HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP GRANT SCHEME

Purpose of Report
To update Members on, and seek approval for, variation of the Heritage Partnership Grant Scheme priorities.

Input Required from Members
Request Members’ approval for minor refocusing of the areas of grant aid available from the Heritage Partnership Grant Scheme and flexibility of the percentage rate of grant available.

Main Report

1. A copy of a report to Cabinet in 2007 outlining previous variations to the Heritage Partnership Grant Scheme is attached. In summary, the report identifies that the original focus of the grant scheme, reduction in the number of buildings at risk, was no longer appropriate and the report suggests broadening the scope of the grant scheme to include area enhancements as well as works to buildings at risk.

2. The Heritage Partnership Grant Fund was at this time (2007) split into two, Buildings at Risk and Area enhancements.

   The Buildings at Risk Fund has a £80,000 Budget
   The Area Enhancement Fund has a £70,000 Budget

   The focus in 2007 remained on physical works to buildings or on physical enhancements.

3. In recent years, the number of known listed buildings at risk has been significantly reduced through action facilitated by the Heritage Partnership Grant Fund. However, ongoing review of the buildings at risk list has been reduced and the lists are now out of date. This has prevented the identification of buildings at risk and the early intervention to remedy the reasons why they are at risk. It is also the case that the remaining identified at risk structures are the extremely complex ones, the solutions required to ensure their long term use are equally complex. Simply providing grant for physical repairs will not secure such long term solutions.

4. Recent Buildings at Risk have raised two issues, finding a viable end use and legal ownership complications in bringing a building to the development market.

5. In the first instance, finding an acceptable and profitable use can be hard to identify. Simply providing grant for physical repair rather than finding a viable and acceptable end use is unsustainable. It is therefore necessary to carry out research to inform the way that such Buildings at Risk are dealt with. The production of heritage statements, condition reports and feasibility studies to facilitate the provision of a long term solution based on a sound analysis is fundamental to providing an end use. Currently the Heritage Partnership Grant Scheme provisions do not allow the use of the fund to facilitate such a proactive process unless a long process of seeking specific consent to over ride the current grant provisions is undertaken. The ability to use the grant fund in this manner would therefore allow much quicker decision making and a more proactive approach at an earlier stage making the process of facilitating the restoration and reuse of particularly complex buildings at risk more efficient and timely resulting in less expense and a more economical resolution.

6. In the second case, the problem of complex or unknown or uncooperative ownership and or significant debt on a property can severely stall a proactive approach to securing the survival of the building. Action that could be taken to facilitate works required to safeguard the building from deterioration would normally be facilitated using an Urgent
Works Notice under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This would require the owner to carry out the works at their own cost, or for the Local Planning Authority to carry out the works in default and reclaim the money by means of a charge on the property or court action. Due to complex ownership or debt on a property, the serving of an Urgent Works Notice would become more complicated with the possibility that the Authority would incur expense that subsequently could not be reclaimed. For this reason, the decision to issue an Urgent Works Notice can be delayed, resulting in ongoing dilapidation of the building. Currently the Grant Fund can not be used for this purpose without seeking permission to override the current grant provisions. It would be useful in such rare cases as this if the grant fund could be used as a facilitating fund to cover Urgent Works Notices where the prospect of recovering the monies is unlikely and that such action should be considered in the light of a facilitating grant on the property, to be reclaimed if possible. The ability to use the grant fund in this manner would therefore allow much quicker decision making and a more proactive approach at an earlier stage ensuring the temporary safeguarding of a building at risk against further deterioration is swift and effective. In the longer term this ensures that restoration costs are kept low had the urgent works been postponed or not undertaken and deterioration continued unabated.

7. This issue of absent owners has another difficulty. Bringing the building to a viable end use where owners are difficult or absent would require action by TWBC, usually the threat of a Repairs Notice leading to a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) under the provisions of the Planning (listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, or direct application for a CPO under the provisions of the Housing Act. Such action would require Management Board and Cabinet approval. However to inform and potentially facilitate such action, the Authority would require an exit strategy; that is, a way of dealing with the property if a CPO is successful. In such a case, the exit strategy is usually a back to back deal with a developer. To facilitate such a back to back deal, it would be essential to have an evidence base to inform the actions of both the Authority and the developer. It would be useful to be able to fund condition, structural, heritage, feasibility and or viability reports to help inform both the CPO procedure and to attract developers/potential owners from a fully informed position.

8. In the case of Area Enhancements, the changes to the grant fund requested in 2007 were based on the work of a former post within the Planning Policy Team. That work involved the production of Conservation Area Character Appraisals (CAAs), which highlighted conservation area enhancements at which the fund could be targeted. On the deletion of that post, work on CAAs was severely curtailed and will soon be stalled by further resource reductions. It would be useful, therefore, if the grant fund could be used to fund consultants or facilitate community groups (such as at Cranbrook) to produce CAAs on the basis of which conservation area enhancements could be funded. This could not happen under the existing procedures.

