


<p>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee report</p> <p>27 September 2018</p>	
<p>Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Interim Corporate Director of Place</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Informal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor for Regeneration and Air Quality
Originating Officer(s)	Sripriya Sudhakar – Place Shaping Team Leader
Wards affected	Bow East
Key Decision?	Yes
Forward Plan Notice Published	16 th August 2018
Reason for Key Decision	Impact on Wards
Community Plan Theme	A Great Place to Live

Executive Summary

This report relates to an informal offer of a London Borough of Tower Hamlets Historic Buildings Grant of £30,000 to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church (also known as Bow Church), 230 Bow Road, London E3 3AH, for the second and final phase of repair works, which include improvements to surface drainage, repairs to rainwater goods and the removal of pollutant encrustation to the external stonework of the aisles and chancel. The building is listed Grade II* and is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.

St. Mary's has previously been awarded a LBTH Historic Buildings Grant (HBG) of £20,000 for its first phase of repair works, completed on 29 June 2018. When the second phase of repair works has been completed, the building can be removed from the Heritage at Risk register. The LBTH grant contributes to partnership funding for a larger HLF grant; without the LBTH grant, the charity will have a shortfall in funds which could threaten the project.

Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and comment on the recommendation to issue an informal offer of grant of £30,000 to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church, Bow.
2. Approve the issue of a letter of comfort to the church, communicating the council's willingness to offer a Historic Building Grant of £30,000 in principle, subject to conditions.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 St. Mary's 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.
- 1.2 The works will improve the external appearance of the Grade II* listed place of worship and is an opportunity to enhance the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. The church is already an important community asset, currently used for religious services, volunteer activity and the Bow Foodbank. The intention is to extend local community engagement and use the building for further community purposes.
- 1.3 The Council grant would make up a shortfall in funding for the project, the majority of which is made by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Council grant would contribute towards the cost of Phase II of the Church's repair project to alleviate problems relating mainly to water ingress and damp, resulting in deteriorating external appearance and the risk of loss of important historical features.
- 1.4 Phase I repair works to the west tower were completed in July 2018, to which the Council contributed £20,000. The Church, however, will remain on the Historic England's Heritage at Risk register until the full repair work is completed. Phase II concentrates improvements to surface drainage, repairs to rainwater goods, the removal of pollutant encrustation to the external stonework of the aisles and chancel and access improvements.

2. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 The council operates a Historic Building Grant scheme to assist owners and occupiers of listed buildings and buildings within 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 and section 57 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.2 The annual Historic Building Grant allocation is £26,250. £27,000 of uncommitted funds have been rolled over from 2017/18, forming a total of £53,000 in 2018/19. This does not include the monies already allocated to Oxford House (£95,000) and St. Mary's Phase I (£20,000). If £30,000 is allocated to St. Mary's Phase II, this would leave £23,000 of funds. An expression of interest has been received from the Calvary Charismatic Baptist Church (CCBC) in Poplar, but an application has not yet been made.
- 2.3 With over 50 conservation areas and approximately 2000 listed buildings (with over 30 buildings and 5 conservation areas on the Heritage at Risk register), demand for grant-aided assistance in meeting the costs of buildings repair is high. Priority is given to buildings and conservation areas on the Heritage at Risk register.
- 2.4 The building fabric of St. Mary's Church shows its development from its origin as a chapel in 1311 and its extension to a church, with tower and chancel, in 1495, to major restorations in Victorian times and again following extensive damage during the Blitz. It was during this latter restoration that the church gained the clock-tower and cupola, becoming an iconic landmark in the borough. St. Mary's 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 through bomb damage during the Second World War, is remarkable.



