Dewsbury Town Centre regeneration scheme to go ahead

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The money, awarded to Kirklees Metropolitan Council (KMC) under HLF's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme means that the £3.6million scheme to transform the North West Quarter of the Dewsbury Town Centre Conservation Area can now go ahead. The area, comprising connections between Dewsbury Station, Pioneer House, the arcades and the town centre forms the Victorian core of the town, and the scheme will see prominent derelict historic buildings brought back into sustainable use as offices, businesses and residential flats.

Lying to the East of the River Calder, Dewsbury was once a thriving market town, having undergone a period of major growth in the 19th century thanks to the country's burgeoning textile industry. The largest of a conurbation of small mill towns in the Heavy Woollen District, Dewsbury today continues to play an important role in the local economy but faces stiff competition for retailers and businesses in today's tough economic climate from nearby Leeds and Huddersfield.

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "HLF's Townscape Heritage schemes put historic-environment conservation at the heart of regeneration. Local, regional, and national organisations work together to make a real difference to our deprived towns and cities and their communities, by breathing new life into areas like Dewsbury, not only enabling conservation of the fabric of the town but also helping local businesses to grow and the wider community to feel more engaged with the history of where they live."

Cllr Cathy Scott, Kirklees Cabinet member for Place, said: "This boost from the Heritage Lottery will help the scheme to rejuvenate the Victorian heritage of Dewsbury go ahead and will bring some of the town's most prominent landmarks back into use and secure their future on the town's skyline. 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, added: "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. I would like to thank all those involved in the bid – this should bring back much needed confidence in our team at a time of austerity."

Research by the HLF has shown that these schemes can really help turn local economies around, not only by improving the look and feel of our historic towns, but also by prompting business start-ups and creating new jobs.

Notes to editors

Since the launch of HLF's new strategic framework (2013 – 19) the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme, under which the Dewsbury THI has been awarded, has now been re-launched as Townscape Heritage programme (from 25 March 2013).

Its aims are to encourage partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces with grants available from £100,000 up to £2m. The next application deadline is 31 August 2013 with decisions being made in January 2014. Please go to Townscape Heritage programme page for further details.

To date, HLF has invested over £214m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline.

Further information

For information, interviews or photography requests contact:

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