

# HERITAGE COUNTS

## NORTH EAST



*Heritage Counts 2010* is the ninth annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. It is prepared by English Heritage on behalf of the North East Historic Environment Forum. Visitors to the *Heritage Counts* website are now able to download the full set of regional indicators for the historic environment sector in their region. Please see [www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk) for more information about the historic environment in the North East of England.

### THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HERITAGE

Investing in the historic environment brings real economic benefits to local places. New research for *Heritage Counts* shows that, on average, £1.0 of investment in the historic environment generates an additional £1.6 in the local economy over a ten year period. Similarly investment in 72 historic visitor attractions generated £197 million of additional spend in regional economies. The research also found that half of all the jobs created by heritage tourism were in the wider economy.

The historic environment is important to local economies because it attracts businesses, residents and visitors. In decisions about where to locate, one in four businesses surveyed agreed that the historic environment was as important as road access. Respondents also regarded the historic environment as an important factor in decisions on where to visit (91%), live (68%) or work (63%). Two North East case studies are discussed below.

#### WEST AUCKLAND

West Auckland in County Durham has benefited from a Conservation Area Partnership Scheme between the local authority and English Heritage over the last three years. This heritage regeneration scheme has resulted in a significant upgrade in the quality of the built environment through a programme of historic building repairs, shop front improvements and works to the public realm.

It is estimated that the £0.5 million of public investment in the area will generate an additional £1.5-£3 million in the local economy and create 29-33

jobs over a ten year period (beyond what would have happened without the investment). The scheme has brought three small business units back into use, created one new café and safeguarded two businesses.

#### NORTH SHIELDS FISH QUAY

North Shields Fish Quay is a historic fishing port on the mouth of the River Tyne. The area immediately surrounding the port is mainly commercial, including traditional small and medium sized businesses associated with marine processing and trading.

A decline in the local fishing industry resulted in the Fish Quay suffering from a protracted period of neglect and under-investment. North Tyneside Council commissioned a regeneration strategy and master plan for Fish Quay to inform a programme of improvement works to reverse the decline suffered by the area. The aim was to find building solutions that conserved the original character of the area whilst also providing viable business accommodation for commercial users.

North Tyneside Council led on all main aspects of the regeneration programme, with substantial community involvement. Local people prepared a conservation area character appraisal and were invited to community planning sessions run by Northern Architecture and the North of England Civic Trust. Area-based funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage helped to supplement mainstream funding. The Fish Quay Heritage Partnership, comprised of local residents and business people, was established to deliver these heritage-led initiatives.

Consultation has found that public sector investment in the area has helped to increase confidence with the result that private investors now view the area as a prime location associated with business excellence and growth. It is considered that the unique character of the area has helped to increase its resilience to the challenges posed by the recent recession and has given it a competitive advantage over other business locations. Please see [www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk) for the full research reports.

### UNDERSTANDING THE ASSETS

NORTH EAST	2010
WORLD HERITAGE SITES	2
SCHEDULED MONUMENTS	1,383
LISTED BUILDINGS GRADE I	389
LISTED BUILDINGS GRADE II*	751
LISTED BUILDINGS GRADE II	11,116
REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS	53
REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS	6
PROTECTED SHIP WRECKS	1
CONSERVATION AREAS	296
DESIGNATED COLLECTIONS	9
ACCREDITED MUSEUMS	68

### CARING AND SHARING

The North East continues to have the highest percentage of Grade I and II\* buildings at risk in the country. Some progress has been made with a reduction in the proportion of buildings at risk from 7.2% to 6.6% between 2009 and 2010. However the economic downturn may restrict the ability of private owners to fund repairs and may exacerbate problems of vacancy and vandalism.

Public sector spending has played an important role in securing the future of the region's heritage assets. The most important sources of funding for the historic environment sector are the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage. Since 1994/1995 HLF have made £214 million worth of grants in the North East, which represents 5% of the total HLF spend in the UK. HLF have invested £51 million on historic buildings and monuments, £24 million on industrial, maritime and transport, £67 million on land and biodiversity, £61 million on museum libraries, archives & collections and £11 million on intangible heritage.

## USING AND BENEFITING

Visit England's survey of *Visits to Visitor Attractions* suggests that there was a 10% increase in the numbers of visits to historic sites in the North East region in 2009 compared with the previous year. In total there were at least 2.5 million visits to historic attractions in the North East in 2009.

Visitors to staffed English Heritage and National Trust properties also increased over the same period by 10% and 15% respectively demonstrating the increasing importance of heritage tourism to the local economy. In 2009 there were over half a million visits to English Heritage properties in the North East region and 1.5 million visits to National Trust properties in the North East and Yorkshire areas combined.

Membership of historic environment organisations in the North East also continues to increase. For example, regional membership of English Heritage rose from 44,749 in 2008/9 to 47,783 in 2009/10 whilst National Trust membership rose from 342,854 to 358,454 over the same time frame. The Historic Houses Association also saw an increase in membership from 971 friends in 2008/9 to 1,135 in 2009/10.

In 2010 the North East region was also the only English region to have experienced a significant increase in historic environment participation levels since 2005/06 as measured by the DCMS *Taking Part* survey. In 2005/6 the survey found that 69.1% (+/-2.2) of all adults surveyed had visited at least one historic environment site in the past twelve months. By 2009/10 this figure had risen to 74.4% (+/-10.2).

## KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

Government has set out plans to abolish Regional Development Agencies and replace them with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) that will bring local businesses and local authorities together in driving economic development.

In the North East a proposal was developed by the Association of North East Councils and the Northern Business Forum to develop a North East Economic Partnership to support the work of LEPs by coordinating some activities at a larger scale.

Proposals were also received from:

- ▶ County Durham
- ▶ Newcastle / Gateshead
- ▶ Northumberland / North Tyneside
- ▶ South Tyneside / Sunderland
- ▶ Tees Valley

At the time of writing it is unclear what new structures will emerge. However, members of the North East Historic Environment Forum are keen to support whatever new structures are adopted to ensure that the heritage sector contributes to future economic growth and resilience.

All of the LEP bids from the North East recognised the potential of tourism to act as an economic driver. Many also recognised the role played by heritage assets in supporting the visitor economy. This year's *Heritage Counts* data supports that position with substantial increases in visitor numbers at historic sites and attractions.

The North East Historic Environment Forum is well placed to support heritage tourism opportunities. Its members include a mix of tourism operators from both the public and private sectors such as English Heritage, the Historic Houses Association, the National Trust and the North East Regional Museums Hub.

Another common theme of the LEP bids from the North East was the adoption of place-based approaches to local investment and regeneration. Heritage organisations such as English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund have already established place-based grant programmes for heritage-led regeneration. In future there may be further opportunities for place-based working in collaboration with Local Enterprise Partnerships.

### PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 5: PLANNING FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

*Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment* was published by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Department for Culture and Media and Sport on 23 March 2010. PPS5 provides a new streamlined approach to the historic environment that will help people to understand and manage the historic environment better in local planning processes.

Members of the North East Historic Environment Forum (such as the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, English Heritage and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation) are playing a key role in helping local authorities and local communities to implement this new policy.

PPS5 will play a key role in guiding development in historic settings whilst maintaining quality of place and the economic benefits it brings in terms of tourism and investment. A robust planning framework and the capacity to deliver it are essential tools for maximising the economic opportunities of an area whilst protecting its intrinsic assets.



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