Further good news for the regeneration of Colwyn Bay

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This first-round pass** means that Conwy County Borough Council can now progress to the next stage of the HLF application and submit more detailed plans to see the HLF money rolled out. A development grant of £37,500 has been awarded to help develop these plans.

Huw Davies, Conwy's Project Officer for the current Property Grant Scheme, said: "The potential for further investment in Colwyn Bay is an important opportunity to ensure a quality reinstatement of the historic architectural heritage of the area. The general quality of the area, particularly the surviving upper floors will benefit from the investment it needs and truly deserves."

The purpose of the THI is to preserve and enhance the distinctive character of historic areas and the Council's proposals for Colwyn Bay are based around the Conservation Area.

Specific elements identified for grant support under the THI include:

- Restoring the historic and commercial quality of the Victorian conservation area, and adding value to a first phase of HLF-funded work which was completed in 2004
- Bringing vacant buildings back into use
- Linking with local college courses with heritage based modules
- The establishment of a centralised hub for visitors with exhibition spaces displaying regeneration projects, traditional skills training, 'drop in' conservation advice and a local history centre.

Cllr Philip Evans, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Regulatory Services, said: "This is excellent news for the further regeneration of Colwyn Bay. The Colwyn Bay THI will complement and further enhance other key projects such as Parc Eirias Development and the Waterfront Project."

Dan Clayton Jones, Chairman of the HLF's Committee for Wales, says: "Our research shows that our THI schemes can really help turn local economies around, not only by improving how run-down historic towns look and feel but also by prompting business start-ups and creating new jobs.

"We recognise the difference it could make to this Victorian seaside town and its residents making it a place where people enjoy living and working. What's more it will encourage more visitors back and attract further investment. As such we have awarded a development grant to help Conwy County Borough Council to progress its plans in order to see the full amount of funding rolled out."

Conservation Officers will now draw up and submit the Stage 2 detailed bid within the next six months. If successful, this scheme could result in up to £4.04million of investment being made into buildings in Colwyn Bay over a five year period. The funding partners are Conwy County Borough Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Cadw and the Welsh Assembly Government.

“Our aim is to deliver improvements based on what local people and businesses want to see. Feedback from public consultation events highlighted Colwyn Bay as in need of regeneration. Similar schemes have made a significant impact in Penmaenmawr and Llanrwst and I’m delighted that Colwyn Bay will now benefit from this positive feedback,” said Peter Jones Hughes, Principal Conservation Officer.

The THI funding will add a new dimension and resource to regeneration that will expand the coverage and beneficial impact of individual projects and will specifically assist with restorations and re-use of vacant floor space, the reintroduction of traditional shop fronts and cast iron canopies, these being absolutely vital ingredients for regeneration.

The restoration and major improvements done on the streetscape will further complement earlier work on the regeneration of Colwyn Bay carried out in 2,000 and other regeneration projects that fall under the Bay Life+ umbrella.

The regeneration scheme will provide job and training opportunities for local students and professionals, public initiatives, possible award schemes, as well as improving the appearance of the town.

Phil Rafferty, Head of Regulatory Services, said: “I am thrilled with this news, Colwyn Bay has been extremely fortunate to receive this first phase allocation; a lot of hard work has been put into the submission by the Conservation Team, in particular the work undertaken by Peter Jones-Hughes and Huw Davies should not go unrecognised. Colwyn Bay was one of many towns across Britain bidding for just over £10million pounds of funding and was the only town to be successful in Wales this year.”

Notes to editors

* HLF’s 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 £200m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline.

** A THI earmarked first-round pass means that money has been set aside by the 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. On occasion, development funding will also be awarded at the first round. 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 fully meet the programme criteria.

Further information

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