



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DATE:	14 FEBRUARY 2013
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE JULIAN RUDD
TITLE OF REPORT:	MILTON ROOMS DEVELOPMENT
WARDS AFFECTED:	PRIMARILY MALTON AND NORTON BUT ALL WARDS INDIRECTLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report outlines the need for a robust Options Appraisal and Business Plan that demonstrates the viability and sustainability of proposals for the Milton Rooms to become a successful arts venue and seeks Members' approval of funding towards this work.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members consider in principle support for the proposals subject to officers identifying sufficient funds within the 2013/2014 budget.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Council holds a long lease on the Milton and Assembly Rooms buildings, parts of which are significantly underused and in need of extensive internal refurbishment.
- 3.2 The building complex is a Grade II Listed Building within the Malton (Town Centre) Conservation Area. As such there is a statutory duty on the Council to protect the character and future of this historic building. As the Council is also the enforcement body for Listed Buildings it is even more important that the Council ensures that it fulfils its statutory duties in this respect.
- 3.3 The Milton Rooms Management Committee (MRMC) wish to pursue proposals, with support from the Prince's Regeneration Trust (PRT), to renovate the buildings and enable them to be used their full potential to become a major arts venue for Malton / Norton, the District, and regionally. This will provide significant regeneration benefits for Malton / Norton in general and would have particular benefits for the tourism, catering, hospitality, and arts sectors of the economy, with associated additional employment and would promote Malton as a major cultural hub.

- 3.4 The proposal outlined in this report will help to ensure that the Council can make best beneficial use of its asset by identifying a sustainable long-term use for the building - potentially reducing the cost to the Council of long term maintenance liabilities.
- 3.5 The creative sector is of major importance to the Ryedale economy: the Creative Commissioning process, which the Council is currently undertaking, has identified that it represents:
- 11 professional arts organisations
 - Over 150 micro-enterprises
 - Creative businesses account for c. 1 in 20 of all businesses in Ryedale
 - More than 100 social enterprises
 - In excess of 1,000 volunteers
 - At least 50% of Ryedale residents are engaged in cultural activity
 - Cultural organisations attract more than more than 400,000 visitors per year
 - Inward investment exceeding £1,000,000 per annum
- 3.6 Development of the Milton Rooms as an arts venue and as an arts hub for southern Ryedale will provide an opportunity for further development and growth of this important sector of the local economy.
- 3.7 An Options Appraisal and Business Plan is required in order to demonstrate to potential investors that the proposed use is both appropriate and viable. Other potential funders for this work have been approached, however, £15,500 is now required from the Council in order to enable this work to commence at the earliest opportunity.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 Should Members decide not to adopt the recommendations outlined in this report significant risks could include
- Members of the MRMC conclude that their aspirations for the venue are not achievable and are no longer prepared to commit time to the venue. This would result in further on-going period of uncertainty and might ultimately result in the dissolution of the MRMC and responsibility for the whole building (excepting the basement area leased to the Masonic Lodge) reverting to the Council.
 - PRT may conclude that the Council is not committed to the project and may withdraw their support – seriously affecting the ability to deliver a sustainable long-term solution for the building, and significantly reducing opportunities to secure capital funding from heritage and other organisations.
 - There would also be a significant reputational impact on the Council if the above risks transpire.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Council Aim 2: To create the conditions for economic success in Ryedale:
- Improving the vitality of Malton as a retail centre
 - Improving the infrastructure and strengthening the role of the market towns

