

Historic England Response to Arts Council England-Draft Strategy 2020-30

This is an opportunity to share anything additional you would like to contribute to the consultation.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. As a sister non-Departmental Public Body under the wing of DCMS, Historic England strongly supports the thrust of the draft Strategy and we look forward to developing stronger and more effective collaborations that we expect could arise from it. We congratulate ACE on the clarity with which it has resolved the 7 outcomes proposed in the summer 2018 document into the 3 x 3 structure of outcomes and investment principles in the current draft. We see close parallels with our own effort, expressed in our Corporate Plan and Public Value Framework, to separate on the one hand the outcomes for which we are working from, on the other hand, the standards we expect of ourselves and our partners in delivering results that make the most of taxpayer funding.

Our main concern is with some of the language used, which we are concerned should not inadvertently put a barrier between our effective collaboration. Most importantly, whilst we appreciate that the issue has been grappled with earlier in the evolution of the Strategy, we are concerned that your use of the term 'culture' in a way that sidelines heritage is potentially unhelpful to both our interests in making the case on behalf of society for public investment. It also contradicts the Culture White Paper's explicit use of the term to include heritage in all its forms. Although heritage conservation is a creative process, we have less concern over the reservation of the term 'creative' for the work done by ACE, but we ask that you revisit the 'culture' definition issue once again.

Our second area for comment is on the emphasis in the Strategy on the creativity of cultural production in the present to the detriment of curation responsibilities to future generations. We take comfort in the more detailed objectives for developing the museums leadership aspects of ACE delivery planning that we saw in the on-line consultation, but we observe a substantial gap between those objectives and the Strategy, a gap which may be more evident to us from the outside than it is to ACE itself from within.

Third and finally, we foresee much common ground between our organisations in the place-shaping agenda that we feel will be a key driver of public investment in the next decade. To quote from the draft Strategy, '... recognition has grown across the board of the powerful role culture can and should play in shaping the places where we live.' We invite ACE to acknowledge its partners in the achievements of the Great Place Scheme and in the pioneering collaborations such as in Margate that pioneered the integrated use of heritage and creativity to kick-start regeneration. More than that, though, we feel that the place-based collaborations of the future depend on a deeper understanding of the term 'place' than merely a geographical location in which cultural production is catalysed. Place is about the personal and shared relationships that people have with their surroundings, which can be shaped and intensified through culture. We suggest that ACE, as a thought leader in this area, should signal such a deeper understanding in the Strategy.