

**8<sup>th</sup> September 2015****Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, CORPORATE STRATEGY****MANSFIELD TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROJECT****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update members on the progress of the 'Mansfield Townscape Heritage Project' and the supporting application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and to request match funding of £45,000 towards the Heritage Lottery Fund application.

**Background**

2. The Economic Development Strategy 'Delivery Action Plan' Ambition 13 is to support Nottinghamshire's thriving towns and service centres. One of the activities initially identified was to develop plans for Mansfield to improve the sustainability and viability of its town centre.
3. In June 2014, Committee approved £20,000 to support the development of heritage-led regeneration projects in Mansfield town centre in collaboration with the County Council's Conservation Team and Mansfield BID. The work has sought particularly to identify future opportunities to secure external funding via the HLF. In March 2015, an update report was presented to EDC on the progress of this work.
4. The HLF 'Townscape Heritage' funding stream offer grants which can be distributed to businesses within a defined area to conserve, repair or restore aspects of their physical property. By doing so, it is hoped that the work carried out will enhance the appearance of both the property and the locality in which it sits and consequently attract greater occupancy of the premises.

**Information and Advice**

5. In Mansfield, the project area has been identified as the Market Place and Leeming Street up to the junction of Clumber Street/Toothill Lane. This area was chosen because of its centrality to the town and because it contains some of Mansfield's most iconic buildings. It is also one of the most deprived wards in Mansfield with the highest levels of unemployment.
6. One of the criteria for the HLF is that conservation skills be taught as part of the work being carried out. An element of volunteering is also encouraged. The

volunteers can be involved in research and interpretation as well as celebrating the local heritage.

7. If a successful application is made to the HLF, the 'Townscape Heritage Project' in Mansfield is likely to consist of three main strands:
  - Work with business/property owners to undertake improvements including an increase in the number of buildings being used commercially.
  - 'Heritage Interpretation': this could include activities such as the involvement of schools and colleges in local heritage exhibitions or in re-enactments of historic events within the town.
  - An element of Public Realm works in Leeming Street.
8. There are approximately 80 properties within the 'Townscape' area. Contact has been made with the owners and in some cases occupiers of all of the properties. The response rate has been high and has already led to some specific expressions of interest being received stating exactly what work owners would like to bid for should the HLF application be successful.
9. This approach correlates with the HLF 'Townscape Heritage' aim which is to bring empty properties back into use. There is also strong interest from Vision West Notts College in taking forward the training and skills elements with both their own students and with local schools. Potential skills training could be offered across a range of courses, including construction skills, tourism, marketing and media.
10. The project will be led by a partnership 'The Mansfield Townscape Heritage Partnership' who will manage the fund established to carry out these activities. It should be noted that grants offered to building owners as part of this scheme will attract private sector match funding of between 10% and 40%, in addition to the funding from HLF and the partnership.
11. Applications to the HLF for 'Townscape Heritage' projects have to be submitted by the end of August each year and it is envisaged that if an application is submitted in 2015, the project would be concluded in 2022. It is likely that any bid to the HLF will be for approximately £926,000. In the HLF process, there is an interim stage which (if successful) allows for the release of a 'development grant'. The Partnership is requesting £50,000 for the development grant to facilitate the completion of further detailed work prior to submitting the final HLF application by December 2016.
12. It is a requirement of the HLF that a signed Partnership Agreement is submitted with the funding application. The agreement sets out the way in which projects will be directed and administered in order to improve the appearance, aesthetics and business confidence within the town centre conservation areas.
13. The Partnership consists of Mansfield BID, Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Vision West Nottinghamshire College. It is intended that these organisations would act as the steering group for the project. Mansfield District Council (MDC) will be the official applicant to the HLF under

the steering and direction of the Partnership Team. MDC will consequently act as the employing body for any project officers and accounting body for the finances.