Council Aim 3: To have a high quality, clean and sustainable environment

- To maintain the quality of our local environment

Council Aim 4: To have active communities where everyone feels welcome and safe

- Improving the cultural offer in Ryedale

5.2 Consultation on this issue has taken place with the MRMC and PRT.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 A report was presented to Resources Working Party on 13 March 2012 setting out detailed background, proposed approach and matters for consideration in relation to project development.
- 6.2 The Prince's Regeneration Trust (PRT) have been providing advice and officer support to the Milton Rooms Management Committee (MRMC) to assist with developing plans for the venue and identifying funding sources. PRT's support is all offered on a 'pro-bono' basis – there is clearly very significant value to this support but it is offered at no cost to the MRMC. The PRT have stated that they are committed to supporting the project on this basis for as long as it takes to get to the point where MRMC have all the funding and capacity needed to implement the agreed project. They have provided a statement of support, as attached at Annex A.
- 6.3 The PRT are a very effective and highly prominent advocate for the Milton Rooms and their aspirations for the future. Their involvement will greatly enhance the chances of successfully establishing the Milton Rooms as a long-term sustainable venture. One of the major strengths that the PRT bring is the ability to successfully engage key heritage and funding agencies with a project, which then greatly increases the ability to secure the necessary investment to achieve a sustainable solution.
- 6.4 PRT produce case studies of their regeneration projects – two such studies relating to heritage regeneration projects based around historic buildings, which both previously had uncertain futures, are attached at Annex B. Neither of these projects demonstrates exactly the same challenges or opportunities as the Milton Rooms, however, there are some parallels and they demonstrate that over time the initial investment in Heritage Regeneration can pay for itself through increased taxes and reduced benefits and that they also contribute towards the overall economic and social regeneration of an area.
- 6.5 Senior Members and Officers met with representatives of the MRMC and the PRT on 9 May 2012 to discuss proposals. The meeting was very positive and confirmed that a robust business plan was essential.
- 6.6 Since then the MRMC have continued to run their regular programme of events and performances. In addition the MRMC have commissioned a special production of a new play by internationally acclaimed playwright Jim Cartwright entitled 'A Christmas Fair'. The play has received very positive reviews, including from the Guardian (see link below under Background Papers) and has further enhanced the Milton Rooms' standing as an arts venue of regional and even national significance.
- 6.7 PRT's ambassador, Griff Rhys Jones, visited the Milton Rooms and presented a special 'Tea and a Tale' event on 12 November 2012, talking about his experience in saving historic buildings and discussing what the future might hold for the Milton Rooms. This was effectively a public event to publicise the project and the PRT's involvement with, and commitment to, the Milton Rooms. The visit is highlighted in

an article on the PRT's website (see Background Papers link below). The event attracted a capacity crowd of around 300 people, indicating strong support from the local community for the Milton Rooms and their aspirations.

- 6.8 The meeting with Members, Officers and representatives of the MRMC and PRT on 9 May 2012 confirmed that a robust business plan was essential to enable any project to progress. Discussions with the PRT have highlighted that some potential funders will require an initial options appraisal to consider various options and to ensure that the proposed use is appropriate before then developing a business plan for the proposed use.
- 6.9 The outcomes of the proposed work will be to:
- provide a realistic and viable option for development and the long-term future operation of the Milton Rooms
 - greatly reduce uncertainty regarding the future use of the Milton Rooms
 - provide greater certainty regarding any requirements for Council investment
 - enable the Milton Rooms to continue to develop as a major arts venue and to become a hub for the arts in southern Ryedale
 - provide a major draw to encourage more visitors to Malton / Norton and Ryedale
 - contribute significantly towards the regeneration of Malton / Norton and provide economic benefits for a wide range of businesses
 - provide enhanced access to a high quality arts venue for residents of Malton / Norton, Ryedale and surrounding areas
- 6.10 Neither the MRMC or RDC have the funds, capacity or expertise to undertake this work and so a specialist consultant appointment is required. Officers have therefore worked with the MRMC and PRT on the following tasks:
- Development of Options Appraisal and Business Plan Brief
 - Obtained Tenders for this work
 - Interviewed two prospective consultants
 - Completed evaluation of the tenders received
 - Identified Bonnar Keenlyside as preferred consultant
- 6.11 PRT have assisted MRMC to identify potential funding sources for this work and in making high level introductions to organisations that might be of assistance and advocacy on behalf of the MRMC.
- 6.12 The total cost of the Options Appraisal / Business Plan work following the tender exercise outlined above is expected to be £22,000. It was initially envisaged that this cost would be split three ways as set out below, and funding applications have since been made to AHF and GFTA:
- £7,500 Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF),
 - £7,500 Grants for the Arts (GFTA, via Arts Council England (ACE))
 - £7,000 Ryedale District Council.
- 6.13 The AHF application was approved at a reduced amount of £6,500 – and the offer of funding must be taken up by the 1st April.
- 6.14 The MRMC's play 'A Christmas Fair' also entailed an application for funding from GFTA that was submitted prior to that for the Options Appraisal and Business Plan. The Arts Council England (ACE) will only allow one GFTA application at a time from an organisation, unless prior permission has been obtained to submit a second. A request to submit a second application was made and permission was granted to

