Historic buildings in Burslem set to be given a further £1m lottery cash boost

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It means that Burslem is the second town in the UK to have the opportunity of three successive rounds of the Heritage Lottery Fund cash. Together with match funding of £1.2m from the European Regional Development Fund and private investment, it will pump around £4m into the town.

The first stage support from HLF includes a development grant of £15,200 for the council to develop a full application, and means that the council can continue to build strong partnerships in the town with the assurance that funding is secured.

Councillor Ruth Rosenau, cabinet member for regeneration, planning and transportation, said: “The HLF have told us that the £1m funding is in place, provided our final detailed proposals fully meet the programme criteria. They have also congratulated us on the quality of our application and work to date. This is a massive boost for Burslem, and builds on tremendously positive work over the last five years to rejuvenate the Mother Town’s historic buildings and preserve the town’s heritage.”

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, 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 training opportunities. We are delighted to be able to work with Stoke-on-Trent City Council on these plans that will help transform Burslem and look forward to seeing them progress.”

The new funding would concentrate on Burslem’s Historic Quadrant, to help address the fact that 21 percent of properties in the town’s conservation area are currently vacant, and contain 14 semi-derelict buildings. The £1m funding should help attract new business into renovated properties, increase footfall in the town, and help stimulate development of brownfield land on the edge of the town centre including driving up demand for housing developments.

Since 2007, the Townscape Heritage Initiative has seen the city council, Advantage West Midlands, Heritage Lottery Fund and local investment from building owners plough £4m into Burslem. It has successfully supported projects to restore the integrity of historically important streets and buildings within Burslem’s conservation area and act as the catalyst for economic growth for the town.

It has supported initiatives including Swan Bank Methodist Mission, 12-14a Nile Street Live Work Units, Burslem School of Art’s Orangery, 2-4 Market Place (Barewall) and the Swan Hotel.

The second round of the THI funding has renovated 36 properties in the town centre, including 10 properties that were derelict and have now been brought back into use. The programme has reduced the number of empty units in the town centre and has increased businesses in the town from 137 in 2006 to 182 in 2012.

Councillor Rosenau said: “The programme is having a significant impact on the historic and economic environment of Burslem town centre. It has helped kick-start the town’s regeneration by bringing derelict buildings back into use, creating a real vibrancy in the town. The improvement in appearance of buildings and streets has attracted investment,

new jobs and restored historic floor space. But there is further work to do, and the new funding will address this, to ensure the town's historic buildings are preserved for years to come."

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 develop well.
- 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.

Further information

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