Historic shopping street given new lease of life

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Coatsworth Road in Gateshead is set to regain much of its former glory with repairs to historic shop fronts and expert advice to help local independent retailers boost their trade.

One of the first shopping streets in Gateshead, the majority of Coatsworth Road is a designated conservation area due to its Victorian features and largely unchanged character.

The work to spearhead its revival is being led by Gateshead Council. Shop fronts will be repaired and restored, building repairs undertaken and empty properties brought back into use thanks to grants. Improvements to the road itself are also planned in order to make the area a more welcoming and pleasant environment for shoppers.

Training will be provided to the community on building repairs and conservation education. Specialist advice from retail experts will continue to be offered too, to help independent retailers refine and improve their business and learn how to attract more customers.

Gateshead Council cabinet member for culture, Cllr Linda Green, said: “This project is about a really thorough transformation for the area. Everyone will be able to see the changes to buildings and to the street itself. I know that the improvements will make a big difference. But by working with local businesses too we’re securing the future for this area in a way that work on buildings alone can’t do. The best possible way to preserve a historic shopping street is to ensure that it survives and flourishes, that’s exactly what this project will do.”

Ivor Crowther, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “We at the Heritage Lottery Fund are delighted to be able to support the revitalisation of Coatsworth Road in Gateshead. THI schemes can really help turn around local economies, not only by improving how they look and feel, but by prompting business start-ups and creating new jobs and training opportunities. Getting the local community involved is a key part of this project and will mean that the people who live and work in the area will be an important part of the project as it develops.”

Work on providing help and assistance to local businesses will continue with seminars and one to one mentoring. Physical works are expected to start later this year, with completion scheduled for 2017.

Notes to editors

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.

Gateshead Council is also currently consulting on a draft Coatsworth Road conservation management strategy and shop front design guide to shape the future of the conservation area. More information on this and the Townscape Heritage Initiative can found on the Gateshead Council website.

Further information

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