14. Apart from the established building regulations, the Partnership has established their priorities for grants, as outlined below:

Priority	Description
First	Properties that are in need of urgent repairs and currently stand empty (or partially empty) in order to attract commercial use
First	Properties stand in need of either urgent repairs or re-instatement of historic features to bring them in-line with conservation area guidance.
First	Conduct a series of activities to raise the profile of the town centre (HLF requirement) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage research</li> <li>• Highlight the heritage of the area through various media</li> <li>• Produce activities to attract and engage with the public such as street theatre, guided walks, exhibitions, electronic interpretation</li> <li>• Training of volunteers &amp; business/property owners</li> </ul>
Second	Public Realm works (HLF would expect only a small portion of the grant towards this work): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh and standardise street furniture</li> <li>• Clean Bentinck Memorial</li> </ul>
Second	Properties that currently stand empty or are underused to attract partial use for residential purposes on upper floors
Third	Work with other businesses/property owners to give their properties a 'facelift' through, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stone cleaning</li> <li>• Less urgent repairs</li> </ul>
Third	Public Realm works: Create delineation markers to guide pedestrians away from vehicular traffic on Leeming Street

15. Students from Vision West Notts College (VWN) will be involved in the HLF project. An initial estimate is that there will be 20 students per year (60 in total) engaged in learning heritage construction skills, the types of heritage construction skills required by the project are likely to consist of:

- Stone masonry
- Carpentry
- Heritage decorating
- Some 'heritage plumbing' involving exposed lead pipework

24. There is also a significant opportunity to engage tourism, marketing and media students with the project to enable them to gain 'hands on' experience e.g. conducting market research, compiling audio tours. An estimate is that there would be up to 20 students per year across the three curriculum areas of tourism, marketing and media (up to 60 in total).

25. HLF will expect to see a certain level of match funding from the major partners in the bid i.e. Mansfield District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. As the outcomes are always greater than simply providing improvements to the Conservation Area or listed buildings, including both economic and skills training benefits, match funding for schemes of this nature has generally been split between the County Council and District Council partners. Mansfield District Council is contributing officer time which equates to approximately 3 days per week over 5 years.

26. The deadline for the HLF application is the end of August 2015 and it is anticipated that feedback will be received in January 2016. If the application is successful, the partnership will be in receipt of a 'Development grant' which is £50,000 (£47,500 from the HLF with £2,500 of match funding from the BID). The development grant will pay for the services of professionals to calculate the exact costs of each project, establish base-line data and set improvement targets for each area including job creation and condition of buildings. Assuming the partnership is successful in securing the Development Grant, the deadline for the submission of the final application is December 2016 and once the final outcome is clear, project delivery would commence.

### **Other options considered**

27. Committee could opt not to support this initiative. However this would undermine the Council's role as a core partner to regeneration efforts in Mansfield and could have a significant impact on the partnership's ability to draw down Heritage Lottery fund.

### **Reason(s) for Recommendations**

This report has been prepared to support the Committee's understanding of the 'Mansfield Townscape Heritage Project' and the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The contribution of £45,000 from Nottinghamshire County Council would represent approximately 5% of the total investment in Mansfield town centre.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described within the body of the report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Committee support the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund and contribute a total of £45,000 as match funding towards the project costs from its 2016-17 budget.

**Celia Morris**

**Group Manager, Corporate Strategy**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Fiona Anderson, ext 72688

**Constitutional Comments [SLB 24.08.2015]**

Economic Development Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

**Financial Comments [NDR 26.08.2015]**

The financial implications of the proposal are set out in the report.

**Background Papers**

*Economic Development Strategy – Delivery Plan and Budget 2014-15*, report to Economic Development Committee, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014, published

Minutes of Economic Development Committee, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014, published

*Town Centre Initiatives 2014-15*, report to Economic Development Committee, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2014, published

Minutes of Economic Development Committee, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2014, published

Economic Development Committee, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

Mansfield East, Mansfield North, Mansfield South, Mansfield West