

Historic England's response to the Heritage Lottery Fund Policy Directions Consultation Submitted 27.07.2018

[The four Consultation questions are in **bold** and Historic England's response in standard text. The text of Directions is in *italic* font.]

UK-WIDE QUESTIONS:

1. Is there anything in these directions that the HLF should not be doing? Y/N If yes, tell us what you think HLF should not be doing and why.

No.

2. Is there anything that the HLF should be doing that is not covered by these directions? Y/N If yes, tell us what is missing and why you consider this important.

No.

Historic England welcomes the amendment of Direction 1 to incorporate the consideration of designation and heritage at risk when making grant decisions. HLF's resources are far greater than any other funder in the sector and it therefore has a critical role to play in saving our most important (i.e. designated) historic buildings/sites at greatest risk of loss. The priority given to heritage at risk should be embedded within the decision making process but when assessing and prioritising applications, HLF also is strongly advised to consider whether the proposal will address the most urgently needed work.

Historic England's Heritage at Risk programme is perhaps the best recognised and established but there are others who help to identify heritage at risk of loss. These organisations include the Theatres Trust, SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Greater London Authority's culture team, amongst others. We also encourage Local Authorities to prepare and publish their own Heritage at Risk Registers that include Grade II non-ecclesiastical buildings (these are already covered by Historic England's register in London) and locally listed buildings/sites. Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register is published <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>.

Historic buildings/sites identified in any published register (or database), which have the potential to deliver significant public benefits, including well-being and economic regeneration, should be prioritised. The project's ability to enable local people to take a more active role in the stewardship of their community's heritage and determine new uses that will serve their needs as well as dealing with the problems will need to be weighed alongside the viability and quality of proposals, including their sustainability in the longer-term.

We recognise that 'heritage at risk' may be about more than the physical condition of heritage assets; wider approaches could focus more on the loss of use or community support for a site or its vulnerability in broader terms. Given the lack of capacity in many communities we welcome any funding HLF can offer to projects to increase local skills in fundraising, project planning and delivery. It would also be very helpful if HLF could provide grants to stave off further decay whilst community groups determine how to bring heritage back into beneficial use, before its physical condition becomes sufficiently critical to warrant inclusion in a Heritage at Risk Register. We would like to discuss how our Heritage at Risk and other specialist teams within Historic England could best work with local HLF offices and community groups to identify how such funding could be most effectively used..

Historic England also considers Directions 16-18 to be a welcome addition, for the following reasons:

Direction 16: Encourage effective use of creative funding models (loans, community funding initiatives, crowd funding, etc.) to increase viability of projects and financial sustainability of heritage.

Historic England welcomes HLF's commitment to test alternative sources of finance, including loans or other types of social investment. These imaginative approaches are essential to help unlock difficult projects, including buildings and sites at risk. A greater range of funding models will provide more options for the private and commercial sectors and will ensure that organisations focus on the long-term sustainability of their project given future repayment commitments. The introduction of loan finance could also help Lottery proceeds go further, with funds recycled on an on-going basis.

Crowd-funding is an inclusive way to draw a wider audience into a heritage project, particularly a younger 'digital' audience. It allows the public (both locally and nationally) to demonstrate their support for a project, helping to achieve 'public ownership'.

Groups/organisations would need to develop their communications and digital infrastructure and networks to ensure success. However, HLF should only support viable projects that tackle valued heritage at greatest risk of loss.

In testing these alternative approaches, HLF should take account of the experiences and expertise of other organisations already delivering loans and social investment – e.g. the Architectural Heritage Fund. HLF should avoid duplicating the offer already provided by these bodies.

Direction 17: Increase digital skills, capability, and use of digital tools, both within HLF and the heritage sector, encourage better collecting, using and sharing of digital heritage material and encourage digital innovation

Historic England applauds HLF's aspiration to support the innovative use of digital technology across the sector. HLF projects generate a huge amount of useful information in a digital format and it is important that this information is publicly accessible. HLF could play an important role in encouraging applicants to think about the accessibility and longevity of digital content as an integral part of their project development and design from the outset. Clear written guidance should support this approach e.g. flagging the benefits of early consultation with Historic Environment Record (HER) officers and local heritage repositories. Consideration should also be given to how user-generated content is managed in the long term and who is responsible for it.

There are also opportunities for HLF to encourage awareness and use of digital recording technologies – e.g. laser scanning, 3D recording and photogrammetry. These technologies need not be costly or overly specialist. HLF could consider funding projects delivered by third parties to help local groups or schools to use these technologies. This would ensure local ownership of the data, which could be used to help with the management of a historic building/site, as well as outreach, communication, presentation and local engagement.

