

<p align="center"><b>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee report</b></p> <p align="center">7 November 2018</p>	
<p><b>Report of:</b> Ann Sutcliffe, Interim Corporate Director of Place</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p align="center"><b>Payment of Historic Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church, Bow</b></p>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Air Quality</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Sripriya Sudhakar – Place Shaping Team Leader
<b>Wards affected</b>	Bow East
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	A Great Place to Live

### **Executive Summary**

This report relates to the payment of a London Borough of Tower Hamlets Historic Buildings Grant of £20,000 to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church (St. Mary's), 230 Bow Road, London, E3 3AH, for vital repair works to the exterior of the church west tower. The building is currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. This contribution is towards phase one of a multi-phase project. On completion of the second phase of work, which the church is preparing for now, the building can be removed from the Heritage at Risk register.

LBTH made a formal offer of £20,000 as a flat rate contribution to the overall cost of the works of £251,753. The majority of funding is made up by the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme' (£184,300). The applicant reports that the restoration works have cost in excess of £252,887 to date.

Phase one of the restoration is now complete and the council is satisfied that the works have been carried out to an appropriately high standard. Payment of the grant has therefore become due.

## **Recommendations**

The Mayor is recommended to:

1. Approve the grant payment of grant of £20,000 to St. Mary and Holy Trinity, Bow, as a contribution to vital repair works to the exterior of the west tower.

### **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 St Mary and Holy Trinity Church (also known as Bow Church) is a prominent Grade II\* Listed Building located in the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. The church is also an important community asset, which is currently used for religious services and volunteer activity. The building suffers from extensive dampness, stone decay and leaking roofs and, as a result is on the Historic England Register of Heritage at Risk. The building has been given a condition rating of 'very bad' (the worst of four categories).
- 1.2 Remedial and restoration work to the west tower (phase one) was completed on 29 June 2018 and the architect issue a letter of practical completion on 2 July 2018 (see appendix 2). The Heritage at Risk Projects Officer visited site on 24 May 2018 and found the work to be carried out to a good conservation standard. Photographic evidence of the visit can be found in appendix 3. The Heritage at Risk Projects Officer has reviewed the final cost of the project and found that it exceeds the anticipated cost, however there is no provision for an increase in the grant sum offered. The grant sum will remain at £20,000. The grant offered does not exceed the grant aiding maximum of 60% of total cost (including VAT) and is therefore eligible for payment.

### **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

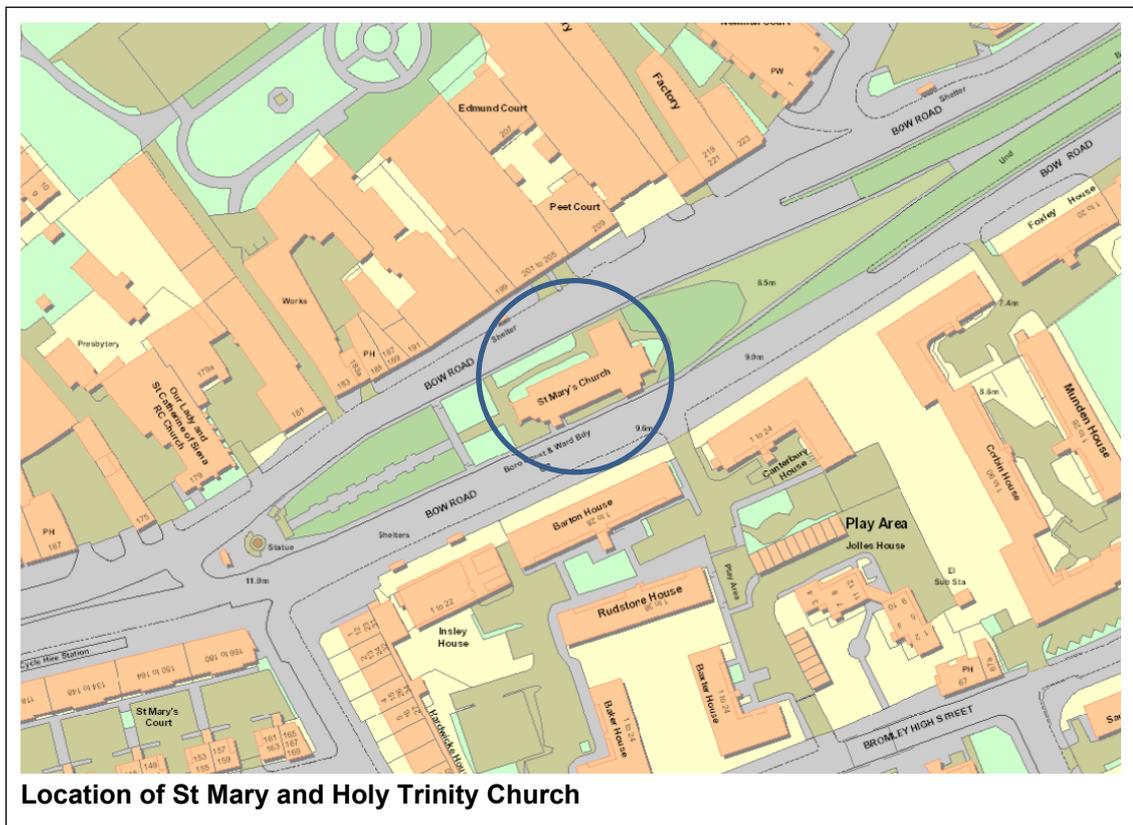
- 2.1 The council and the church have a contractual agreement (see appendix 4), signed by the former Rector Deborah Frazer and Heritage at Risk Projects Officer, Anna Zucchelli. As the applicant has met all conditions for grant payment, the council now has an obligation to make payment.

