

 Executive Report 11 March 2015		Agenda Item No. 17A
Title	Historic Building Grants Allocations	
For further information about this report please contact	Alan Mayes (Principal Architect/Planner)	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	March Executive 2014	
Background Papers	Grants Working Party Background Paper	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes – Ref:
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	Yes/No (If No state why below)

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive		Bill Hunt
Head of Service		Tracy Darke
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer		
Finance		Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)		Councillor John Hammon
Consultation & Community Engagement		
A meeting of the Grants Working Party made up of Councillors Higgins, Blacklock, Dean and Falp, together with Alan Mayes and Roger Cullimore was held in January 2015.		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the proposed allocation of the 2015/16 budget towards the historic building grants scheme as set out in section 3 below and Appendix A.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Executive approves the proposed allocations for the Historic Building Grants for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix A.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 A capital allocation for grants towards the improvement of historic buildings across the District for the financial year 2015/16 of £50,000 was agreed by Executive at the February meeting.
- 3.2 Separate historic building grants schemes operate for i. **Leamington**; ii. **Warwick** and iii. **Kenilworth, Whitnash, and the rural conservations areas**. Within each scheme, grants are available towards improvements to listed and unlisted buildings within a conservation area and are usually offered at a level of 25% of the cost to a maximum of £2,000 per property. Under scheme iii. grants are also available to individual listed buildings which are not located within a conservation area.
- 3.3 In order to ensure the most effective use of the funds available, a grants working party meets on an annual basis to consider the manner in which the funding available is to be divided between the different schemes. Over recent years, the experience has been that the grant scheme for Warwick hasn't been fully allocated and therefore this year it is proposed that a reduced allocation of £11,000 be made to each of the 3 main schemes above supplemented by the creation of a general fund of £11,000 which can be distributed across those 3 schemes once each has been fully allocated according to demand.
- 3.4 In addition to the above schemes, the **Conservation Facilitation Fund** is used for the funding of Heritage Open Days with a proposed allocation of £3000 for 2015/16¹ and the **Environmental Grant Scheme** is used for public realm works (such as lamp post restoration within conservation areas) with a proposed allocation of £3,000 for 2015/16.
- 3.5 Finally, the **Kenilworth Abbey Fund** which has been almost entirely expended on the completion of the new roof for the Abbey Gatehouse is no longer proposed to be funded. A small slippage of £1,800 is proposed to be used for pointing works during 2015/16.

Slippage

- 3.6 The table included at Appendix A identifies that all of the funding within the Leamington grant scheme has been allocated to specific projects albeit that £29,500 of that funding is yet to be paid when those projects are completed.
- 3.7 In terms of slippage that table identifies that £900 of the Heritage Open Days allocation and £1,800 of the public realm allocation remain unspent and are proposed to be carried across to the next financial year both of which are proposed to be addressed as earmarked reserves.

¹ It is also proposed that £900 slippage from 2014/15 be added to this figure.

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The maintenance of the Historic Environment is a key element of the National Planning Policy Framework and the existing and emerging Local Plans for the District. The use of grants to assist with the improvement of the historic environment has and will continue to contribute to the vision of making Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and therefore be consistent with the Fit for the Future programme.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 The capital program approved as part of the 2015/16 Budget Setting Report (February 2015) included a Historic Building grant of £50,000 per annum for each of 2014/15 to 2016/17. The proposed allocations are therefore within the current budgetary framework.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 The main risk is that funds will be misappropriated or used for substandard work. The Conservation staff operating this scheme have appropriate safeguards in place which include approval of specifications, the site inspection of completed works and payment of grants against receipted invoices in order to address this risk.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

- 7.1 An alternative option would be to reduce or abolish the grant scheme. However, it is considered that either of these options would impact upon the Council's ability to assist in maintaining the Historic Environment for both residents of and visitors to the district.

8. BACKGROUND

- 8.1 The District Council has for many years supported Historic Buildings Grants to help property owners to maintain/restore historic assets which are a very important part of the environment of Warwick District. It is in this time of financial constraints that the maintenance of this type of grant is crucial to many owners of historic properties which also recognises the contribution made by the historic environment to the economic and social wellbeing of the District.
- 8.2 The contribution of grant aid helps to stimulate high quality restoration which also contributes towards the economy of the area by encouraging traditional skills. It also maintains our impressive stock of historic assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors to Warwick District.
- 8.3 Grants are offered in accordance with the Planning (Listed Building in Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which makes provision for Local Authorities to make Historic Buildings Grants. They are available for all Listed and Unlisted Buildings in the Conservation Areas which make a significant contribution to the Conservation Area. Grants are offered normally at a level of 25% of the cost of works to an absolute maximum of £2,000 per property.
- 8.4 For the current year a total of £121,000 has been paid or allocated which has enabled a minimum of £484,000 of works to protect historic assets to proceed².

² As certain grants do not cover a full 25% of the cost of the works, the actual level of enabled

- 8.5 Across all of the grant schemes, a total of 58 grant offers have been made during 2014/15 and all grant funds have been allocated. Although slippage is indicated for the Leamington Town grant this represents funds which have been allocated to specific schemes that have not yet completed their works and does not therefore represent an underspend. To ensure there is no underspend within the overall scheme, funds can be transferred between individual schemes to where there is most need.
- 8.6 A Grants Working Party comprising of four Elected Members together with Conservation Officers met on 7 January 2014 to review the allocation of grants over the past year and to discuss and recommend the allocations for the coming financial year. Members of the Grants Working Party expressed their support for the maintenance of the Grants Schemes and the contribution it makes towards cultural tourism within the District.
- 8.7 The contribution made by the grant funded works to the Conservation Area, the Historic Environment as a whole and to individual Listed Buildings is monitored by the Council's Officers when making final inspections of grant works, to ensure that funds are being used beneficially for the individual property and for the wider Conservation Area as a whole.
- 8.8 The principal of providing grant aid is to enable the additional cost of materials required for historic building work to be met. In line with national guidance the grants are not means tested but offered for the purpose of maintaining the building and enabling work that would otherwise not proceed. Without the facility to offer grant aid it is most likely that buildings would remain in a state of disrepair or inferior works would be carried out to our important stock of historic buildings. There would also be no incentive to encourage historic building owners to replace unsympathetic works which were carried out in the past.
- 8.9 The grant schemes are publicised on the District Council's web site and via press releases and information to parish and town councils as necessary.

work is likely to be higher than this figure.

Historic Building Grants 2015/16 Allocations including slippage.

This table is based on a 2015/16 budget book allocation of £50,000.00 for Historic Building Grants from capital funding.

Table 1

2014/15 Allocations	Grant	2015/16 Allocations	Slippage
£20,000 + £17,200 allocated slippage and £10,000 virement from Warwick Town grant.	Royal Leamington Spa Town Grants	£11,000	£29,500 of funding allocated to specific projects which is awaiting payment.
£15,000 + £3,000 slippage – £10,000 virement to Leamington Spa Grants	Warwick Town Grants	£11,000	Nil
£15,000 + £2,600 slippage	Kenilworth, Whitnash and the rural Conservation Areas Grants	£11,000	Nil
Nil	General Fund	£11,000	
£5,000	Heritage Open Days	£3,000	£900
£4,000	Public Realm Grant	£3,000	Nil
	Kenilworth Abbey Fund To be discontinued.	Nil	£1,800
	Totals	£50,000	£ 32,200