9. Since 2007, it has been noticed that area enhancement schemes have mostly been generated by Parish Councils rather than by local community groups. This would appear to be due to the reduced funding capabilities of volunteer community groups. However, area enhancements by local community groups, such as the Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Water in the Wells Group, Rusthall War Memorial Group and similar, would be beneficial and raise the profile of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council as a facilitator of area improvements. The current grant rates have had to be increased, on a case by case basis, to allow such groups to access the grant fund. It would be useful, therefore, to introduce more flexibility in the percentage rates identified in the 2007 report.

10. It is therefore proposed in this report that the twin focus be retained; the care of buildings at risk and the facilitation of area enhancements. However, it is considered that uses for which the grant fund can be accessed should both be broadened and made more accessible, to enable a both a more proactive use of the Heritage Partnership Grant Scheme to support the BAR strategy and also allow greater community engagement in the care and improvement of the local heritage and the cherish local scene. It is therefore requested that the Heritage Partnership Grant Fund be expanded to allow the following proposed funding areas:
• Partnership working with local communities utilising professional facilitation of community projects for production of Local Lists of Heritage Assets

Where Local Heritage Assets have been identified within a Local Planning Authority, the National Planning policy Framework paragraph 135 allows for their significance to be taken into account within the Planning process. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council adopted a Local Heritage Asset Supplementary Planning Document in June 2012 with a view to facilitating the establishment of a List of Local Heritage Assets. The widening of the grant scheme to allow grant aid for Parish Councils or Community Groups to employ independent professional facilitation will encourage local communities to engage with their local heritage. Local consultation would be a condition on any grant offer made.

• Partnership working with local communities utilising professional facilitation of council/community led projects for conservation area appraisal, reviews and enhancements

English Heritage best practice recommends quality consultation when a Local Planning Authority formulates and produces Conservation Area Appraisals. In Cranbrook a local group got together and produced a quality Conservation Area Appraisal with help from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The widening of the grant scheme to allow grant aid for Parish Councils or Community Groups to employ independent professional facilitation will encourage local communities like as Cranbrook to produce their own appraisals and management plans and therefore engage with their local heritage. Local consultation would be a condition on any grant offer made. The production of conservation appraisals and management plans would identify area improvement projects which the grant fund is already geared up to support and potentially leading to visual amenity improvements within the local environment.

• Partnership working to grant aid publicly accessible projects in conservation areas and the public realm
This function of the grant scheme is a continuation of the current grant function.

• Partnership working with other organisations on heritage at risk project facilitation/protection, including commissioning of structural, condition, heritage, feasibility or similar reports and grant-aiding Urgent Works Notices and repairs notices

Due to the complex nature of the remaining identified buildings at risk, the widening of the existing grant aid for buildings at risk within the grant scheme from simply physical repairs to end use facilitation would allow for a more proactive approach to dealing with complex buildings with limited or non viable end uses such as Providence Chapel, or complex ownership issues such as Mascalls Manor where Compulsory Purchase Notice may be the only way forward. The widening of the fund to cover Urgent works Notices would also allow greater freedom to act where serious neglect of a listed building is identified.

• Heritage restoration grants, for works to heritage assets that result in a definable improvement in the quality of the asset (for example, reinstatement of lost features as opposed to repairs, maintenance or replacement of existing features)
This function of the grant scheme is a continuation of the current grant function

• Hire in resource to achieve strategy goals/objectives; for example, providing up to date and cyclically reviewed heritage at risk register
The widening of the grant scheme to allow for external resource, local community groups and Parish Councils to participate in or to facilitate the goals of the Buildings at Risk Strategy will allow for the heritage of the Tunbridge Wells area to be better monitored and facilitate better care resulting in a better quality environment and greater community awareness of their designated national heritage assets.

11. This would allow flexibility on the percentage rate of grant dependent on the nature of the proposed benefits achievable and the applying organisation.

Conclusion

(1) That the target areas for grant aid for partnership grant projects be changed as described in paragraph 10 of this report;

(2) That there be provision for flexibility on the percentage rate of grant specifically for applications by community groups with limited funding and for the commissioning of professional services to support community projects and heritage at risk work;

(3) That partnership grant offers over the value of £10,000 be approved as a non-key decision by Planning Policy Working Group or Portfolio Holder for Planning as per previous scheme requirements;

(4) That progress be reported to Cabinet on an annual basis or as necessary.
Executive Summary

Due to the emergence of new priorities and objectives, it is considered that the Buildings at Risk Project requires review. This report proposes that the Borough Council takes a new direction in working with partners in the upkeep, regeneration and promotion of the borough’s built heritage.

