

# National Lottery support for Lurgan regeneration plans

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Lurgan in 1907

Funding of £2million has been awarded in support of the initial proposals from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to restore and revitalise buildings within the town's conservation area.

Announcing the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "These exciting plans will regenerate the historic streetscape and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Lurgan. The heart of the town will be transformed and reimagined as a vibrant space for people to use, visit and enjoy, and we are delighted to be involved.

"It is thanks to National Lottery players that we can support such fantastic projects that deliver real benefits to communities right across Northern Ireland. To date, HLF has awarded funding to more than 1,200 projects with a total investment of £209m in our amazing local heritage."

Lurgan is the oldest major settlement in the area with an architectural heritage dating back to the 17th century. Today, many of the historic buildings which give the town centre its unique character have fallen into disrepair and are underused or vacant.

The five-year Lurgan Townscape Heritage project will repair and conserve historic buildings throughout the town's commercial core, bringing back into sustainable use much-needed, valuable floor space. The heritage-led regeneration will breathe new life into the town centre, boosting the local economy with the creation of new jobs, new living and retail space, and acting as a driver to attract additional investment to the area.

Alongside the extensive capital works, a programme of events and activities such as town tours, storytelling sessions, a Blue Plaque scheme and traditional skills and crafts workshops, will help bring people into the town centre to learn more about and get involved in the unique heritage of the area.

Funding was awarded through HLF's Townscape Heritage programme, which provides grants ranging from £100,000 to £2m to regenerate towns and cities by improving their historic built environment. The award includes a development grant of £63,900 to enable Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to work up full plans to access the full £2m grant requested at a later date.

Welcoming the announcement, Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Councillor Garath Keating, said: "I am delighted our exciting plans for Lurgan town centre have received significant financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is yet another boost for the Borough and will enable us to further develop our rich and varied heritage offer. Council have also secured HLF Townscape Heritage funding in Armagh City, and now look forward to delivering a heritage led regeneration scheme in Lurgan town centre. This will enhance Lurgan's historic buildings, bringing them back into economic use and creating employment opportunities in Lurgan."

Chair of Council's Economic Development and Regeneration Committee, Councillor Colin McCusker commented: "This scheme will be a key driver for the ongoing regeneration of Lurgan town centre, and further reflects the Council's ability to deliver major projects. Our built heritage is a valuable asset that can support the wider regeneration agenda for the Borough, helping us to create new and unique opportunities for investment and economic development. This programme could support investment in as many as thirty buildings, which would have a transformational impact on Lurgan town centre, and I look forward to working closely with HLF and other partners."

## **Further information**

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