



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DATE:	26 SEPTEMBER 2019
REPORT OF THE:	DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS AND PARTNERSHIPS PHILLIP SPURR
TITLE OF REPORT:	MILTON ROOMS
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Committee on the support which is being offered, and will be offered by the Council to identify a sustainable, long-term future for the Milton Rooms.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members::

- (i) request officers commission dedicated support, as set out at sections 6.8-6.10, to ensure that a sustainable, long term business model is developed for the Milton Rooms.
- (ii) agree to receive a report back upon completion of this work.
- (iii) note the ongoing support that is being provided to the Milton Rooms by this Council
- (iv) do not approve the application for funding for an events manager or toilet/foyer refurbishment works at this stage.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To confirm the support that will be provided by the Council to identify a sustainable, long-term business model for the facility.
- 3.2 The Council has already invested in the Milton Rooms and is continuing to do in an effort to ensure that it has a long-term future, working alongside the Milton Rooms Community Trust (MRCT) and other relevant partners to achieve this.

- 3.3 To agree at this stage, pending clarity upon the long-term business model, to defer Council investment in an events manager and the proposed toilet/foyer refurbishment works.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 The Milton Rooms is a building of great historical significance and huge importance to the community of Malton and the wider Ryedale area. As such, it is vital that a sustainable, long-term future is found for it.
- 4.2 It is recognised that, over a number of years, a range of options have been considered, and a range of plans developed for the future of the building. However, none of these have identified the sustainable long term business model that all partners are striving to achieve, and so it is recommended that further work is commissioned to identify this sustainable model. This will be commissioned and led by the Council.
- 4.3 It is acknowledged that the Milton Rooms is in need of investment and that choosing to defer the recruitment of an events manager and toilet/foyer refurbishment at this stage could result in a potential loss of bookings and resulting income. However, in the absence of a comprehensive forward plan, such investment cannot be supported in isolation. It must be noted, however, that in line with its leasehold responsibilities the Council does continue to invest significant sums in the repair and maintenance of the Milton Rooms as set out below.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 As a key facility for Malton/wider Ryedale a strong and thriving Milton Rooms has a significant role to play in contributing towards the delivery of a number of key Council priorities:

Sustainable Growth

- Promoting a strong economy with thriving businesses and supporting infrastructure for future generations.
- Capitalising on our culture, leisure and tourism opportunities.

Customers and Community

- Making the best use of resources to ensure maximum benefit for all customers and communities across the district.
- Supporting communities to identify their needs, plan and develop local solutions and resilience.

One Ryedale

- Utilising assets in supporting the delivery of priorities.

- 5.2 More broadly, it is vital that the district is able to boast a range of thriving market towns, with the Council's current Economic Action Plan (2016-2020) identifying 'Successful and Distinctive Places' as one of five key Plan objectives. A successful Milton Rooms will make a major positive contribution to the role of Malton as a thriving market town, attractive to both residents and visitors alike.

