

TO: EXECUTIVE - 26 MARCH 2007

SUBJECT: HISTORIC BUILDINGS GRANTS

FROM: PLANNING AND ENGINEERING

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1.1 That the allocation of funding for 2007/8 as set out in Appendix A of the attached EEPC report from the Grants Working Party be approved.
- 1.2 That the Executive agree to Town Councils and Parish Councils being approached to consider jointly funding grant schemes with the District Council.
- 1.3 That the Grant Working Party be re-established at the beginning of 2008 to review the Historic Buildings Grants at the conclusion of the financial year.
- 1.4 That the Executive note that the EEPC's recommendation that in subsequent years the Historic Buildings Grant Capital Budget be raised back to £100,000.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 The District has for many years supported schemes of grants for preserving and enhancing the historic environment within Warwick District as described in the attached EEPC report of 7 February 2007. The annual allocation for 2007/8 for distribution under the various historic buildings grants is £60,000, which has been reduced from £100,000 distributed in previous years. The EEPC report sets out the considerations of the Grants Working Party and how the proposed allocation of funds in Appendix A of that report has been arrived at.
- 2.2 In the light of reduced funding for the current year, the EEPC recommended that Town and Parish Councils could be approached to consider offering joint funding towards grant schemes which affect their particular Town or Parish. This can be pursued on an individual basis with each Town and Parish Council. The EEPC also considered that the budget should be reinstated to £100,000 in subsequent years. In order to monitor the progress of the grant scheme over the coming year the Working Party should be re-established again at the conclusion of this financial year in 2008.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative options are discussed in the EEPC report attached.

4. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The distribution of Historic Buildings Grants is in line with National and Local Plan Policies. The allocation of funds as set out under Appendix A (revised) is in line with the reduced figure of £60,000 capital funding as agreed for the current financial year.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Historic Buildings Grant File

Areas in District Affected:	All
Executive Portfolio Area and Holder:	Councillor Mrs M Begg
Over view and Scrutiny Committee(s):	Environment
Key Decision:	Yes
Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
If Yes, method of consultation:	

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TO: **ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMIC POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 7 FEBRUARY 2007**

SUBJECT: **HISTORIC BUILDING GRANT SCHEMES IN WARWICK DISTRICT-
A REPORT OF THE MEMBERS WORKING PARTY**

FROM: **MEMBERS WORKING PARTY & PLANNING & ENGINEERING**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an annual review of the historic buildings grant schemes and to consider the report of the Members Working Party on Historic Buildings Grants.
- 1.2 To provide recommendations to the Executive for distribution of historic buildings grants for 2007/8.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Current Situation

- 2.1.1 The District Council has for many years supported schemes of grants to preserve and enhance the historic environment within the District. The following schemes have been successfully operated within the district following the recommendations of the grants working party in 2006.

2.2 The Historic Buildings Grants Scheme

- 2.2.1 This scheme of grants has operated in the rural areas, Kenilworth and Whitnash, and is available for all listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas that make a contribution to the conservation area. This fund has been fully allocated to date, although all the works have not yet been completed. The funding allocation for 2006/7 was set at £20,000 last year and this has proved to be an adequate sum of money for the current year. A wide mix of properties have received grant aid including the Abbey Hill Reform Church in Kenilworth, rethatching at the Doglands, Whitnash, timber framed restoration at Little Virginia, repairs at Baginton Castle and restoration of a significant wall in Leek Wootton. The scheme provides an important source of money for listed buildings in the rural areas and helps to maintain the important character of the historic environment in these areas together with Kenilworth and Whitnash.

2.3 Warwick Scheme of Grants

- 2.3.1 This scheme is available to all listed buildings in the Warwick Conservation area and significant non-listed buildings which make a contribution to the conservation area. This scheme has been fully allocated during 2006. A sum of £10,000 was allocated by the Grants Working Party last year for this scheme, which does seem to be the appropriate sum at the present time. Significant works in High Street, Jury Street, Coten End, Gerard Street, Old Square and Mill Street have all received grant aid during the past year.