Fig. 1: The west tower and main entrance of St Mary and Holy Trinity Church

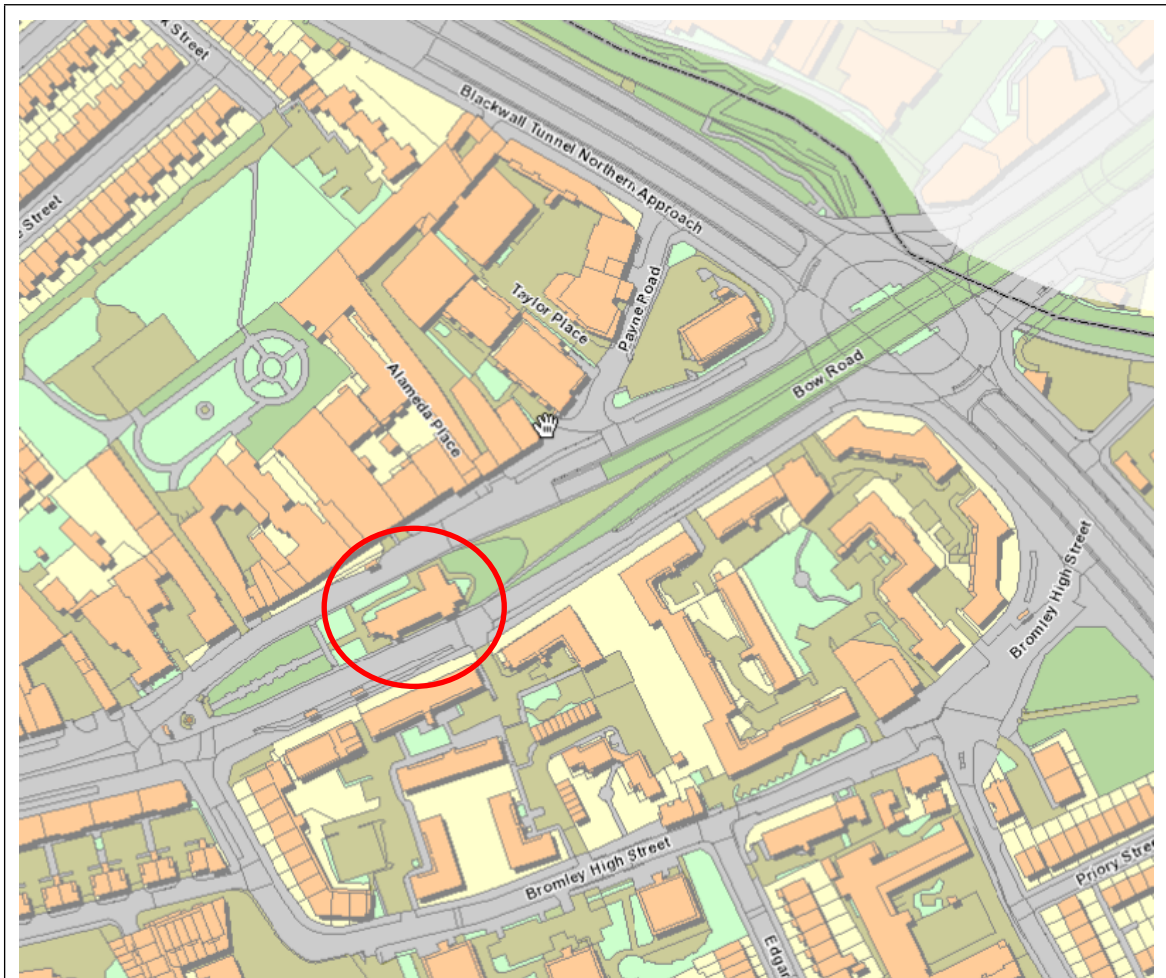


Fig. 2: Location of St Mary and Holy Trinity Church to the east of the Borough

- 2.5 St. Mary's Church is a nationally important building, being listed Grade II*; less than 6% of England's buildings are listed at this level. It is also located within the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. It was placed on Historic England's Register of Heritage at Risk in 2015, where it was stated that 'the church suffers from extensive dampness, stone decay and leaking roofs.' The extent of the works was such that the HLF proposed the works were split into two phases. Phase I of repairs to the west tower of the church were carried out in 2017-2018, mainly funded by the HLF but also supported by a Historic Building Grant from the Council. Phase II of repairs will complete the repairs to the aisles and chancel as well as providing for churchyard and access improvements.
- 2.6 By alleviating damp and water ingress problems, thereby reducing maintenance problems, and improving access, the project will reduce ongoing future maintenance costs. The drier, more accessible building will be more attractive for community uses, thus improving its economic and social sustainability. The church already hosts a wide range of community activities, such as concerts, plays, fairs and is home to the Bow Foodbank- the repair