FOR DECISION

Introduction and summary of progress to date

(1) The current Buildings at Risk programme was approved by Cabinet on 16 December 2004, introducing a series of measures with the following five-year targets:

- To reduce the number of Buildings at Risk and capable of use from 20 to 5;
- To reduce the number of Monuments at Risk from 19 (later increased to 20) to 5;
- To process 100% of standard grant applications within 20 working days.

(2) After two years of the five-year Buildings at Risk project the Council has again succeeded in meeting its annual targets, as stated in the 2006-07 Planning Service Plan, by reducing the number of Buildings at Risk from 40 to 15. The tables in Appendices 1 and 2 show progress on the register of 20 Buildings at Risk and 20 Monuments at Risk at the time of this report. Those no longer at risk are shaded.

The need to review the strategy

(3) The current approach, which uses English Heritage’s criteria is based entirely on the physical condition and ‘occupancy status’ of listed properties, and operates through two strands:

a) Project targeting listed Buildings at Risk and Monuments at Risk, using a combination of 50-90% partnership grants, advice, information and statutory measures. The condition and occupancy of buildings are taken into account, but not their location and other strategic and economic factors;

b) The 25% Listed Building Grant scheme, for which ‘publicly accessible’ buildings are eligible to apply.

(4) However, it is now considered that a shift in the focus of the project is needed, in order to take account of the following Council priorities:

a) Sustainable Community Plan:

   conserving and improving the built environment, including public spaces and particularly local heritage;

   enhancing the attractiveness of towns and other centres in the borough as thriving places to visit, shop and do business;

b) Corporate Priorities:

   enhance conservation areas, listed buildings and the countryside; we need to ensure that our buildings are well maintained to encourage a thriving tourist industry;
c) Local Development Framework:

the emerging Town Centre Action Plans; other Supplementary Planning Documents and Development Plan Documents; Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans;

d) Trevor Roberts Report:

*introducing a full and responsive pre-application advice service;*

*adoption of a full framework of procedures and priorities for enforcement and compliance;*

e) A responsive approach:

community pressure to enhance listed and unlisted heritage ‘grotspots’, from Tunbridge Wells Town Forum, Town and Parish Councils, Civic Societies, other amenity groups and community groups, ‘Heritage Champions’, the Council’s Empty & Difficult Properties initiative; and potential Section 106 agreement proposals that may come forward;

f) Promoting and sharing good practice:

links to events such as the Heritage Trails, Heritage Open Days, 2009 Royal Centenary of Tunbridge Wells.

**Changing the focus of the project**

(5) It is proposed that the project criteria should be changed to reflect these current policies and strategies. To assess eligibility, target buildings and structures will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

Principal
  • heritage value

Secondary
  • current condition
  • townscape / landscape value
  • economic contribution or potential
  • public accessibility
  • other contribution to Corporate Priorities

(6) The current approach is restricted solely to those buildings and structures that are listed by the UK Government for their special architectural or historic importance, and also to those that are considered ‘at risk’ as a whole. However, many important heritage features currently escape the Council’s attention, either because they are not on the national list or because they are not whole buildings.

(7) It is therefore proposed to target town centre ‘heritage’ grotspots, including parts and features of buildings or shared between groups of properties, and those that are not listed nationally. Where a partnership approach proves unsuccessful or inappropriate, procedures will then be considered in accordance with the Enforcement and Compliance Strategy.

(8) The Buildings at Risk programme had budgets amounting to £310,000, of which £146,000 has been expended, leaving £164,000 available.

(9) In order to ensure both a pro-active drive and the ability to respond to situations that arise during the project, the existing programme will be replaced with two new strands, each with its separate budget allocation for the coming financial year:

  • targeted partnership projects £100,000 (approx.)
  • partnership applications £50,000 (approx.)
(Available budget depends on final applications under the current Buildings at Risk scheme)

(10) As with the Buildings at Risk project, grants will be offered at 50% of project costs, which may also include appropriate related agents’ fees. To ensure openness, accountability and good value on larger projects, partnership grant offers over the value of £10,000 will be approved as a non-key decision by the portfolio-holder for Planning, and will require three competitive quotes. This aligns the scheme with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules.

(11) A greater proportion of grant will be considered in cases where the Borough Council is considered to hold a greater interest, and a non-key decision will also be sought in such cases.

(12) As the project focus changes, it is proposed that tentative offers of partnership grants to owners of buildings targeted under the existing Buildings at Risk project will be discontinued, except where they remain eligible under the criteria of the new strategy.

