Dewsbury through to second round of town centre funding bid

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The bid is to the Townscape Heritage Initiative programme which offers grants to help regenerate conservation areas which display particular social and economic need.

The initial bid for £2m, including £33,500 development funding, made it through the competitive first round and was submitted by Kirklees Council on behalf of partners which include the Dewsbury Town Team. Match funding from the council will provide a total of £3.7m of grant aid.

Fiona Spiers, Head of HLF Yorkshire and Humber, said: “HLF investment goes well beyond the bricks and mortar of a building. 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. We are delighted to be able to work with Kirklees Council on these plans for Dewsbury and look forward to seeing them progress.”

Cllr David Sheard, Cabinet member for regeneration, said: “This is good news for the town and will go a long way to reverse the creeping decline of the important buildings in the historic core of Dewsbury. Our plans for investment in the cluster of buildings in the north west quarter of the conservation area including the iconic Pioneer House complex will provide a focus for new retail, office and enterprise activity and will stimulate the economic vitality of the town and drive further investment. We will work closely with building owners to produce high quality refurbishments of retail and office spaces which will encourage local people, visitors and businesses into this beautiful town.”

Cllr Paul Kane, Chair of the Dewsbury Regeneration Board, said: "This is very good news for the town and a shot in the arm for the hard work of officers working with the Regeneration Board. Regeneration is a marathon not a sprint and bit by bit we are seeing success after success in these bid rounds. Everyone knows there is a lot to do in the town and we have a hard job in these present circumstances. Decline does not happen overnight but the "rot" I believe is now under control. I look forward to working with our community to hear their ideas on the next round of the process."

Notes to editors

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.

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 £214m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline. The deadline for first-round applications is 31 October and decisions will be made in March 2013.