- 5.3 On a county level NYCC, with active support from RDC and other districts, is currently in the process of developing a North Yorkshire Cultural Strategy, which is expected to identify a requirement for vibrant cultural facilities across the county. Once produced, this document will be used to attract funding into the area from organisations like the Arts Council England. This Council will also be developing its own Cultural Strategy over the coming months so it can maximise any benefits for arts and culture venues and organisations across Ryedale.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 As Members will be aware, the Milton Rooms has been the subject of a number of Committee reports over recent years, the details of which will not be re-visited here.
- 6.3 The Milton Rooms is subject of a 999 year lease agreement from the Fitzwilliam Malton Estate (FME) to this Council, of which approximately 930 years remain outstanding. The lease is a full repairing and insuring lease, with such costs falling to the Council. It should be noted that that FME has made it clear that they recognise the importance of the Milton Rooms and are keen to see the venue thrive and prosper.
- 6.4 The Council takes its leasehold responsibilities to the Milton Rooms very seriously. In the period for 2015/16-2018/19 the Council invested upwards of £140,000 in a range of repairs and maintenance, infrastructure, boiler and other costs. £136,000 is allocated in the future capital programme for repairs and maintenance activities, with boiler replacement and fire security works ongoing.
- 6.5 In order to identify a sustainable future for the premises, which will enable the Council to meet its obligations and ensure that the Milton Rooms is able to thrive, a number of options/plans have been considered, the most significant of which was an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a significant renovation project including accessibility improvements and dedicated exhibition space. Unfortunately, this funding application made in 2017 was unsuccessful.
- 6.6 £476,000 of RDC funding has been made available to the Milton Rooms, comprising of £136,000 for maintenance and repairs (as highlighted above) and £340,000 as match funding for the HLF project. The MRCT has applied to the Council to utilise approximately £70,000 of this funding to pay for toilet/foyer refurbishment works.
- 6.7 It is clear that refurbishment/renovation works are required to the Milton Rooms. At this stage, however, pending clarity upon the future of the building, potential additional uses, layout/configuration matters and associated issues, it is recommended that these works are not supported to ensure that future options are not compromised/a significant sum is not spent which could be rendered redundant should alternative layouts/configurations be identified through the next phase of project development work.
- 6.8 In order to review potential future options it has been discussed with representatives of the MRCT that the Council will appoint and fund a 'Development Manager' whose role will be to work with the MRCT and other partners to identify a clear sustainable business model, (including delivery plan).
- 6.9 The purpose of this role is not to support the day-to-day operation of the Milton Rooms, rather what is required is focussed development support over a relatively short period

of time. This being the case it may be necessary to engage industry experts to undertake this work. A specification for this commission, addressing issues around layout/ design/uses/opportunities/income/funding, etc is currently being prepared. It is expected that the role will go out to procurement or recruitment in late September/early October, with appointment anticipated by early November. The appointee will report into the Programme Director for Economic Development. Throughout this process, the Council will work with the MRCT and other partners.

- 6.10 If a successful appointment is made in early November, it is estimated that this work will take approximately six months to undertake, with a final report back to the Council by May 2020.
- 6.11 In addition to this 'development' support, it has been agreed that the Council's new Arts & Events Officer (due to start in post on 23 September) will work to support the Milton Rooms in developing its offer. Again, this is not about providing operational support, but it is about working to advise/support on issues around programming/promotion/partnerships, within the context of an extensive range of other activities that the officer will be expected to deliver.
- 6.12 In summary, there has been/will continue to be, significant repairs and maintenance funding provided by this Council to the Milton Rooms with further support to be offered to assist the Milton Rooms, both on programming/promotion issues, etc, but also in identifying a sustainable, long-term business model for the facility, following which decisions will need to be made regarding the implementation of any identified way forward. Within this context it would be premature at this stage to agree funding for an operational events manager, as requested by the MRTC, or for toilet/foyer refurbishment works.
- 6.13 It should also be noted, that the MRTC has submitted an application for £4,300 of funding for Assembly Room curtains through the s.106 fund. This application will be considered in early November.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial

Financial implications feature heavily throughout this report.

The recommended position regarding the request to utilise £70,000 of Council funding for short-term improvement works is as set out above. This must, however, be seen within the context of over £140,000 spent by the Council upon repairs and maintenance of the course of the last four years and £136,000 allocated towards the Milton Rooms in the future capital programme.

It is estimated that recruiting additional support could cost in the order of £20,000/£25,000, which will be met from Reserves.

b) Legal

As highlighted, there are approximately 930 years remaining in the lease of the Milton Rooms from the FME to this Council.

The freedoms/flexibilities/options for the future use/operation of the Milton Rooms resulting from this lease will be core considerations in the work to be done by the appointed consultant.

c) Staffing

In addition to the appointed consultant, and ongoing support from the Council's assets officer, work around the Milton Rooms will require input from the Council's new Arts & Events Officer, to be balanced against her wider portfolio of responsibilities.

d) Climate Change

There are no direct Climate Change implications associated with this report.

Climate Change issues will be considered in the development work which is to be progressed in the period ahead.

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Background Papers:

None

Background Papers are available for inspection at:

N/A