

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER
July 2010**

PORTFOLIO HOLDER REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: SEVERN VALLEY BUILT HERITAGE FUND

REPORT FOR: Information & Decision

Summary

To seek the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration & Development's decision on the prioritisation and allocation of funding under the Severn Valley Built Heritage Fund.

Introduction

The Severn Valley Built Heritage Fund was successfully awarded funding from WEFO and the total budget over the lifetime of this programme for capital works (2010-2013) is £933,333.

Proposals

a) Prioritisation

The main objective of the Severn Valley Built Heritage Fund is to upgrade the appearance of business and commercial premises of heritage interest. However it is also required, as a condition of its funding from WEFO, to achieve and if possible surpass certain outputs (relating to enterprises accommodated, jobs accommodated, jobs created and vacant floor-space brought back into use). It is essential that these outputs are met, otherwise funding may be withdrawn by WEFO.

Therefore, to ensure the achievement of all of the fund's objectives, the Built Heritage team produced a "Selection & Prioritisation" guidance note which has gained approval from WEFO, and is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

This guidance note is to be used to prioritise those projects that go furthest in helping to meet the fund's objectives.

In order to enable comparison between schemes a 'Prioritisation Assessment Criteria Matrix' is included as part of the guidance note and it is proposed that we use this scoring matrix to prioritise applications with a score of 30 or more, deferring applications that score less than 30.

Applications that are deferred can then be considered at a later date alongside any further applications submitted. If, at that stage, no awards can be made then we will consider revising the score downwards to aid the next most worthy project.

The figure of 30 will be subject to review throughout the lifespan of the scheme to ensure that the most worthy applications are aided.

b) Award Capping

The amount of funding to be awarded to each application is at the discretion of the Council but is up to a maximum of 70% of the cost of the eligible works. The scheme therefore provides a similar rate of assistance to that provide by the Machynlleth Town Scheme.

However, the Severn Valley scheme covers a far larger geographical area than that covered by the Machynlleth scheme and, as you would therefore expect, is receiving a far greater level of interest with 39 inquiries and 25 “expressions of interest” having been submitted to date. In addition, from the interest already expressed, it is evident that there are a small number of large schemes that could potentially take up a large proportion of the total budget available and inhibit work to other properties.

Therefore, to ensure that the benefit of the fund is spread to as many properties as possible within the Severn Valley it is proposed that funding allocations be ‘capped’ as follows:

For projects with a score 30 to 49 in the selection and prioritisation process funding be capped at £50,000 per property

For projects with a score 50 and above in the selection and prioritisation process -funding be capped at £75,000 per property Having considered previous grant schemes that the built heritage team have operated and the potential average cost of projects, it is felt that this level of capping will provide an adequate amount of assistance for any larger projects that may come forward whilst also allowing the budget to be spread more widely.

As detailed within the “Selection & Prioritisation” guidance note, the criteria will be kept under review throughout the duration of the scheme to ensure that the aims and outputs of the scheme are being realised.

Corporate Improvement Plan

The Severn Valley Built Heritage Fund, by offering assistance to maintain and restore the fabric of historic buildings, supports the Corporate Improvement Plan priority of enhancing and sustaining the built environment.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To approve proposals to a) Defer projects scoring less than 30 in the selection and prioritisation process. b) To cap grant assistance to £350,000 per property for projects with a score of 30 to 49 in the selection and prioritisation process and £75,000 per property for projects with a score of 50 and above in the selection and prioritisation process.	To implement the Severn Valley Built Heritage Fund and to provide assistance for eligible works to as many businesses within the Severn Valley.

Person(s) To Action Decision:	
Date By When Decision To Be Actioned:	

Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

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Relevant Portfolio Member(s):	
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Relevant Local Member(s):	
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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

Background papers used to prepare report: SVBHF files