



Haverhill Area Working Party 13 January 2011

Conservation Area Partnership Scheme, Haverhill

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1 English Heritage operates a 'Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas' project with local authorities to give grants within Conservation Areas, preferably to those identified as being 'at risk', for works which enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This can include both works to buildings and public realm enhancements.

2. Conservation Areas in Haverhill

- 2.1 Haverhill has two Conservation Areas, both of which were considered to be 'at risk' in English Heritage's Conservation Area review in 2009. English Heritage's Historic Areas Adviser has visited the Conservation Areas to assess them for suitability for a grant scheme. He has advised that the group of terraced houses at the north end of Hamlet Road (Mount Road, Eden Road, Duddery Road, Meeting Walk and Waveney Terrace) would be suitable for a targeted scheme. The houses were built as accommodation for workers at Chauntry Mill, the former Gurteen's factory, and the different scale and adornment of the buildings reflect the hierarchy of the staff they housed. Today, many of the original windows and doors have been replaced with modern versions, to the detriment of the Conservation Area. The grant scheme could be used to encourage the reinstatement of these and other original features to restore the original character and appearance of this part of the Hamlet Road Conservation Area. Paving and surfacing could also be improved to enhance the streetscene.

3. Grant Budget for a Conservation Area Partnership Scheme

- 3.1 A grant budget in the region of £50,000, provided over three years, could be offered by English Heritage and local authorities are expected to provide match funding. The Cabinet has previously agreed an allocation of £50,000 of Growth Area Funds towards a Conservation Area Partnership Scheme for the Hamlet Road Conservation Area (Cabinet Minute 90(e): 1 December 2010 refers). A partnership would take the form of an agreement between English Heritage and the Borough Council. The day-to-day running of the scheme is delegated to the local authority for a fixed term of up to five years. All the individual grants offered under the Scheme must be made within the first three years, although a carry forward of up to 20% of the amount available to offer in any one year may be made available by agreement. All works must be completed and all claims for payment must be made within five years. English Heritage monitors the progress of the scheme while it is in operation.

- 3.2 To qualify for English Heritage funding the Borough Council will need to demonstrate that the scheme:-
- (a) is within a Conservation Area;
 - (b) can attract partnership funding from the local authority and possibly other funding partners;
 - (c) meets one of English Heritage's priorities for the region;
 - (d) will involve a range of work to a number of buildings, structures or spaces within a defined area;
 - (e) will focus on building repairs; and
 - (f) will require property owners to contribute financially towards grant-funded works to their property.
- 3.3 The Borough Council will also need to demonstrate:-
- (a) financial need for English Heritage funding in the Area;
 - (b) need for repairs in the Area;
 - (c) that the Council has the resources, skills and suitable staff to manage the scheme and to deliver high quality work (English Heritage will consider contributing towards these costs); and
 - (d) that a Conservation Area Character Appraisal is in place (exceptionally, English Heritage could consider funding the production of one, but this work was completed for the Area concerned in 2009).

4. Discussion

- 4.1 It is considered that the possibility of enabling area-wide improvements to a Conservation Area 'at risk' is an opportunity that should be taken advantage of. It is clear that English Heritage assistance would not be available without the Borough Council matching funding. The availability of Growth Area Funds is one such opportunity that would enable improvements to be made to existing homes in the area identified that would be sympathetic to their historic background. Improvements to the streets and spaces could also help reduce the impact of the car and provide a better environment. These are all contributors to the quality of life in Haverhill which support the delivery of sustainable growth and a vibrant local economy.
- 4.2 It is unlikely that grant funding would be available from English Heritage until the 2011/2012 financial year, but English Heritage officers are confident that the funding scheme will remain and are suggesting that an application should be submitted at the earliest opportunity in order to gain early consideration. A grant of £50,000, matched by the Borough Council, could facilitate significant improvements to the area.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 The Working Party is asked to **NOTE** the contents of this report.

For further information, please contact:-

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