

---

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06, RELEASE OF FUNDS:  
NORTHGATE (BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS) PARTNERSHIP SCHEME**

---

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor David Lyonette,  
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment**

---

**Purpose of Report**

1. To seek approval for the release of funds to provide grants for the improvement of older buildings in the Northgate Conservation Area.

**Information and Analysis**

2. Over the past three years the Council has worked with English Heritage and One NorthEast to encourage owners to carry out repairs and the restoration of older buildings in the Northgate and High Northgate part of the Northgate Conservation Area. The scheme, known as the Northgate HERS (Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme), provided grants to help improve this, one of the most historic, but most run-down, gateways into Darlington. After a slow start, significant improvements have been achieved and a momentum of positive change and renewed confidence in the area has been created. Much more, however, remains to be done to reverse the decades of decline and English Heritage has offered to match-fund another two years of grants under the aegis of a new but similar programme called Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSCA). The sums offered by English Heritage (EH) are the maximum possible, £100,000 for both 2005/06 and 2006/07. This reflects EH's satisfaction with the achievements of the HERS and confidence in the Council's management of it.
3. One NorthEast is unable to contribute to the Northgate Partnership Scheme so match-funding will need to come from the Council's own corporate resources. Cabinet on 15 March (Minute C241(a)(ii)/Mar/05) formally released £100,000 from the 2005/06 Capital Programme to fund the first year of the scheme. Following the funding announcement by EH, this funding now needs to be formally released so that grants can be offered and improvements can get underway as soon as possible.

**Outcome of Consultations**

4. This is not a scheme for which external consultation was considered necessary. No objections were raised following consultations within the Council.

## **Financial Implications**

5. The cost of the scheme for 2005/06 is £200,000, of which £100,000 would come from the Council's Capital Programme. The revenue costs for managing the scheme will be met from within the Planning Services Section budget. The grants should generate private investment in the area by owners of up to another £200,000 pa.

## **Legal Implications**

6. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

## **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

7. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

## **Council Policy Framework**

8. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

## **Decision Deadline**

9. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

## **Recommendation**

10. It is recommended that Members approve the release of £100,000 from English Heritage to support the first year of the Northgate Partnership Scheme.

## **Reasons**

11. The recommendation will help improve the condition, appearance, and economic and social prospects of one of the most historic, but most run-down, gateways into Darlington.

**John Buxton**  
**Director of Development and Environment**

## **Background Papers**

None other than those referred to in this report.

Brendan Boyle: extension 2630