
UPDATE ON PROJECT PLANNING GRANT BID

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report advises Members on the outcome of the bid submitted in February 2004 to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to develop interpretation of the museum proposal.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Following the unsuccessful bid for funding to refurbish the Windmill in 2002/03, discussions were held with officers from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to discuss a way forward.
- 2.2 It was suggested that to develop the refurbishment bid, contact was made with the Essex Museums Service, which the Council subsequently joined at a cost of £1,328 in 2003/04. The HLF also suggested that the National Trust should be more involved in the project, although it was pointed out that they were fully consulted and supported the project throughout but could not financially support the work.
- 2.3 A report based on the meeting with the Museums Service identified the need to provide additional facilities if a registered museum were to be developed on the site. The outcome of this meeting was brought before this Sub-Committee on 5 September 2003.
- 2.4 Based on the advice that the Council could bid for a Project Planning Grant for the development of the museum, a bid was submitted to the HLF in February 2004. Advice and guidance was sought from the HLF and professionals in this field in the development of this bid. The project planning bid was based on how a museum would develop, how the museum would interpret the cultural and historical information available, identify the potential audience, and work on the educational development that could derive from the provision of this facility.
- 2.5 A brief was prepared and costs sought from specialists in this type of work, the lowest of which was £30,000. The quote also stated that the work would take in the order of twelve months to complete. This quotation formed part of the bid to the HLF to indicate that appropriate professionals would be carrying out the work.

3 OUTCOME OF THE SECOND BID

- 3.1 Officer discussions with the HLF have been ongoing since February, the most recent of which has led to a strong belief that the bid will not have a successful outcome, with a suggestion from the HLF officers that the Council withdraws the current bid.

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- 3.2 HLF officers have also indicated that, due to changing financial circumstances, i.e. reduced funding available for projects, that the scale of this project be reduced as its potential outcome would not be sufficient to justify the HLF supporting the project. The scale of the museum is unlikely to develop sufficient footfall compared to other projects.
- 3.3 Officers have strongly expressed concern at the likely outcome now being conveyed and are querying whether the Council could ever be successful in bidding for this project.
- 3.4 Having bid for a relatively modest project, initially of £184,000, advice was received from the HLF to further develop the project, and subsequent work has been carried out on that basis. However, it does appear that the goal posts are shifting again, and having developed the bid in the light of advice from the Essex Museums Service and the HLF, the HLF is now intimating that a full registered museum is not likely to be funded.

4 OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- 4.1 With the likelihood that funding is to be refused for the interpretation of the museum proposed for the Windmill, and the advice that the scale of the bid should be reduced, the Council now has to consider the options for the future of this important landmark. These are outlined below
- As now intimated by the HLF, the Council could fund the work that formed the current bid, approximately £30,000, and then move to make a new bid for a reduced project.
 - The Council could use the current funding available, £72,000 in the Capital budget, to refurbish the outside of the building as far as this funding allows. Tenders were sought in October 2003 by the appointed consultant and analysis of the works and discussion with the lowest contractor would be required to ascertain the actual level of work.
 - Provide some additional funding in next year's Capital programme to carry out a thorough refurbishment of the windmill, probably in the order of an additional £75,000.
 - Seek funding through other means, appeals etc, to local business, partnership with Rayleigh Town Council, to raise additional capital funding.
 - Investigate alternative proposals for the usage of the windmill, to make it more sustainable following refurbishment.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Strategic Risk

The Rayleigh Windmill is a prominent landmark that requires regular maintenance. The tourism, cultural and historic potential of this site needs to be realised.

5.2 Operational Risk

Current emergency works to brickwork will be carried out in 2004/05 to maintain the structure

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Should funding not be forthcoming from the HLF, in considering options the Council could incur significant expenditure on the refurbishment and maintenance of the Windmill.

6.2 Tenders have been sought in preparing the bid in line with HLF requirements from specialist contractors. The costs for works for total external and internal refurbishment allowing public access to upper floors amounts to £277,000 at the time of tender.

6.3 Continued membership of the Essex Museums Service is likely to be in the order of £1500 for 2004/05 and should be reviewed in the light of events.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There is a legal obligation to maintain the Windmill as it is a Grade 2 listed building.

8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS**

(1) The way forward for the future of the Rayleigh Windmill in the light of the likely decision of the HLF not to support the bid for the project planning grant.

(2) That an urgent meeting be sought with the HLF.

(3) That the assistance of local MPs be sought in securing support for the project.

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Background Papers:

None

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