Yorkshire towns regenerated

23/02/2011

Keighley and Pontefract – both featuring buildings of significant historical interest and importance - can now look forward to a brighter future.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for Yorkshire and the Humber said:

“The Heritage Lottery Fund is proud to be playing a key role in helping to revitalise these communities. These two very different, yet equally special historic Yorkshire towns can now look forward to the far reaching benefits of the investment this scheme will bring. It will help the two councils to make essential improvements to these areas and repairs that will encourage both local business and visitors back into these historically vibrant areas.”

Keighley Town Centre – confirmed award of £2million

Dating back to the Doomsday book the town is steeped in history. It has an industrial tradition originating in textiles - particularly wool, cotton processing and textile machinery and the distinctive look of the buildings comes from the local millstone grit.

The scheme will focus on the older part of the town where the impressive Victorian and Edwardian commercial and civic buildings need investment to preserve their character for the future. Repair and restoration works could be eligible for grant aid. Training and community activities will encourage property owners and local groups to get involved in the transformation to their local area.

Coun the Rev Paul Flowers, Bradford Council’s Executive Member responsible for culture, tourism and sport, said:

“Keighley is rightly proud of its wonderful heritage and this funding will help us give historic buildings in the town a new lease of life."

Kris Hopkins, MP for Keighley, said:

“As the Leader of the Council at the time the original bid was submitted, I am thrilled at this outcome. Keighley has a wonderful heritage that must be preserved. The award will not just protect, but also enhance what the town has to offer local residents and visitors alike.”

Pontefract – confirmed award of £750,000

“Ponte” - as it is known locally – has been a market town since at least the Middle Ages and is famous for its pubs, racing and liquorice. The deep, sandy soil on which it is built makes Pontefract one of the few British places where liquorice can be successfully grown, and the famous Pontefract Cakes are still produced.
The THI scheme will enhance the historic features of the town and help regenerate the local economy. It will showcase the town to a much wider audience and encourage tourism, by repairing and restoring buildings in the medieval Market Place Conservation Area. It is hoped that protection and conservation of Pontefract’s historic assets will encourage people back into the town centre and boost its role in the local economy.

Cllr Denise Jeffery, Wakefield Council’s cabinet member for regeneration and economic growth said:

“We know that times are tough but we must invest in the future of our district and we have match funded the Heritage Lottery Fund’s grant so that this work can go ahead. The initiative will allow us to really enhance the lovely, unique character of Pontefract. There is really beautiful architecture in the town but some needs attention - we want to restore it to its former glory.”

“This work will also generate new jobs and new investments in Pontefract, attracting more visitors and improving the overall economy of the town. We are committed to protecting the town’s heritage and this work will complement what we’re already doing to conserve Pontefract castle.”

Research by the HLF has shown that these schemes can really help turn local economies around, not only by improving the look and feel of our historic towns, but also by prompting business start-ups and creating new jobs.

Have your say: HLF’s three-month consultation Shaping the future – for heritage, for everyone is now live on our website and all views will help shape HLF’s strategy from 2013 to 2019. This is people’s chance to tell us what they think we should continue to do and what we should do differently. For further information, to view our consultation video and to respond to the consultation, please visit: www.hlf.org.uk/consultation2011 until 26 April 2011.

- ends -

For further information, interviews or photography requests:
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Notes to Editors:

Heritage Lottery Fund
Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK, including £351million in Yorkshire & the Humber alone.

To date, HLF has made 177 awards in Wakefield amounting to just over £27.7million, and 214 awards in Bradford totalling just over £30.3million.

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 almost £200m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline.