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## **HERITAGE ENVIRONMENT REGENERATION SCHEME**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report informs members of urgent action taken under the procedure agreed by Council on 25 July 2000 (Minute 254/00).

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A letter dated 19 February 2001 was received from English Heritage inviting the Council to participate in a new round of the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) in the 2001/2002 financial year. The offer related to Rochford Town Centre which had been identified as an area that could benefit from funding under the scheme.
- 2.2 In order to take advantage of the money on offer, an Implementation Programme was required to be submitted to English Heritage by 16 March 2001. Since the Transportation and Environmental Committee did not meet until 22 March 2001, and in order to allow time for the preparation of the Implementation Programme, it was necessary to seek agreement at an early opportunity to enable the matter to be progressed.
- 2.3 The HERS scheme is intended to focus funding on neighbourhood businesses, high streets and corner shops – employment generating activities which form the focus for community life and prosperity, and where area-based assistance with building repairs and enhancement will help tip the balance in favour of continued local employment, provide new home and encourage inward investment.
- 2.4 Schemes are normally intended to run for three years, but English Heritage has had some difficulty getting funding arrangements resolved and therefore, this round of bidding was been condensed into a single stage process, with schemes commencing as soon as possible in the new financial year.
- 2.5 Rochford was been identified as a town that could benefit from funding and accordingly, a provisional maximum figure of £15,000 was earmarked against this project for the financial year 2001/2002. The total grant available may be adjusted depending on the bids received.

#### **Rochford Town Centre Enhancement**

The Rochford Town Centre Working Group has prepared a scheme for the enhancement of the town centre based on the capital sum of £100,000 that has been identified in the budget (Item 'Rochford Town Centre Enhancement Scheme' on this Agenda refers).

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- 2.6 The town centre enhancement scheme proposes significant works in and around the Market Square, and this was used as the basis for the submission to English Heritage. Given that £100,000 had been identified for the town centre, there was considered to be no difficulty in identifying match funding.
- 2.7 On that basis, urgent approval was sought and agreed and a bid was prepared and submitted by the closing date on 16 March 2001.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning Services

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**Background Papers:**

Letter from English Heritage dated 19 February 2001

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton on:-

Tel:- 01702 318100  
E-Mail:- shaun.scrutton@rochford.gov.uk