
RAYLEIGH WINDMILL – DISCUSSIONS WITH ESSEX MUSEUMS SERVICE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update following a meeting held with the Essex Museums Service on 8 July 2003.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Windmill Sub-Committee on 4 July 2003, it was stated that officers would be meeting with Essex County Council's Museum Development Officer on 8 July 2003.
- 2.2 Notes of the meeting held on 8 July are attached at Appendix A.

3 OFFICER COMMENTS ON MEETING WITH ESSEX MUSEUM SERVICE

- 3.1 The advice of the Museum Service, if adopted, would change the scheme significantly from that originally envisaged. However, the advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) clearly indicated that a museum should receive more favourable consideration.
- 3.2 The proposal for additional space raises the question of whether a small building close to the windmill is acceptable or whether some space within The Mill could be utilised.
- 3.3 Holmes Place is submitting a report to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 11 September 2003, as part of their normal twice yearly report to Members. The report includes proposals for the potential re-use of the Crèche for wider community use, which would fit in with the potential for providing additional room for educational purposes. Officers will discuss the potential to use this room, subject to the Holmes Place proposals being accepted.
- 3.4 Whilst there is the possibility of receiving a five year contribution towards revenue costs, this is clearly an issue that requires careful consideration as ultimately there will be additional costs to be borne by the Authority.
- 3.5 If Members are minded to instruct officers to investigate in more detail the suggestions made by The Museum Service, it is estimated that at least six months will be required to formulate a new bid.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RESOLVES**

That Members note the content of the meeting with the Essex Museum Service and agree an appropriate way forward in formulating the bid.

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

Background Papers:

For further information please contact David Timson on:-

Tel:- 01703 318110

E-Mail:- david.timson@rochford.gov.uk.

APPENDIX A

Notes of Windmill Meeting with Essex County Council, Museums Service

Date: 8 July 2003.

Present: Stephen Lowy, ECC. Museums Service
David Timson, RDC
Brian Broadbent, RDC
Esther Rowland, RDC

The meeting was convened to discuss the way forward in terms of developing the museum / educational element of a new bid to the HLF. The advice given by Mr Lowy is his view of what would make a successful bid.

It had been made clear in the feedback from the HLF that they saw the development of the museum and the educational opportunities as the prime means of providing sustainability to the refurbishment of the building.

RDC will consider joining the Essex Museums Service, who will be providing advice in terms of developing and working towards formal registration of the museum and of the type of museum presentation that would be most likely to be successful. Stephen made the point that working towards registering the museum would give a lot more weight in a second HLF bid. That the process, if the decision was made to proceed with a registration application, would take time and there was a “whole set of requirements” which would need to be met.

Discussion was initially around how the museum would work on a number of floors and it was decided that the museum should concentrate on social history of the district, with a time line through the floors.

In terms of educational sustainability, he considered it necessary that additional space would be required to provide an educational base and a small storage facility for artefacts within the museum. Stephen advised that it would be essential to have a form of humidity control in the windmill to safeguard the artefacts (this would require investigation by a specialist – cost likely to be high.

Stephen Lowy confirmed that the HLF also had provision for bids for revenue funded posts for up to five years and that potentially this bid could include a bid for either a curator or conservation officer and a part time site officer, to manage the facility.

Bearing in mind that the HLF have now indicated that we can bid for up to 90% up to a maximum of £1 million. With the Council's £65,000 capital contribution, this gives an overall potential bid of approx. £700,000. This can be broken down into the following figures:

The windmill restoration:	£350,000
Educational/Storage	£250,000
Revenue posts:	£100,000 (£20K for 5 years)

The revenue posts bid would respond to the issues about site management and ongoing support for the Rayleigh Historical Society to both develop the museum and their organisation to support the museum. An integrated approach to the management of the site could be that a part time site manager would open the museum on a regular number of hours per day and the Historical Society could then provide enhance opening hours through their voluntary support.

Stephen Lowy advised of the appropriate officers at ECC Education who could provide maximum support and Esther will contact them in the very near future. He also mentioned a museum in Brentwood, which was run as a trust, was registered, yet was only very small – may be useful contact.

Further discussion was held around the National Trust potential development of the barbican gate, which provided a good linkage between the windmill site and the facilities in The Mill and Rayleigh Mount. It was considered that this would enhance the bid's opportunity of success.

Stephen Lowy will confirm much of his detailed advice in writing as soon as possible. A further meeting will take place at a date to be set in the autumn to review progress.