

This was announced by the Head of HLF Scotland, Colin McLean, this week.

The funding, which is distributed through HLF's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme, was confirmed by HLF following a stage two application submitted by Fife Council last year. It will complement the £1m already announced by Historic Scotland for a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) in Cupar – bringing £1.5m investment to Cupar's historic town centre.

The CARS and THI will be run together, starting in April, and managed by Fife Historic Buildings Trust in partnership with Fife Council. The initiative supports local authorities committed to investing in their historic environments, as an important way to help stimulate economic regeneration.

Councillor Lesley Laird, Deputy Leader and Executive Spokeperson for Economy and Planning said: "This new announcement is very good news for Cupar and its regeneration. The five-year scheme includes a grant to find a new use for the historic Burgh Chambers, conserving this important landmark in Cupar, as well as funding towards the conversion of part of County Buildings to much welcomed affordable housing, planned for later this year. The scheme also includes funding towards Cupar's historic closes and wynds, as well as an extensive training and apprenticeships scheme that will create employment opportunities as well as leaving a lasting skills legacy for the care of historic buildings across Fife.

“This will be complemented by a focus on energy efficiency in traditional buildings – raising awareness and building capacity to tackle this important issue. This investment, in conjunction with the wider infrastructure improvements in Cupar will contribute to improving the appearance, attractiveness and functionality of Cupar’s town centre.”

Councillor Frances Melville, North East Fife Area Committee Chair added: “This is wonderful news and this funding announcement reflects the positive and constructive input we have had from local people and groups in Cupar whilst the application was developed. The scheme includes grants for private owners of historic buildings in the Cupar Conservation Area – this grant scheme is expected to be launched in 2015, following the delivery of training to local contractors in 2014. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership to deliver the scheme over the next five years.”

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: “The regeneration of town centres is an obvious way in which we as an organisation can make an important contribution to improving the economy of an area and the standard of living for the people resident there. Investing Lottery money to revitalise historic buildings at the heart of Cupar, will not only make it a more attractive place to live, visit and invest in, it will also provides jobs and training opportunities for local people. We are delighted to make this award as part of our on-going commitment to preserving Scotland’s heritage in a way in which is pertinent to the needs of today.”

The five-year scheme will be launched later this year, with details on all key projects and information on how to apply for grants.

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.

Further information

Heritage Lottery Fund: Shiona Mackay on 01786 870 638 / 07779 142 890. Twitter: @heritagelottery.

Fife Council communications team on 01592 583 312.