Regeneration of Ballymoney’s historic heart one step closer

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The funding has been earmarked through HLF’s Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme and includes a development grant of £50,000 to support the drawing up of more detailed proposals. Ballymoney Regeneration Company now has up to 12 months to submit the fully developed plans in order to secure the full award.

Since 1998 HLF has invested £200million through the THI programme to regenerate conservation areas that have suffered serious social and economic decline. The programme encourages partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces within these defined areas, aiding social and economic regeneration and helping to improve the quality of life for all those who live, work or visit there.

Ballymoney Town Conservation Area was designed in 1994. It is a relatively large area encompassing 13 listed buildings, one scheduled monument and the majority of the town’s commercial core. Led by Ballymoney Regeneration Company and working in partnership with Ballymoney Borough Council, Department of the Environment (DoE) Planning Service, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Built Heritage and Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Ballymoney THI will enhance and restore a number of historic buildings which contribute to the special townscape character of Ballymoney Conservation Area.

The scheme will focus on the distinct areas of Victoria Street, Main Street, High Street and the Diamond, which have a number of vacant and underused historic buildings that have suffered from a lack of investment and inadequate maintenance and provide poor quality residential accommodation. Works including external repairs, structural repairs and the reinstatement of architectural details and floor space will be undertaken to bring back in to sustainable use 29 derelict, redundant or underused historic buildings within the area.

Local people will be encouraged to become involved with, and learn more about the heritage of the area through the development of a website, design guide, lecture programme and an exhibition. Training opportunities will also be provided to promote and share traditional building skills.

The THI will act as a catalyst to aid the wider economic and social regeneration of the town, increasing community pride and business confidence, and helping to maximise the area’s tourism potential.

Commenting on the announcement, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: “We are delighted to support these ambitious plans to conserve and enhance the rich townscape heritage of the Ballymoney Conservation Area. The proposals will transform the area, bringing a range of benefits to the local community through the promotion of sustainable, heritage-led economic regeneration, and we look forward to receiving the fully developed plans in due course.”

Welcoming the HLF announcement of Ballymoney’s success in the first round of the THI scheme Ballymoney Mayor Bill Kennedy said: “The Council and its scheme partners, Ballymoney Regeneration Company, have a strong desire to preserve and enhance the character of Ballymoney’s town centre. The HLF funding will allow us to encourage growth and change in sympathy with the character and appearance of the conservation area.”

Notes to editors

[1] 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

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, please contact Julie Halliday on email julieh@hlf.org.uk or phone 07733 100 674.

For Ballymoney THI, please contact Liz Johnston on email liz.johnston@ballymoney.gov.uk or phone 028 2766 0244.