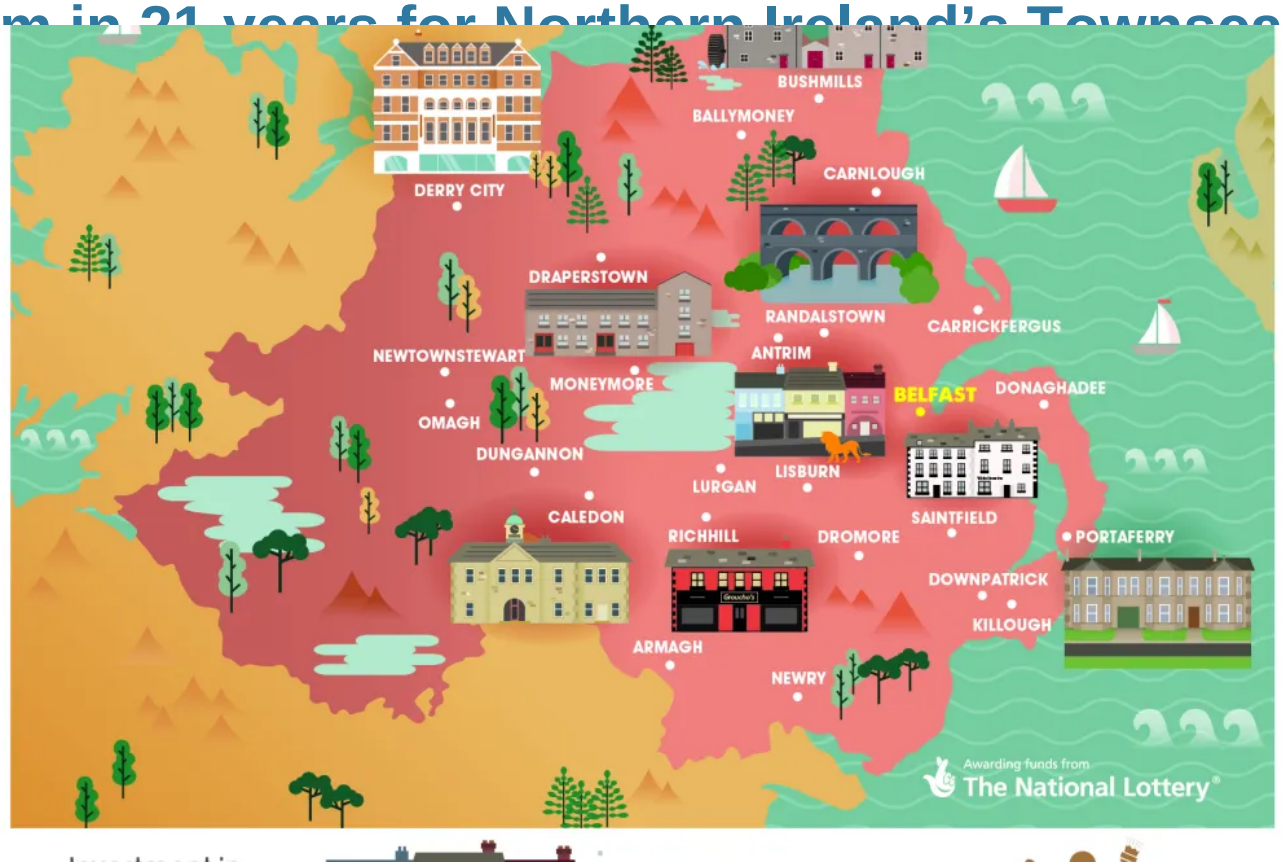
£21m in 21 years for Northern Ireland's Townscape



HLF has invested £21m in Northern Ireland's towns and cities

Grants awarded through HLF's Townscape Heritage programme have reached a major milestone in Northern Ireland.

Over the last 21 years, grants totalling £21million have been awarded through the programme to help regenerate deprived towns and cities by improving their historic built heritage. In this time, a remarkable 25 towns and cities in Northern Ireland have benefited from a Townscape Heritage grant.

The HLF grants have helped communities in Northern Ireland to transform their high streets and reverse years of under-investment and economic decline. Vacant and derelict buildings have been restored to their former glory and management plans have been developed to protect them from future neglect.

[quote= Chip shop owner Andrew Rollston]"After the Townscape Heritage works were finished the properties all looked much better, customers in the shop were full of praise and there was a noticeable change in people's attitude to living and working here."[/quote]

The improvements to the appearance of buildings have encouraged new businesses and visitors, and have helped people to feel proud of their heritage, roots and hometown. Andrew Rollston has owned Nibblers chip shop on Richhill's Main Street for the past 14 years. His property was part of the village's Townscape Heritage programme and he says it has made a real difference to the local area: "The Townscape Heritage [grant] has definitely had a positive impact on

the village," he said.

"After the works were finished the properties all looked much better, customers in the shop were full of praise and there was a noticeable change in people's attitude to living and working here."

Investing in places

HLF's commitment to these regeneration plans across Northern Ireland has boosted the ability of communities to attract additional funding from a range of other public and private sector organisations. The initial investment of £21m from HLF has helped to attract £39m from other sources – bringing the total investment to a huge £60m.

Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "The Townscape Heritage programme is about investing in the places we call home - our high streets and town centres.

"These are at the heart of local communities and we are delighted that over the last 21 years, National Lottery players have helped to safeguard this heritage and improve the quality of life for people across Northern Ireland."

The latest project to benefit - Armagh City – will see a £1.98m grant used to turn underused and empty buildings into much-needed retail and office space. Up to 30 buildings and 3,000 square metres of floor space will be brought back into use. Five new businesses and 20 jobs will be created, with four existing businesses and 10 jobs secured. There will also be a programme of activities to involve residents, businesses and visitors in learning more about the iconic built and cultural heritage of Armagh City.

The towns and cities in Northern Ireland to have received a Townscape Heritage award are: Carrickfergus, Lisburn, Derry-Londonderry, Carnlough, Caledon, Donaghadee, Portaferry, Draperstown, Antrim, Killough, Omagh, Downpatrick, Moneymore, Armagh, Ballymoney, Richhill, Lurgan, Bushmills, Saintfield, Dromore, Newtownstewart, Randalstown, Newry and Dungannon.



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A map showing 21 years of HLF investment in Northern Ireland's historic towns and cities

Armagh City regeneration project receives National Lottery boost