2.4 Royal Leamington Spa Scheme of Grants

- 2.4.1 This scheme of grants is available to all listed buildings and buildings of significance in the Royal Leamington Spa conservation area. This scheme has remained at £20,000 as allocated in previous years. The scheme has been fully allocated with a total of 30 offers being made for the current year. It has been possible to fund as many schemes as possible by the use of some funding brought forward from previous years. As there is now no match funded scheme in Leamington Spa it is important that this level of funding is maintained. Although many of the schemes are small scale works it is important that listed buildings and buildings in the conservation area are maintained to a high standard and the correct materials used, which would often not be the case unless funding were available. A number of works in Leamington have included re-instating missing architectural details such as cornices and railings which has significantly enhanced the conservation area.

2.5 District Wide Shop Front Scheme

- 2.5.1 The scheme is a new grant scheme to which £15,000 was allocated by the Grants Working Party for 2006. It was introduced following the conclusion of the shop front grants scheme in Old Town, Leamington Spa. It is intended that this scheme should be available for shop fronts in conservation areas throughout the district. To date three shop fronts all in Leamington Old Town have all benefited from grant aid this year. Whilst the take up on this scheme had not been as significant as the other grant schemes, it is an important facility to be made more widely available throughout the district. The improvement of shop fronts does greatly enhance the commercial areas of the historic towns in the district and has already been noted in Leamington Spa Old Town.

2.6 The Conservation Area Enhancement/Facilitation Fund

- 2.6.1 This fund was first introduced in 2006 at the sum of £15,000 being allocated by the Grants Working Party. This has been introduced for facilitating proactive work by the Conservation Department. This year has included the heritage open days in September, District Wide Design Awards and the Heritage Day held in the Royal Priors at the beginning of September. These have all been successful events and a further event to launch the development guide for listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas is planned for spring 2007. This fund is also available for printing of new documents prepared by the Department and is an important source of funding to make the general public more aware of the historic environment and the benefits which the maintenance of the historic environment bring to the area.

2.7 The Rural Enhancement Scheme of Grants

- 2.7.1 This scheme is operating for the second year, with an allocation of £10,000. This scheme was introduced to offer the opportunity for Parish Councils and other bodies within the rural conservation areas, to put forward schemes for enhancement of conservation areas which might receive funding from the District Council. In 2005/6 three schemes were funded and three further schemes have been funded from the current financial year. These have included a new bus shelter at Bishops Tachbrook, repairs and re-roofing to the reading room at Norton Lindsey and new access path incorporating disabled access at Leek Wootton

Church Yard. This scheme has proved a successful scheme and popular with Parish Councils and has served a useful purpose in providing enhancement facilities to our Rural Conservation Areas.

2.8 The Urban Enhancement Scheme

- 2.8.1 This is a new scheme introduced in 2006/7 with an allocation of £10,000. It was made available on the same basis as the rural enhancement scheme to the Town Councils in Leamington Spa, Warwick, Whitnash and Kenilworth. Proposals were received from Warwick, Leamington and Kenilworth and to date the most significant scheme was considered to be that from Warwick for enhancing the Market Place. This scheme is currently being taken forward with a separate meeting to ensure adequate information is provided. Once a costing has been arrived at for this work it may be possible to offer some funding the more minor schemes put forward by Leamington Spa and Kenilworth. These included either cleaning the statue of Queen Victoria or repainting the Victorian Vent pipes in Leam Terrace in Leamington Spa and replacing flower tubs or providing more suitable railings around the Borrowell in Kenilworth. This scheme has not produced major proposals in all of the towns, and it is probably less significant to repeat it immediately in 2007/8.

2.9 Future Considerations of the Members Working Party

- 2.9.1 This year has been the first year without any match funded schemes in place, however it has been possible to meet most of the demands for grant aid through our own schemes as already described. The scheme under most pressure has been the Leamington Spa Scheme of Grants, together with the Historic Building Scheme of Grants.
- 2.9.2 In terms of the enhancement schemes for both rural and urban areas, the Urban Enhancement Scheme was introduced for the first time this year. It would seem that the Rural Enhancement Scheme is the more successful of the two schemes and could be maintained on an annual basis. It would probably be most suitable to reintroduce the Urban Enhancement Scheme in 2008/9.
- 2.9.3 The Rural Enhancement Scheme has been particularly popular over the past two years and consideration could be given to increasing the sum available through this scheme and publicising it more widely to encourage both Parish Councils and other village organisations to consider taking advantage of the funding available for the enhancement of the rural areas.
- 2.9.4 The Conservation/Environmental Facilitation Fund has supported three successful events during the year and will be providing funding for the new Development Guide together with any further funding needed for the production of the conservation area statements. This is an important source of funding which, it is considered, should be retained for repeating the Heritage Open Days and the Heritage Day Exhibition in 2007 together with other proactive educational initiatives throughout the year.
- 2.9.5 Shop Front Scheme has not yet drawn the fullest number of applicants. It is suggested that further publicity could be carried out during the year for this scheme.

