

## CABINET MEETING – 07 DECEMBER 2011

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART 1

**Title of Report:**

**OLD SUNDERLAND TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE: AWARD OF GRANT TO ASSIST WORKS TO RESTORE 49 & 50 HIGH STREET EAST, SUNDERLAND**

**Author(s):**

Deputy Chief Executive

**Purpose of Report:**

To obtain authorisation to delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive the award of grant to enable the restoration of 49 & 50 High Street East, Sunderland.

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to;

- (i) Delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive the award of grant from the Townscape Heritage Initiative Budget to assist in the delivery of a restoration project at 49 and 50 High Street East to enable the building to be returned to full and beneficial use as ground floor retail with two apartments above.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?**

**\* Yes**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

The contribution of the proposed grant towards the overall cost of the renovation of the building will assist in advancing the Council's objectives of securing the regeneration of the Old Sunderland THI area through the refurbishment of a vacant and derelict historic building currently at risk. An award of THI grant will assist in bringing back into beneficial use an important heritage asset of the East End.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

Not to offer a grant. Without the offer of the grant, there is a risk that the scheme will not be carried out and works that will contribute to the regeneration of Old Sunderland will not proceed and the building will continue to deteriorate.

**Is this a “Key Decision” as  
defined in the Constitution?**

**No**

**Is it included in the Forward Plan?**

**No**

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee:**

Sustainable Communities Scrutiny  
Committee

**OLD SUNDERLAND TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE: AWARD OF GRANT TO ASSIST WORKS TO RESTORE 49 & 50 HIGH STREET EAST, OLD SUNDERLAND CONSERVATION AREA**

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To obtain authorisation to delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive the award of grant to enable the restoration of 49 & 50 High Street East, Sunderland.

**2. Description of Decision**

- 2.1 Delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive the award of grant from the Townscape Heritage Initiative Budget to assist in the delivery of a restoration project at 49 and 50 High Street East to enable the building to be returned to full and beneficial use as ground floor retail with two apartments above.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council's participation in the Old Sunderland Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), in partnership with Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), was approved at Cabinet in October 2005. The initiative aims to deliver financial assistance to suitable schemes that will contribute to the heritage led regeneration of the historic East End. Grants that will contribute to the costs of works to restore vacant historic buildings and return them to beneficial use are calculated on the basis of 'conservation deficit' (a gap funding basis) in accordance with a formula provided by HLF that takes into account the cost of the restoration works compared to the anticipated increase in value of the building. The Old Sunderland THI had initially a lifespan of five years that was due to finish on the 30 June 2011 however HLF have recently agreed to an extension to the scheme to at least 30 June 2012 to enable projects such as this to benefit from the funding available.
- 3.2 The progress of the THI has been very slow in recent years as the initial interest by property owners in improving their property has been seriously prejudiced by the economic downturn and loss of confidence in the property market. Hence many of the schemes that had been initiated in the early years of the THI's operation have been held back by their owners for viability reasons as the prospects of finding end-users for the accommodation provided has been poor.

- 3.3 The property in question is believed to date from around 1780 with double shop front added in the late nineteenth century between stone quoined reveals. The elevation to Union Lane is also rich in history and character. The sum budgeted for in the THI Action Plan to be made available for a suitable scheme is £107,570.

#### **4. Proposal**

- 4.1 The proposal comprises a comprehensive schedule of works to repair the building. Extensive structural repairs are required to make the building stable, wind and water tight. Works are also required to repair or re-instate architectural features to the exterior of the building. The end use will be ground floor retail with two apartments above. The proposal is well designed and is considered to represent a significant improvement; it will make a valuable and very welcome contribution to the regeneration of Old Sunderland.
- 4.2 The property has been vacant for a number of years and was recently purchased by the applicant. He has submitted an application for Listed Building Consent which at present is under consideration. The external restoration works include re-roofing, new windows, re-pointing, new shop front etc for which the grant will be applicable and the internal works will be carried out without the support of the grant award.

#### **5. Reasons for the Decision**

- 5.1 The contribution of the proposed grant will assist in advancing the Council's objectives of securing the regeneration of the Old Sunderland THI area through the refurbishment of a vacant and derelict historic building currently at risk. An award of THI grant will assist in bringing back into beneficial use an important heritage asset of the East End.

#### **6. Alternative Options**

- 6.1 Not to offer a grant. Without the offer of the grant, there is a risk that scheme will not be carried out and works that will contribute to the regeneration of Old Sunderland will not proceed and the building will continue to deteriorate.

#### **7. Relevant Consultations**

- 7.1 The Head of Law and Governance has considered the application and is satisfied with the applicant's title to the building.
- 7.2 HLF is aware that this application has been submitted and is supportive of the proposals.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The approved THI Action Plan makes provision for a sum up to £107,570 to be made available to this project, based upon an estimation of the likely 'conservation deficit.
- 8.2 Any award of grant will be funded from the THI joint grant pool with 50% coming from the Council's contribution; and 50% coming from the HLF.

## **9. Background Papers**

- Grant Submission
- Schedule of works and associated drawings.
- Old Sunderland THI Action Plan