At the most basic level, widespread use of social media means the digital sharing of experiences and places is now commonplace and inexpensive, accessible to all projects. It would be good to build on those skills, especially among young people, to encourage them to learn more about the role of digital technology and heritage, perhaps to the point of considering it as a career option.

In terms of existing datasets, we would like to advise on engagement with Historic England's Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS) and the UK-wide Historic Environment Information Resources Network (HEIRNET) amongst other initiatives. Historic England's Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS) is a programme of interlinked projects designed to simplify and improve public access to heritage data held or generated by Historic England, Local Authority Historic Environment Records and other bodies.

Collaborative working across the sector is essential to ensure appropriate standards for the creation, management, sharing, re-use and storage of digital historic environment data. Other networks include the UK-wide Historic Environment Information Resources Network

(HEIRNET), which helps members work together so that their information resources are easier to access for conservation, education, research and general interest. HLF could also make links with the Digital Preservation Coalition.

Direction 18: Collect and understand data on the reach, impact and audience of HLF's work and use that understanding to improve HLF's grant-making policies and procedures, including supporting the work on participation. Data should be made as transparent as possible

HLF's project evaluation data is a potentially rich source of material for research and learning purposes but is currently not published and openly accessible. We would strongly encourage making this information available to provide a rich seam of experience and evidence to inform policy.

HLF should work with partners to develop a simple and standard monitoring framework for projects. This will ensure that grant recipients are not expected to collect different datasets or format reports differently to satisfy the requirements of each project funder. Heritage projects are often delivered and managed by volunteers with few resources to collect this data. The requirements for data collection must therefore be proportionate to the project and allow for some flexibility, recognising that not all projects will be able to reach all groups within the local community.

ENGLAND DIRECTIONS:

3. Is there anything in these directions that HLF should not be doing? Y/N If yes, tell us what you think HLF should not be doing and why.

No.

4. Is there anything that HLF should be doing that is not covered by these directions? Y/N If yes, tell us what is missing and why you consider this important.

Historic England welcomes the addition of the England Directions and offers the following observations:

England Direction 1

Historic England welcomes an approach which puts heritage at the heart of place-making.

HLF's resources are far greater than any other funder in the sector – it therefore has a critical role to play in encouraging the conservation, preservation, presentation, promotion and

interpretation of England's heritage, so it can contribute to heritage-led regeneration for this generation and continue to be appreciated and understood in the future

Whether a medieval market town, a historic park, or a post-war city centre, every place has a unique and distinctive history that can be harnessed to help achieve a prosperous future.

Those with the power to shape the places where we live, work and visit are increasingly recognising that heritage is the key that unlocks success. It creates value and sustains economic vitality, supporting jobs and attracting investment. Heritage provides a canvas for flourishing cultural activity and it helps build connected and healthy communities. It is the vital factor underpinning vibrant and successful places – in other words, putting heritage at the heart of place-making can deliver 'Good Growth' (see our recent publication <http://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/get-involved/translating-good-growth-london-historic-environment-120717.pdf>).

England Direction 2

Historic England's research shows a considerable overlap between heritage at risk of loss and areas of greatest deprivation within England (Indices of Multiple Deprivation). For example, 49% of entries on Historic England's London Heritage at Risk Register (2017) are in the most deprived 30% of neighbourhoods, with one in eight in the most deprived 10%. The inference is clear; tackling heritage at risk has the potential to pay a social dividend. Focussing heritage-led regeneration on those sites most at risk is likely to target the communities and places in greatest need. It is likely to increase the impact of HLF's investment in such areas considerably.

Historic England recognises the important role that activities and community engagement play in broadening the reach of a project and helping to sustain it over the longer-term but the barriers to accessing heritage opportunities will vary considerably by group and location. It is essential that HLF provides appropriate support to priority areas. This support will help communities to better understand, care for and celebrate their heritage. HLF should make effective use of the expertise and knowledge of local partners with strong networks and an ability to reach into communities.

England Direction 3

Funding to build the capacity of organisations or groups able to help deliver HLF's priorities should also be considered – e.g. the BRICK programme administered by the Princes Regeneration Fund, local civic societies or the Architectural Heritage Fund. These third parties play an important role helping to develop skills and build confidence and experience within areas of greatest deprivation.

England Direction 4

Historic England believes that greater collaboration is needed across the heritage sector to maximise our reach and public impact. HLF should capitalise on the expertise, capacity and roles of other organisations. Developing an agreed strategic approach, underpinned by good mutual co-operation and communication, will result in better outcomes for people and heritage. It is also likely to reduce inter-organisational replication and ensure that sound project management maximises the impact and public benefit gained from the inputs of all partners.

End of Consultation response