2.9.6 A new guidance leaflet has been produced for the current year to encourage more people to take advantage of the grant schemes available. This leaflet will be revised in accordance with the recommendations accepted by the Executive for the coming financial year and various initiatives will be taken forward for distributing the leaflet and sending it to appropriate buildings and organisations to encourage as broad a use of grant funds as possible.

2.10 Report from Councillor Mrs A Blacklock and Councillor R Smith as Members of the Grants Working Party

2.10.1 The working party feels that our combination of different schemes, with differing criteria, is a very successful way of meeting the demand that exists. The offer of a grant even for a small proportion of the total cost of the work, has meant that improvements have been undertaken that would not otherwise have been done, or work has been carried out to a higher standard than would otherwise have been the case. Making more money available for schemes outside the historic urban centres has proved popular. The improvements are appreciated by the community and by visitors and tourists.

2.10.2 The main considerations we have wanted to adhere to, are to continue to offer a variety of grants targeted at different situations; to shift funding more widely around the District and especially to the villages; to allocate funding to a category broadly in line with the take-up rate of grants in the previous year and to support the awareness-raising and advisory role of the Conservation Team.

2.10.3 We wish to continue the slight change in direction established 2 years ago and while retaining the total sum of £100,000 to allocate more funding to categories where we think there is more potential need than there is some others.

2.11 Recommendations for 2007/8

2.11.1 The recommendations for consideration for 2007/8 are set out in Appendix A (as amended) of this report.

3. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

3.1 There will be no change to the present arrangements offering £100,000 towards the historic buildings grant scheme on the budget allocation for 2007/8. There are, however, changes in the way funds are to be distributed as set out in Appendix A.

3.2 The present grant schemes have been successfully operated in the district in the past year. However, experience over the past year has indicated some changes are necessary and these are proposed in Appendix A to the report.

4. OUTCOME(S) REQUIRED

4.1 The recommendations and conclusion of the Members Working Party into the Historical Buildings Grant Scheme be accepted. That an annual report be brought to the Environment & Policy Committee in 2008.

Alan Mayes
Principal Architect/Planner

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Historic buildings grant files

Areas in District Affected: All

Executive Portfolio Area and Holder: Councillor Mrs Begg

For further information about this report please contact:

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1. **Proposed allocation of Historic Buildings Grants Funds for 2007/8**

Historic Buildings Grants	£ 25,000
Leamington Spa Town Grants	£ 20,000
Warwick Town Grants	£ 10,000
District Wide Shop Front Scheme of Grants	£ 10,000
Spatial Facilitation and Enhancement Scheme of Grants	£ 15,000
Rural Enhancement Scheme of Grants	£ 20,000
Total	<u>£100,000</u>

2. **This year allocations 2006/7**

Historic Buildings Grants	£ 20,000
Leamington Town Grants	£ 20,000
Warwick Town Grants	£ 10,000
District Wide Shop Front Scheme of Grants	£ 15,000
Conservation Facilitation and Enhancement Scheme of Grants	£ 15,000
Rural Enhancement Scheme of Grants	£ 10,000
Urban Enhancement Scheme of Grants	£ 10,000
Total	<u>£100,000</u>

Amended allocation of Historic Buildings Grant Funds for 2007/8

(Taking account of proposed reduction in funding to £60,000).

Historic Building Grants	£18,000
Leamington Spa Town Grants	£15,000
Warwick Town Grants	£ 8,000
Rural Enhancement Scheme of Grants	£10,000
Conservation Facilitation and Enhancement Scheme of Grants	<u>£ 9,000</u>
Total	<u>£60,000</u>

It is felt that this reallocation in the light of reduced funding maintains the principals set out by the Working Party in this report.