F&ES))

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Background Papers:

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