Heritage Lottery Fund supports proposals to improve Folkestone Conservation Area

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The partnership team now has the green light to develop its proposals further over the coming year, leading to an application for a full grant within the next year.

The project proposes work on properties in the Conservation area that ranges from full restoration or refurbishment to more minor works to improve facades. All of the buildings proposed for inclusion in the plans have heritage value, and improvements are also proposed to streets and open spaces, including Rendezvous Street, The Parade and The Bayle. The overall objective will be to create a more attractive destination for local people, visitors and businesses.

The town centre conservation area was first designated in 1972, since which time several reviews have taken place which have redefined the boundary. The area now includes The Creative Quarter, Rendezvous Street, The Bayle and Payers Park.

Kent County Council (KCC) Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development Mark Dance said: “We’re delighted to be part of this initiative to bring about further improvements in Folkestone and help improve the area’s economic outlook. The town has long been one of Kent’s most attractive destinations for visitors and in recent years KCC has been pleased to support Folkestone’s emergence as a key centre for creativity. The Townscape Heritage scheme will help to underpin the progress made so far, with emphasis on the rich heritage of the old town and harbour.”

Leader of Shepway District Council Cllr Robert Bliss said: “This is great news for Folkestone and marks another milestone in our efforts to re-vitalise the town. We have plenty of history and heritage to celebrate, and with our partners we shall work hard to help bring this project to fruition.”

Chief Executive of The Creative Foundation Alastair Upton said: “We’re really pleased to have played a part in securing this support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Obtaining funding from sources like this will be very helpful in making our streets look more attractive, so that the people who work and live here and the people who come to visit and shop in the area can enjoy their surroundings.”

Stuart McLeod, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South East, 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 training opportunities. Folkestone is an important historic town and we are pleased to be able to provide much-needed support to Kent County Council, project partners and local residents for these vital restoration plans.”

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.

About the partnership members
The Creative Foundation is a charity that is playing a leading role in the regeneration of Folkestone's old town. It is investing some £48million in partnership with The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, mainly on restoration and refurbishment of run-down buildings in the old town for use by individuals and businesses working in the creative sector.

Further information

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