
OUTCOME OF THE HERITAGE LOTTERY BID – RAYLEIGH WINDMILL

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the rejection of the Heritage Lottery Bid for Rayleigh Windmill. The report provides Members with information on the reasons for refusal and seeks Members agreement to the way forward.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The bid for improvement to the access for Rayleigh Windmill was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in May 2002. The bid was made following the deliberations of the Rayleigh Windmill Working Group, consisting of Council Members, Officers, a Consultant Conservation Architect and representatives from the local Historical Society of Rayleigh (formerly Rayleigh Antiquarian Society) and the National Trust. There was also input from Soundtrak in terms of the Information Technology provision in improving access.
- 2.2 A decision from the Heritage Lottery Fund was anticipated at the end of November 2002. However, following a late request for information, it was clear that this deadline was not going to be achieved. A revised decision date of 28 February 2003 was given, when the Heritage Lottery Committee would next meet. A verbal response to the Council's application was received on 7 March, followed by written notification on 11 March 2003.

3 REASONS FOR REJECTION OF THE BID AND OFFICER COMMENTS

- 3.1 Two reasons have been given for the rejection of the bid. The Heritage Lottery Fund consider:
1. That the scheme is not accurately costed.
 2. That the development of the museum has not been sufficiently and thoroughly examined.
- 3.2 In the course of processing the application, the Heritage Lottery Fund had been in contact with the Council on both these matters and further information was supplied. The comments made in relation to the costings are extremely surprising, bearing in mind that the costs for the scheme were prepared by a qualified, experienced Conservation

Architect, who had prepared schemes for the refurbishment of windmills previously. He also engaged the services of an experienced Millwright in preparing the costs. A full survey of the building was carried out, so it was believed costs submitted were accurate.

- 3.3 In relation to the museum element, this had really not been the main focus of the bid and it is therefore surprising that the Heritage Lottery Committee has specifically focussed on this area. They were advised when they questioned the museum element that the Essex Museums Service had been involved and that an action plan had been prepared. This was sent to the Heritage Lottery Fund
- 3.4 As part of consideration of the Council's bid, an Architect / Assessor representing the Heritage Lottery Fund, visited the site on 7 November. At the request of the Architect / Assessor, representatives from the Council were not present.
- 3.5 In their feedback, the HLF have indicated that the door is not totally shut on this project, as they recognise the value of the Windmill in Rayleigh and the potential access improvements. Thus, it is likely that through further discussion a successful project might emerge, although the timeframe for this cannot be given at this time.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

- 4.1 Members now have to determine whether and how they wish to take this project forward. Given the importance of the Windmill in the context of Rayleigh and its relationship to the Mount, it is considered that there is still a need to develop a long term future for the building and its upgrade, as part of the overall enhancement of this area.
- 4.2 In this context, it is therefore suggested that Officers take up the offer of the HLF Development Team, to clarify the issues that have arisen, the potential for taking the bid forward and the likely timeframe associated with this.
- 4.3 Members may also like to consider whether it would be appropriate to set up a new Rayleigh Windmill Sub-Committee comprising, say, four Members. This could receive the report back from Officers on the meeting with the HLF Development Team and consider the options available to the Authority, before making a recommendation back into the Council on the proposed way forward. It could also invite representatives from other interested parties e.g. the National Trust, the local Historical Society of Rayleigh (formerly the Antiquarian Society), the Town Council and the Chamber, to its meeting(s) to discuss with them the way forward on this project.

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- 4.4 Clearly, if the decision is to proceed with a revised project submission, it will be important to clarify with partners their resource contributions to the project, as well as examine the resource implications for the Council, in funding, Officer and Member contributions.
- 4.5 If the museum issue is to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion, Members may also need to consider whether it would be timely to subscribe to the Museums in Essex Service, to ensure that the support of that body can be fully utilised.
- 4.6 Membership of the Museums in Essex Service was previously considered at Community Services Committee on 2 October 2001, (min. 331/01), when the decision was made not to become a member. Museums in Essex acknowledge that Rochford has little in the way of museum facilities at present but if it is decided that the museum proposal must be developed, then their expertise would prove invaluable in working on a revised project. It is recommended that following feedback from the HLF Development Team, the Sub-Committee considers this issue and recommend to the Council accordingly. If a decision was taken to join, the annual fee is currently £1,500.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 At this stage the key resource implications relate to Officer and Member time on evaluating the reasons for refusal, receiving feedback and determining the way forward in the light of the information.
- 5.2 If it is decided to proceed with a revised bid, there will clearly be costs both in terms of the project itself and putting the bid submission together. Both would need to be considered in detail before Council formally decided on whether to proceed.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) That Officers meet with the HLF Development Team at the earliest opportunity, to clarify the reasons for refusal and examine potential ways forward to progress this project.
 - (2) That a new Rayleigh Windmill Sub Committee, comprising four Members, is established to consider the options available for the Council and to come forward with a recommended plan of action for securing the future of the Windmill and the adjoining area. (HRHM)

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Background Papers:

Letter from Heritage Lottery Fund dated 10 March 2003.

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