National Conservation Centre in Stirling gets initial support

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The sum is part of a £6.5million funding package which will include £3 million from the Scottish Government's Young Scots Fund.

A world-leading centre for conservation, the purpose of the NCC is to raise standards for traditional buildings, broaden awareness of the importance of traditional materials and skills and develop those traditional skills, particularly among young people.

Research and education at all levels will be key objectives. The centre will be housed in the Engine Shed, a historic building in the Forthside area of Stirling formerly part of the MOD complex.

The announcement was made by Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, who today visited the Engine Shed to view plans of the proposed refurbishment and to meet a number of Historic Scotland's traditional skills apprentices.

On completion, the NCC will provide a focus for research and dissemination of good practice, delivering a new bespoke range of qualifications and informal learning, and promoting the care of traditional buildings and the ongoing importance of traditional skills and materials.

Historic Scotland have also applied to the European Regional Development Fund for a further £1.9million grant which, if awarded, will bring the total funding package to £8.4million.

With funding now largely in place, a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process will begin to ensure that the new NCC meets the needs and expectations of the historic environment sector.

Fiona Hyslop said: "Conserving our heritage for future generations and developing the skills in our young people to do so is a key focus for Scotland. This initial approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund is a huge boost for this important project. Scotland has long championed the value of nurturing traditional skills and technical expertise so I am delighted that the HLF is backing our plan to help establish a world-leading centre for conservation. From climate change research to pioneering digital scanning, this centre for excellence will develop all elements of heritage conservation, enabling Scotland's historic environment to continue playing a key role in stimulating economic growth and helping to safeguard the future of Scotland's traditional buildings.

"Scotland is a creative nation, and we want our young people to develop and nurture their skills and creativity. That is why the Scottish Government established the Young Scots Fund to provide £50 million over the next four years focused on developing the potential of our youngsters in sport, enterprise and creativity.

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to give its initial support to this visionary project which will transform the skills available to ensure the future of Scotland's traditional buildings. The National Conservation Centre will become a centre of excellence for the hundreds of thousands of historic buildings which form part of our everyday lives as shops, banks and homes. Tradesmen and professionals will

have the opportunity to learn the skills and techniques required to care for them, and to find out about the latest research and its implications, while the centre will help the public to understand the need to maintain historic buildings. The NCC will also be a showcase for the development of new digital technologies to scan and record historic buildings, helping to raise Scotland's international profile as a leader in digital conservation."

Councillor Johanna Boyd, Leader of Stirling Council, said: "Stirling will be the ideal venue for the National Conservation Centre. Not only will the centre help develop the specialist skills necessary to preserve and protect our outstanding heritage for future generations, but it will also play a major part in the ongoing regeneration of Stirling's Forthside, and create great job opportunities for local young people. I am sure the funding announced today will help Stirling go from strength to strength as a centre of excellence in conservation expertise."

Notes for editors

Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment. The agency is fully accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament. For more information visit Historic Scotland's website.