work will enable the development of an enhanced range of community activities, serving a broader audience. As one of the Borough's last surviving mediaeval buildings and a landmark at one of the main entrances to the borough, St. Mary's is a powerful contributor to the sense of place and continuity of the area. The iconic building is integral to the social and cultural fabric of the whole East End. Completion of the Phase II of the project will ensure that it can be removed from the Heritage at Risk register and represents a major step towards restoring the building to the community, as the centre of the hamlet of Bow.

- 2.7 The church has been offered a majority sum towards the cost of the project by the Heritage Lottery Fund, through their 'Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme'. Despite concerted efforts to find funding from other sources, the Church still has a shortfall of c. £37,000. If the Church is unable to raise the partnership funding required by the deadline of 2 November 2018, then the HLF offer will lapse, the project will be unable to go ahead and the building will remain on the Heritage at Risk register.
- 2.8 The total cost of the capital works of Phase II is £235,000 (including VAT). The overall cost of the project, including development stage costs, professional fees, heritage-related activity and interpretation is £333,000. Of the capital works, the HLF will contribute £148,000, £43,000 of VAT will be reclaimed, and the church will contribute £7,000 of its own reserves. This brings a total of £198,000 and leaves a shortfall of £37,000. It is proposed to allocate £30,000 from the Council's Historic Building Grant fund to the church. The church has confirmed that it has been successful in securing the additional £7,000 to meet the shortfall.
- 2.9 The Historic Buildings Grant would contribute towards repairs of the rainwater goods of the aisle and transept and drainage at ground level. Pollutant encrustation and inappropriate cement mortar will be removed from the exterior walls, which will encourage evaporation of moisture trapped in the stonework. These works will reduce water ingress, shed water from the building, enable the building to 'breathe', prevent further deterioration of the historic fabric and contribute an improvement of the external appearance of the building. The type of work proposed meets the criteria of the council's Historic Buildings Grant scheme and offers significant benefits for the residents in and visitors to the borough when complete. It will enhance the appearance of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area and allow the building to be removed from the Heritage at Risk register. Some elements of the project such as the churchyard and access improvements are not eligible for a Historic Buildings Grant, but are a subsidiary benefit from the overall scheme.

- 2.10 As a condition of the Council's HBG application, the award of a formal grant offer is based on the provision of a professional specification of the proposed works, three alternative detailed quotations and clear drawings of the proposed works (further detail, please see Appendix 4). However, the church is not currently in a position to provide three alternative detailed quotations as the project is not planned to go to tender until mid-September 2018, with a decision on the tender and a fixed contract sum by the beginning of November 2018.
- 2.11 As a result, the council cannot yet make an offer of formal grant; however the deadline for the church to raise partnership funding is 2 November 2018. If the church does not receive the necessary partnership funding, there is a risk that the HLF will withdraw their offer, the project will not go ahead and the building will remain at risk. Therefore it is proposed that a letter of comfort, with a grant offer in principle, subject to conditions, is written, approved by the Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee on 27 September 2018, before the HLF deadline. A request to make a formal offer of grant will be put forward to the meeting on 2 January 2019, once all the necessary documentation has been received from the church.
- 2.12 Permission to start is anticipated in March 2019, leading to a start on site in April 2019. The payment of the grant would be in the next financial year, 2019-2020, and a request to roll over the grant will be made before the end of March 2019.
- 2.13 The grant will be conditional upon the building participating in London Open House of 5 years to ensure the best possible value for the council.

3. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The proposed works would contribute to the conservation and enhancement of a highly valued community asset, contributing to the setting of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area and neighbouring listed buildings.
- 3.2 The building currently provides a wide range of community activities, such as concerts, plays, fairs and is home to the Bow Foodbank. The work will see the building become a greater focal point for a larger number of residents, as well as visitors to the borough.
- 3.3 The project thus contributes to the theme 'A Great Place to Live' in the Community Plan to build One Tower Hamlets.

4. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.

4.2 Best Value implications

The delivery of this project ensures the Council meets its commitment set out in the Council's Conservation Strategy. The partnership funding would contribute to securing a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. The restoration of this listed cultural asset part funded through the grant will benefit the whole community and is considered to offer excellent value for money. The grant will be conditional on the building participating in London Open House for five years to ensure the best possible value for the council.

4.3 Environmental

In line with other beneficiaries of grants from the Council, St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church will be 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. The proposed access improvements will allow for on-going future maintenance work, thus reducing

4.4 Risk management

The Council has not committed itself to a payment of a grant at this stage. A formal offer of grant can only be made on receipt of three detailed quotations and the architect's specification for the works. Payment of the grant cannot be made until the work is completed to the full satisfaction of the Council and the works do not come under budget. There is a risk that if the Church do not receive adequate partnership funding then the HLF may withdraw their grant offer, the repair work may not proceed and the benefits described in this report would not be delivered.

4.5 **Crime reduction**

Beyond the repair works, the overall scheme with the churchyard improvements, should help to promote positive neighbourhood engagement by encouraging visitors and users to St. Mary's Church and reduce anti-social behaviour.

4.6 **Safeguarding**

There are no safeguarding implications.

5. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 5.1 This report seeks the approval of the Grants Determination Sub-Committee to allocate funding of £30,000, payable as a Historic Buildings Grant, to St Mary and Holy Trinity Church as a contribution towards the cost of repairs and restoration works to the church.
- 5.2 This is the second phase of the repairs programme. The Council previously awarded a Historic Buildings Grant of £20,000 towards the £283,000 cost of the initial works which mainly related to the West Tower.
- 5.3 The total works costs for the second phase are estimated at £235,000. These exclude fees and non-repair works which are financed from a separate Heritage Lottery Fund grant. At the time of submitting the application to the Council for Historic Building Grant, £198,000 of financing had been raised, leaving a shortfall of £37,000 as shown in the table below.

	£
Works Costs - Excluding Fees	235,000
<u>Approved Funding - at application stage</u>	
Heritage Lottery Fund	148,000
Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme	43,000
Reserves	7,000
	<hr/> 198,000
Funding Shortfall	37,000

- 5.4 In order to obtain the Heritage Lottery Funding, the Church must provide evidence of the secured match funding by 2nd November 2018. Based on the initial submission, the Council contribution would mean that a balance of £7,000 would still need to be raised, however the Church has recently confirmed that it has been successful in securing the required additional funding (see paragraph 2.8).

- 5.5 The proposed grant allocation will utilise £30,000 of the uncommitted resources of £53,250 that have been earmarked to finance Historic Buildings Grants. No funding should be released until all necessary grant conditions have been made and the supporting documentation verified.

6. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 6.1 The Council has the legal power to make this grant if it so wishes.
- 6.2 However, the applicant has not fulfilled all the criteria of the grant application process as it has not been out to tender and provided 3 quotes against the specification. The offer of a grant is required so that the applicant can access the substantial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and therefore requires a commitment from the Council to provide this grant. Therefore, an offer of grant may be made but it must be conditional upon the satisfaction of the grant application conditions prior to payment of the grant. Therefore, a condition of the grant agreement will be that there is the provision of the requisite number of quotes.
- 6.3 The grant terms will also provide for the control and the monitoring of the use of grant funds. This will ensure that the Council achieves Best Value in line with the law. However, this also means that the quotation process must be undertaken and evaluated in accordance with pre-advertised conditions. Again this should be covered in the grant terms.
- 6.4 The particular application does not give rise to any specific equalities issues under the law. The grant scheme itself is also subject to the Council's equalities monitoring process and is therefore assessed regularly to ensure that any equalities issues are dealt with appropriately.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- List any linked reports
-
- State NONE if none.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Extract from the Heritage at Risk Register
- Appendix 2: Historic Buildings Grant application form
- Appendix 3: Letter of comfort
- Appendix 4: Historic Buildings Guidance

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Sripriya Sudhakar

Place Shaping – Team Leader

T: +44 (0) 207 364 5371