### **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 The Council has in operation a Historic Buildings Grant Scheme to assist owners and occupiers of listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas,

in meeting their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the irreplaceable cultural asset, which these buildings represent. The provision of this type of grant is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 3.2 With over 50 conservation areas and approximately 2000 listed buildings, demand in the Borough for grant-aided assistance in meeting the costs of buildings repair is high.
- 3.3 St Mary's Church applied for a Historic Buildings Grant from the Council for remedial and restoration works to the Church of St Mary & Holy Trinity (St Mary's Church), 230 Bow Road, London E3 3AH on 22 June 2016. A formal offer of grant of £20,000 was made by letter on 28 September 2017. Works on site were complete on 29 June 2018. The church is now seeking payment of the grant.



- 3.4 The council's Historic Building Grant provides partnership funding towards a Heritage Lottery Fund '*Places of Worship*' grant-aided project. The extent of the work required has meant that the remedial and restoration work is split into two phases. The church is seeking payment for its first application of grant for its first phase of works. It has simultaneously submitted another application for grant from the HLF and LBTH for its second phase of works, which is dealt with separately.

- 3.5 St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church is a landmark building in a highly visible location on the Bow Road on the eastern edge of the borough. There has been a place of worship in this location since the fourteenth century, when Bow was a hamlet outside London, and is one of the last remaining medieval buildings in the Borough. The church in this location has survived in spite of the development and modernisation around it and therefore contributes to a sense of place and continuity. The church is a demonstration of change over time with additions, alterations and rebuilding over 700 years. Its persistent survival over this length of time, even following bomb damage during the Second World War, is remarkable.
- 3.6 St Mary's Church is a prominent Grade II\* Listed Building located in the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. The church is also an important community asset, which is currently used for religious services and volunteer activity. For a number of years, the building has been suffering from extensive dampness, stone decay and leaking roofs and, as a result is on the Historic England Register of Heritage at Risk in 2015. The building was given a condition rating of 'very bad' (the worst of four categories).
- 3.7 The LBTH grant makes a contribution towards the cost of alleviating problems relating mainly to water ingress and damp, resulting in deteriorating external appearance and the risk of loss of important historical features on the west tower, some of which date back to over 500 years ago, which include:
- Repairs to deteriorating bell-tower cupola and renewal of weather coatings
  - Repairs and renewals of gutters and rainwater goods
  - Renewal of stone weathering details which will throw rainwater off the surface of the historic stonework
  - Removal of Ordinary Portland Cement from Kentish rag-stone work and repointing in lime mortar to allow the wall to breathe and prevent further deterioration of historic stonework
- 3.8 The Place Shaping Team Leader presented a report to the Commissioners on 12 September 2017, which sought permission to send a letter to the Rector of St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church stating the Council's offer of a LBTH Historic Building Grant, subject to conditions, as a contribution towards the cost of repair works to the exterior of the church tower. At the meeting the Commissioners agreed that:
- The grant funding of £20,000 to the church as a contribution to vital repairs works to the exterior of the tower be approved.
  - The issue of a formal offer of grant to the church be approved.

