

TO: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 7th October 2003

SUBJECT: Grant Aid Mid Term Review 2003/4

FROM: Planning and Engineering

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To appraise members of the current situation in respect of Historic Buildings Grants administered by the Council at the mid point of the current financial year.

2. **BACKGROUND**

Members will be aware that the District Council has a long association with the provision of grants for the maintenance of historic buildings throughout the district with a variety of grant aided schemes. The following is a resume and update on the present schemes at the mid-term point of the financial year.

Historic Buildings Grant

The scheme is solely funded by Warwick District Council and is available for listed buildings and non-listed buildings which make a contribution to conservation areas and would not generally be eligible for grant aid under other schemes. Last year it was necessary to reduce expenditure on this scheme due to the reduction in the capital programme, however, this year it has been possible to restore the overall funding back to £20,000 per year for this scheme.

To date £12,203.00 has been allocated to 10 properties including buildings at Barford, Budbrooke and Kenilworth.

It is anticipated with outstanding applications all funding will be expended during the current financial year. A grading system for applications has been introduced to ensure that grants which provide the greatest benefit to the buildings and conservation areas are given priority funding.

Warwick Scheme of Grants

This is solely funded by Warwick District Council and is available for all listed buildings and non listed buildings within the Warwick Conservation area. As with the Historic Buildings Grant it was necessary to reduce overall expenditure last year, however, it has now been possible to restore the current funding to £10,000 per year for this scheme. To date four grants have been awarded to properties in Mill Street, High Street and Coten End. It is anticipated that all funding under this scheme will be fully allocated during the current financial year.

Although this is a lower level of grant aid than is available for Leamington demand for grant funding is less in Warwick as the town did benefit for many years from a town scheme of grants funded by English Heritage when many properties were restored during those years.

Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme of Grants for Leamington Spa

This is a partnership scheme of grants jointly funded by English Heritage and Warwick District Council giving a total of £40,000 per year. It is allocated to properties in the Leamington Spa Conservation Area against an action plan and tends to cover the areas to the north of the river where there are no other forms of grant aid. So far this year seven

properties have received grant aid in Warwick Street, Portland Place, Campion Terrace and Clarendon Street areas. This should be fully allocated by the end of the current financial year. This is the last financial year of this particular scheme which has a three year partnership arrangement with English Heritage. A number of properties which were not in the action plan have now also been put forward to English Heritage and agreed and will be allocated funds out of this financial year.

Leamington Spa Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme of Grants

This is a partnership scheme with the District Council, The Heritage Lottery Fund and the Single Regeneration Budget. This scheme draws together the District Council Shop front Grant Scheme in the old town for which our annual allocation is £20,000 and the Heritage Lottery Fund's Townscape Heritage Initiative to which the District Council contributes £30,000 annually. These contributions draw down a total of £138,000 annually to be spent in the old town area. Funding under this scheme normally offers a 50% grant towards the eligible cost of the works which is the highest percentage of grant aid offered in the district. To date, five properties have received grant aid in the sum of approximately £20,000. Due to an under spend last year a further £10,000 has been carried forward in this scheme from last year. The scheme is now being widely publicised and as with the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme of Grants this is the final year under which this scheme will receive match funding from The Heritage Lottery Fund. It is therefore necessary for all funding to be allocated before the end of March although there is a further two year overrun period for works to be completed. The Shop Fronts Scheme of Grants will however continue into the next financial year. Particular efforts are now being made to ensure that as many outstanding properties as possible can be encouraged to take advantage of this scheme in the remaining part of the current financial year.

Future of Grant Schemes

As The Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme of Grants and the Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme of Grants will conclude at the end of this financial year it will be necessary to investigate whether any other match funding can be obtained and how funds can best allocate it to continue to achieve the high quality levels of restoration that have been possible over the past years. It is therefore recommended the report be brought to Scrutiny Committee and Executive in February 2004.

Policy and Budget Framework

Provision of grant aid for historic environment in accordance with Aim two of the Community Plan to improve the urban environment by funding and operating grant aid schemes for improvements to historic buildings. The provision of grant aid is also in line with The Local Plan Policy to protect and enhance historic environment.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the contents of this report be noted and that a further report is brought to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Executive in February 2004.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GRANT SCHEME FILES.

Areas in District Affected: All

For further information about this report please contact:

Contact Officer: Alan Mayes, Principal Architect/Planner

Tel: (01926) 456508

E-mail: alan.mayes@warwickdc.gov.uk