
REPORT OF THE WINDMILL SUB-COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2005

1 RAYLEIGH WINDMILL – LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

1.1 This item of business was referred by the Windmill Sub-Committee on 31 January to Council with a recommendation that the Council agrees proposals for the floor usage of the windmill and the broad strategy around the opening of the various elements of the project and that the principle of a Partnership arrangement with the National Trust should be pursued to the overall benefit of the project. A copy of the officer's report to the Sub-Committee is attached at Appendix A.

1.2 The Sub-Committee noted that:-

- Progress on the scheme had had to be accelerated, as a result of the condition imposed with respect to the Thames Gateway grant, that all monies be spent within the current financial year.
- The ground floor should be utilised as predominantly classroom/exhibition space. The classroom space should be as flexible as possible in order to cater for a variety of needs, including building on the National Trust's Guardianship Scheme. There should also be a small display area to give a flavour of what would be on the higher floors and a second display area to house leaflets about other attractions in the District and postcards relating to the windmill and the Mount as well as being a centre for information about other attractions.
- The ground floor should also house a screen, which would relay images from cameras sited on each of the floors and on the external cap at the top of the windmill so that all visitors would be able to see everything displayed within the higher floors of the windmill and also the panoramic view outside the windmill.
- Given that the first floor comprised the largest area within the windmill, with vertical walls that would lend themselves well for display purposes, it was the ideal area to house permanent exhibitions for the Rayleigh Historical Society.
- The second floor should be used for a variety of exhibitions, which would be rotated. This could include themed exhibitions from the Historical Society's collections and, potentially, craft exhibitions. There would also be meeting space.

- It would be necessary to work closely with the Historical Society and the Museums Service in developing a collections policy so that duplicated items would not be accepted in future and so that details of who had donated items could be recorded. This policy would also determine what the content of the exhibits would contain.
- The third floor would become a viewing level, as it would be the highest part of the windmill open to the public. This floor would contain a Rochford scale model and a history timeline around the wall. There would also be merit in a small display of the history of the Mount being sited next to the window where the Mount could best be viewed.
- The fourth and fifth floors would be for maintenance purposes only. It was also noted that, by means of glass screening, it would be possible to lock off individual floors without, however, preventing access to floors above or below.
- The National Trust was in the process of developing a conservation plan for Rayleigh Mount, which would include the re-building of the Barbican entrance. The National Trust would consider adding an entry to that of the Mount in the National Trust Year Book about the windmill, which could include details relating to the provision of refreshments for the general public, signposting a history trail in Rayleigh and other local attractions and the possibility of guided tours of the windmill on named days.
- It was possible that the East of England Regional National Trust and the Southend branch of the National Trust could generate finance to help with displays at the windmill and there could also be the possibility of housing a National Trust shop within the windmill.
- The archiving of materials held by the Rayleigh Historical Society and the setting up of displays would take some considerable time. A phased opening, commencing with the opening of the sensory garden to the public in November/December 2005, culminating in the opening of the interior of the windmill in April 2006, would therefore seem a sensible way forward.

1.3 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) That the proposals for the floor usage, as outlined in section 3 of the report, be agreed.
- (2) That the broad strategy around the opening of the various elements of the project, as outlined in section 4 of the report, be agreed.
- (3) That the principle of a partnership arrangement with the National Trust be pursued to the overall benefit of the project, with details reported back to the Windmill Sub-Committee. (CD(F&ES))

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Background Papers:-

None

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