(13) Joint-funding with partner organisations and grant-aiding bodies will continue to be sought, and Section 106 Agreements with developers will be pursued in appropriate cases.

Promotion and Review

(14) It is considered that the Council has an important role firstly to promote its achievements and successes regularly to the wider public, and secondly to gain feedback on the new strategy. This will be conducted through press releases, on the Council’s website and at displays, consultations and events such as the annual Heritage Open Days and the forthcoming Royal Centenary celebrations in 2009.

(15) It is proposed that the project runs initially for a three-year period in line with the Service Plan, and that progress be reported annually to Cabinet. It is anticipated that the current budget will not need to be reviewed for the coming financial year 2007-08, but will be reviewed as part of the 2008-09 Service Plan process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That the target criteria for partnership grant projects be changed as described in this report;

(2) That partnership grant offers over the value of £10,000 be approved as a non-key decision by the portfolio-holder for Planning;

(3) That progress be reported to Cabinet on an annual basis.

Appendix 1: Register of Buildings at Risk capable of occupation

Appendix 2: Register of Monuments at Risk

Contact officer: Brian Hayward

JIM KEHOE
Head of Planning Services
Appendix 1
Register of Buildings at Risk capable of occupation

Note: Figures include professional fees
Grants set at 50%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Year identified</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rowley Plain Cottage, Cuckoo Lane, Brenchley</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Urgent works to roof and tile-hanging complete. Other essential repairs required. Owner due to confirm repair programme by end March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy, Park Farm, Somerhill, Capel</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey House, Park Farm, Somerhill, Capel</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brook Farm Barn, Somerhill, Capel</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence Chapel, Stone Street, Cranbrook</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Urgent works to roof complete. Other essential repairs required. Owner proposing to apply for grant before end March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granary, Little Marlingate, Bedegbury Road, Goudhurst</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn and Outhouses, Finchcoks, Goudhurst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Owner has approval for residential conversion subject to conditions. Only basic urgent works carried out. Recently put on market for residential use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walled Nursery, St Ronan’s School, Gun Green, Hawkhurst</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Tower, Lillesden, Hastings Road, Hawkhurst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grantham Hall barn, Lamberhurst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach house, walls &amp; out-building, Swan Inn, Lamberst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Owners proposing use as manager’s residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn and oast, Catts Place, Paddock Wood</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hawkwell Cottage, Colts Hill, Pembury</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hawkwell Cottage, Colts Hill, Pembury</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Mt Ephraim, Royal Tunbridge Wells</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Grove Hill Gardens, Royal Tunbridge Wells</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puxtye Farm Barn, Crouch Lane, Sandhurst</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Owner has stated intention to convert to residential use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Winds Windmill, Penshurst Road, Bidborough</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Cross Barn, Ashurst Road, Ashurst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lodge, Swaylands School, Penshurst Road, Bidborough</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Work has recently begun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non Key Decision by PH
Appendix 2  
*Register of Monuments at Risk*

**Note:** Figures include professional fees  
Grants set at 50% for functional monuments; 75% for follies; 90% for gravestones and tombs. Projections include actual expenditure where repairs are completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Year identified</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garden Walls &amp; Gateways, Marle Place, Brenchley</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Grant offered. Work commenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedstead Memorial, St Lukes Church, Matfield</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Partnership grant. No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldsmid Family Cemetery, Sherenden Road, Tudeley</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Partnership grant. No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary Wall, Badsell Manor Farmhouse, Five Oak Green Farmhouse, Five Oak Green</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Walls at Maypole, Maypole Lane, Goudhurst</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised pavement, Star &amp; Eagle and Spyways, Goudhurst</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gates, piers &amp; quadrant walls, Beresford Lodge, Goudhurst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Owner proposing redevelopment of lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundial, St Mary’s Church, High Street, Goudhurst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Repaired. Dial stolen in January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls &amp; Gate piers, Marlborough House School, Hawkhurst</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calverley Park wall, Prospect Road, Tunbridge Wells</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon Hoare Memorial, St Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Section 106 agreement. Requires change to condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Well at Old Place, Church Road, Sandhurst</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk (de-listed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milestone, Queen Street, Sandhurst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Catherine Stewart’s Monument, Southborough</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk. Southborough Society to donate £900 to project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamp post, Broomhill Road, Southborough</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No longer at risk (de-listed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest Tomb, St Martins Church, Ashurst Road, Ashurst</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No longer at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundial, Groombridge Place, Groombridge</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gates, piers &amp; walls, The Cottage, Groombridge</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No application from owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrace walls &amp; steps, Burrswood, Groombridge</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Partnership grant offered for survey and schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walled garden, Burrswood, Groombridge</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Partnership grant offered for survey and schedule.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non Key Decision by PH