submit the second application. The application was duly submitted on 4 December 2012. Unfortunately, following the 6 week assessment period MRMC were notified on 18 January 2013 that, despite the application scoring very highly, it had been unsuccessful on this occasion.

- 6.15 Following the tender process and evaluation of proposals it is not considered that a robust Options Appraisal and Business Plan can be produced for less than the £22,000 set out above. In order to enable this work to commence at the earliest opportunity it is therefore proposed that the Council provide a total of £15,500 towards this work (being the balance of funding required).
- 6.16 The proposed work needs to commence as soon as possible for two reasons:
- the offer letter from the AHF states that their grant offer will be withdrawn on 1 April 2013,
 - the longer it takes to secure funding and commence work, the greater the risk that the preferred consultants are committed elsewhere.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial

£15,500 is required to finance the recommendations as set out in this report for which there is no budgetary provision. The cost could be met from Council reserves or officers could utilise unallocated funds within the 2013/2014 budget. Should members propose the use of reserves this issue would be a Part B decision for Council.

Depending upon the outcomes of the Options Appraisal / Business Plan, it is likely that a case for further capital investment by the Council to secure the long term success of the venture may be required.

b) Legal

There are no significant legal implications in considering this report

c) Other

There are no significant other implications in considering this report

8.0 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Should the proposed funding be approved, the Milton Rooms will appoint Bonnar Keenlyside to undertake the Options Appraisal and Business Planning work.
- 8.2 Further stages will depend upon the outcomes of the above work, however, it is expected that a positive outcome would result in the need for design development, cost estimates and applications for capital funding from various sources (potentially including the Council).

Julian Rudd
Head of Economy and Infrastructure

Author: Howard Wallis, Regeneration Manager
Telephone No: 01653 600666 ext: 274
E-Mail Address: howard.wallis@ryedale.gov.uk

Background Papers are available for inspection at:

Referenced committee reports are available at:

<http://democracy.ryedale.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

Details of the Milton Rooms current programme of events can be found at:

<http://www.themiltonrooms.com/>

The Guardian's Review of A Christmas Fair can be found at

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2012/dec/17/a-christmas-fair-review>

The Prince's Regeneration Trust website article on Griff Rhys Jones' visit to the Milton Rooms):

<http://www.princes-regeneration.org/press/our-ambassador-griff-rhys-jones-visits-milton-rooms-malton>

ANNEX A – THE PRINCE’S REGENERATION TRUST STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

“The Prince’s Regeneration Trust (PRT) is working with the Milton Rooms to save and restore this beautiful theatre for community benefit and to develop it into a nationally recognised arts venue.

PRT works across the UK saving important redundant historic sites and helping secure sustainable new uses that benefits the community. It believes our heritage spaces and places should not only be saved, but where ever possible, re-used as valuable community-assets.

The national charity became involved in the project to support the expansion and development of the Milton Rooms in 2011. It is providing support and technical advice about the restoration plans as well as helping the theatre secure funds necessary to ensure these ambitious and worthwhile plans come to fruition. PRT wanted to support the project as it is much-loved and well-regarded arts space that truly has community at its heart. It runs successful theatre events and workshops that are widely accessible and inclusive. Its survival and development will bolster the local community and provide opportunity and inspiration to residents and visitors alike.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of the Trust said: “The Prince’s Regeneration Trust is delighted to be supporting The Milton Rooms theatre in their efforts to save the beautiful Georgian Assembly Room. We are well experienced in restoring historic buildings for community benefit and are excited to use this expertise to be able to support this leading innovative arts venue expand. It is such an exciting project and we are hugely proud to be involved.”

ANNEX B – THE PRINCE’S REGENERATION TRUST CASE STUDIES