- The council's contribution to the works be clearly publicised.
- 3.9 A letter was sent to Rev. Deborah Frazer at Bow Rectory, dated 28 September 2017 (appendix 4), stating the Council's offer of a grant of £20,000 towards the vital repair works to the exterior of the tower. A contract for the grant was sent, dated 14 September 2018 (appendix 5)
- 3.10 It was agreed in the previous report to the Grants Sub-Committee, dated 12 September 2017, that a further report would be prepared once work on site was completed. Historic Building Grant guidance states that "*Grant payment is conditional upon the approved works being carried out to the complete satisfaction of the Council.... The conservation officer dealing with the application will inspect the work to ensure it has been carried out satisfactorily and to a conservation standard. It is suggested that, the claim is adequately documented and all the paper-works are kept in order so that the payment can be made as quickly as possible*"
- 3.11 The work on site was completed on 29 June 2018 and the architect issued the Practical Completion Certificate on 2 July 2018 (attached in appendix 2).
- 3.12 The Heritage at Risk Projects Officer visited the site on 24 May 2018 to inspect the quality of the finished works. She found them to be of a good conservation standard and is satisfied with the quality of the work. Photographic evidence of the quality of the repair work can be found in Appendix 4, attached with this document.
- 3.13 The works to the church have enhanced its external appearance and provided for an opportunity to enhance the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. Whilst the condition and external appearance of the church has improved, it will not be until the second phase of work is complete that the church can be removed from the Heritage at Risk register.
- 3.14 The Heritage at Risk Projects Officer has reviewed the final cost of the project and found that it exceeds the anticipated cost, however there is no provision for an increase in the grant sum offered. The grant sum should remain at £20,000.
- 3.15 The grant is conditional on the building participating in London Open House for five years to ensure the best possible value for the Council. The church was open to the public for the 2018 Open House, 22 and 23 September.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 The Grants Determination Sub-Committee approved the allocation of a Historic Buildings Grant of £20,000 towards the financing of restoration works to the west tower of St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The report considered by that committee stated that once works were satisfactorily completed, further approval would be sought to authorise the release of the funding. This report requests that approval.
- 4.2 A second phase of repairs and restoration to the church has commenced, with a further Historic Buildings Grant allocation of £30,000 being approved by the Grants Determination Sub-Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Funding has been earmarked within the Council's Historic Buildings Grant allocation to fully finance both grants to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church.

## **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The Church has complied with its obligations under the grant agreement except for the fact that the cost of the works exceeds the level of grant offered. However, the recommendation is to only pay the £20,000 originally agreed and the Council is legally obliged to also comply with the agreement. Therefore, the grant should be paid in accordance with the law.
- 5.2 The Council's Best Value duty was considered in the previous report. Compliance with the terms of the Agreement at no increased cost to the Council suggests that the Best Value obligations previously noted have been followed.  
The decision to comply with the Grant agreement terms and pay the grant does not give rise to any Equality Act considerations

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The works contribute to the preservation of a very significant Grade II\* listed cultural asset and the preservation and enhancement of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area.
- 6.2 The church is currently used for religious services and volunteer activity. Through the project, the intention is to extend local community engagement and to use the building for community purposes. This will see the church once again become a local focal point for residents.
- 6.3 The project thus contributes to the theme 'A Great Place to Live' in the Community Plan to build One Tower Hamlets.

## **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The delivery of this project ensures the Council meets its commitment set out in the Council's Conservation Strategy.
- 7.2 The partial partnership funding contributed to securing a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.
- 7.3 The restoration of this listed cultural asset part funded through the grant benefits the whole community and is considered to offer considered excellent value for money.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 In line with other beneficiaries of grants from the Council, St Mary and Holy Trinity Church have been encouraged to consider taking appropriate steps to minimise negative impact on the environment when taking up the opportunities offered within the programme and on an ongoing basis.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Works have been completed to the complete satisfaction of the Council. Evidence of the quality of the work can be seen in appendix 4.
- 9.2 As there is a contract in place and the work has been completed to a satisfactory standard, the Council now have an obligation to pay the allocated funds.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Beyond the essential repairs to the church west end tower, the church is running an activity plan as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Project which will encourage visitors to the church promoting positive neighbourhood engagement.

## **11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no safeguarding implications.

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**Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

**Linked Report**

Grant sub-committee report 'Formal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church, Bow', dated 12 September 2017

CABFP1 'Historic Buildings Grant – St. Mary's Church, Bow', dated 12 September 2017

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Decisions 12 September 2017 Grants Determination Cabinet Sub-Committee

Appendix 2: Practical Completion Certificate from architect

Appendix 3: Photographic evidence

Appendix 4: Signed offer letter

Appendix 5: Grant contract

**Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

None

**Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A