Regeneration of Govan takes a major step forward with Heritage Lottery grant

15/07/2009

The Townscape Heritage Initiative is a unique approach to urban regeneration and sustainable development using heritage as the catalyst. Town centres are regenerated by repairing and giving new uses to historic buildings, making them more appealing places to invest, work and live in. To date Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has invested almost £40million in 30 town centres across Scotland, levering many millions more in partnership funding and bringing real economic benefit to the towns as well as restoring community pride.

With a history stretching as far back as the 5th century, Govan is known worldwide as the centre of the Clydeside shipbuilding industry. Dating back to the thriving economy of that era, The Pearce Institute is one of the key buildings to be repaired and restored as part of the THI. A striking example of Edwardian architecture, the building was gifted to the people of Govan in 1906 by Lady Elizabeth Pearce in memory of her husband Sir William Pearce, Chairman of the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company and Govan's first flamboyant MP.

There will also be shop front improvements on Burleigh Street, Govan Road and Langlands Road; Brechins Bar / Cardell Halls will be repaired and restored; there will be public realm work undertaken at Govan Cross; and the Aitken Memorial fountain and Statue of Sir William Pearce will be returned to their former glory.

Conservation skills training aimed at property owners, local contractors, volunteers and schools will be developed as well as a programme to raise awareness of Govan's significant local history and archaeology, and to develop its potential to attract visitors to the area.

The Govan Cross THI will form a crucial part of Glasgow City Council's Central Govan Action Plan and, along with various partners, the wider regeneration of Govan.

Glasgow City Council has allocated £1.6m to the Govan Cross THI and, with contributions from other funders, including Historic Scotland, Glasgow City Heritage Trust and Fairer Scotland Fund, historic Govan will benefit from a total investment of £5.3m during the 5 year THI programme.

Commenting from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Colin McLean, said: "Investment like this goes well beyond the bricks and mortar of a building. THI schemes can really help turn local economies around, not only by improving how they look and feel, but by prompting business start-ups and creating new jobs and training opportunities. We are delighted to be able to work with Glasgow City Council in helping reverse the fortunes of historic Govan.

"Heritage has an essential role to play in regeneration and we plan to mark the Heritage Lottery Fund's 15th anniversary later in the year by celebrating how our funding has helped transform historic but exhausted buildings across the country into homes, shops, cafes, craft centres, theatres and places of learning giving communities a new sense of pride, confidence and hope for the future. Govan will play a key role in these celebrations."

Glasgow City Council said: Councillor George Ryan, Executive Member for Business and the Economy at Glasgow City Council, said: "I am delighted to welcome this announcement by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Without doubt, Govan Cross is one of the important historic and social areas in Glasgow, and this recognition of its remarkable past will contribute to

a brighter future for Govan. Today marks a key stage in the regeneration of greater Govan with the Council working with a number of partner organisations on this and other projects to deliver the transformation of this part of the city."