Seven city and town centres set to benefit from £10m regeneration boost

17/05/2011

HLF's investment comes through its Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)² programme which fosters effective partnerships between local organisations enabling repairs and other essential works in historic but often run-down areas bringing high streets back to life. The funding, integral to wider conservation and regeneration strategies, will also help provide employment and training opportunities.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "City and town centres form a large part of our urban landscape and are the backdrop to millions of people's daily lives. We're determined to help regenerate areas that are currently struggling and in need of additional encouragement and an injection of much-needed cash. The Heritage Lottery Fund set up its THI programme to help exactly the sorts of local projects featured today get up and running – this is just the first step but it is a hugely positive one."

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Minister for Housing and Local Government, said: "Town centres form the heart of our communities, and it is right that local organisations, working with residents, play a key role in maintaining them. "That's why I welcome this £10m investment by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which will make a huge difference to the overall well-being of these areas."

Areas set to benefit are:

Coatsworth Road, Gateshead – first-round pass of £1.4m, including £29,700 development funding
Coatsworth Road is within the Coatsworth Conservation Area which was created in 1987 and includes three of the very first terraces built in Bensham and Saltwell, which undoubtedly influenced the subsequent development of the whole area. The street developed into a popular shopping area after the introduction of the tram system in the early 20th century. Project plans include repairing and restoring historic buildings and shop fronts and bringing vacant spaces back to life. The local community will have a hands-on role in the scheme, with opportunities to take part in conservation training sessions.

Ballymoney Townscape, County Antrim – first-round pass of £1.5m including £50,000 development funding
Ballymoney Town Conservation Area is made up of 13 listed buildings and one Scheduled Monument. The project will focus on three distinct areas: Victoria Street; Main Street; and High Street. Alongside proposed restoration works which include structural repairs to a number of important historic buildings, the project also aims to work with local schools, colleges and community groups on a range of activities such as the creation of a new website and various exhibitions about the town's history.

Prescot Town Centre, Knowsley – first-round pass of £1.89m, including £50,000 development funding
Prescot was once a thriving market town with a medieval grid street pattern and plot layout - it survives almost intact today. The town became an early centre of the industrial revolution with a focus on watch-making and tool-making. As well as restoring the town's historic buildings and shop fronts, a wide range of community-led activities are planned.

Working with local people, the project will offer volunteer-led heritage walks, workshops and training sessions relating to the history of the town and the proposed restoration plans.

Parkhead Cross, Glasgow – first-round pass of £1,735,300 including £25,000 development funding
Parkhead Cross is described by Historic Scotland as 'one of the most impressive pieces of turn of the century urban streetscape' in Glasgow. All the major buildings which form the Cross were built between 1902 and 1914 and designed by key architecture firms such as Honeyman, Keppie & Macintosh and Burnet. Major refurbishment work to the historic shop fronts and buildings are planned plus opportunities for local people to learn skills in traditional conservation and property maintenance.

Dalby Square, Margate – first-round pass of £1.8m, including £35,100 development funding
Dalby Square dates from the mid-19th century and formed part of the wider expansion of Margate through the development of Cliftonville. Cliftonville was a highly exclusive resort from the 1870s until the First World War and remained a popular one until the 1970s. The project will reinstate many lost historical features such as chimneys, parapets and roof coverings. It will also focus on energy conservation issues and, by bringing empty floor space back into use, strive to re-instate some of the high quality hotels that once lined the square. Local people will have the chance to get actively involved and engage with the project through a range of events and activities relating to the town's history.

Colwyn Bay, Conwy - first-round pass of £841,000 including £37,500 development funding
Colwyn Bay was developed as a coastal resort in the late 19th century and is home to a range of distinctive historic buildings. The project aims to regenerate the town by restoring the historic and commercial quality of the Victorian conservation area. Plans include: bringing vacant buildings back into use; close working with local college NVQ courses with heritage-based modules; the establishment of a visitor centre with exhibition spaces; and traditional skills training.

Bromsgrove Town Centre, Worcestershire – first-round pass of £1.2m, including £50,000 development funding
Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area is located within the centre of Bromsgrove and is made up of notable 18th and 19th century buildings and some earlier surviving timber-framed buildings. The project will preserve and enhance the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area, refurbishing dilapidated historic buildings and in doing so transforming it back into a thriving market town. Volunteer activities, training and heritage events will help actively involve the local community in the project.

Notes to editors

• [1] A Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) earmarked first-round pass means that money has been set aside by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the scheme in question. Competition at this stage is tough, and while it does not guarantee funding, it is an indication of positive support. The applicants can then progress to the second round and submit a further, fully-developed application to secure the full award. This early level of strong financial commitment means that THIs can build strong partnerships with the assurance that funding for their scheme is in place provided their final proposals fully meet the programme criteria.

• [2] HLF's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) encourages partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces. Grants range from £500,000 to £2m. To date, HLF has invested over £200m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline.

• HLF is committed to continuing to support the UK’s townscapes. We have recently been consulting and do envisage being able to continue to support this programme.

• Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 30,000 projects allocating £4.5billion across the UK.

• Images available on request.

Further information

Please contact Laura Bates or Alison Scott, HLF Press Office, on 020 7591 6027 / 6032. Out of office hours mobile: 07973 613 820.