Transporter Clears Latest Lottery Funding Hurdle

22/01/2010

Development funding of £111,500 was awarded to help progress the plans towards a full bid for £2.03 million which will be used to create major improvements to the historic bridge which celebrates its centenary in 2011.

The HLF first-round pass* means that the Transporter now progresses to the second stage of the HLF application process, when more detailed plans will be submitted for the full grant amount.

The Grade II listed Transporter, one of only a handful of working examples in the world, links Middlesbrough and Port Clarence and is a spectacular landmark on the River Tees.

The restoration project will feature improvements to the Bridge, with visitors not only enjoying the panoramic view but also gaining a greater understanding of the history of the Bridge and the surrounding industrial heartland.

Further planned enhancements include:

- The installation of glass viewing lifts, giving visitors stunning views across the Tees Valley and a bird's eye view of the former industrial heart of the region.
- Improvements to the walkway across the top to increase public access.
- Motor replacement to improve reliability, enhanced signage and improved lighting.
- Restoration work to the gondola, provision of a viewing area to the motor room, visitor centre upgrade.
- A 12-month programme of celebration events to raise awareness of the Bridge and the area's heritage with a major celebration on its 100th anniversary.

In recent years the Transporter has become a centre for extreme sports with regular events involving 1,500 visitors in bungee jumping, zip lining and abseiling from the structure.

Councillor Charlie Rooney, Middlesbrough Council's Executive Member for Transport, said: "The Transporter Bridge is an iconic symbol for the region and a great tourist attraction for the town, so the confirmation that we're a step closer to major funding is fantastic news.

"If we are successful in winning the full £2.3 million, the Transporter will get a major makeover in time for its centenary year."

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: "Middlesbrough's Transporter Bridge is an iconic structure, both defining the surrounding industrial heartland and acting as a major tourist attraction.We are pleased to be able to give our initial support for the Council's ambitious restoration plans, particularly as preparations for the bridge's centenary in 2011 begin in earnest."

Notes to editors

*A first-round pass means the project meets the Heritage Lottery Fund's criteria for funding and has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has

up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

On occasion an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

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, the HLF invest in every part of the UK's diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

Angus Hoy, Senior Press Officer, Middlesbrough Council on 01642 729502.

Laura Bates, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6027 or lbates@hlf.org.uk