

Foresight Day 2021

Collaboration for Heritage Recovery

Executive summary

Zoom Workshop,

9.30-13.00, Wednesday 5 May 2021

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1. Introduction

Originally organised as part of the programme Heritage 2020, the annual Foresight Day events bring together member organisations of the Historic Environment Forum (HEF) to discuss relevant themes for the future of the sector.

In 2021 the HEF Steering Group proposed to focus the Foresight Day on *Collaboration for Heritage Recovery*, building on the work carried out by HEF and Historic England in early 2021 with the production of the [Heritage Recovery Plan](#).

The **objectives** of the 2021 Foresight Day were:

- To complete the action plan for the different sections of the Heritage Recovery Plan, suggesting all necessary collaborative actions to build it, plus consider any new actions which should be added to the recovery plan for each theme.
- To discuss collectively the topics of the forthcoming Heritage Statement ([announced](#) by the Heritage Minister Caroline Dinenage MP at the Alliance’s Heritage Day 2021).

The meeting started with a short introduction by Adrian Olivier, Chair of HEF, who welcomed the participants and introduced the workshop underlining the opportunities for collaboration in the sector to facilitate Covid recovery and sector resilience. This was followed by a short presentation by Ros Kerslake, CEO of the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The attendees then participated in two sessions with breakout groups, chaired by the members of the HEF Steering Group, to discuss the topics linked to the objectives listed above. A plenary discussion concluded the event.

2. Ros Kerslake’s opening ‘provocation’

Ros Kerslake, CEO of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, outlined the current cultural, social, political and economic context, and the opportunities and threats that it presents. She started by recalling the [NLHF Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024](#), aimed at supporting the sector in the face of

forthcoming challenges (such as Brexit) and risks, as well as at harvesting opportunities (e.g. in the digital sphere). The pandemic hugely impacted the country and the sector unexpectedly, but she acknowledged the unprecedented support from Government and funders to the cultural sector through the crisis. Even though it seems that the situation is slowly getting back to normal, she noted that the period of highest risk to organisations may be yet to come, with the end of extraordinary financial support, volunteers and consumers slow to return, business models not resilient enough to face the post-pandemic world (e.g. in terms of flexible capacity). NLHF priorities set out in 2020 are: supporting heritage through the Covid crisis; promoting heritage as a force for good; playing their part in tackling climate change; involving a wide range of people; encouraging a forward-looking sector. For the next 12 months, they will fund projects to boost the local economy, develop skills and job creation, support wellbeing through places, improve the resilience of heritage organisations. Despite the challenges, positive outcomes can be seen in: the diverse engagement with natural environment and local heritage; an increased understanding of the stakeholders; an acceleration of the investment in digital; flexible working patterns. She stressed the need for the sector to be open for change. She concluded that through the delivery of the Heritage Recovery Plan, the sector will be able to demonstrate that the Government investment to ensure its survival has been well deserved.

3. Breakout session 1: Delivering the Heritage Recovery Plan

The aim of the session was to set out a clear set of actions for the delivery of the Heritage Recovery Plan, and to have a range of organisations signed up for their delivery. The session was organised in three breakout groups, each one focused on one of the short-term priority areas identified in the Heritage Recovery Plan: reopening, resilience and skills.

A draft of the action plan was circulated ahead of the meeting, and all the groups were required to add collaborative actions, sign up to their delivery, and suggest how HEF could contribute to the work.

General discussion points in the three breakout groups:

<p>Breakout group 1: Reopening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance. Problem: guidance tries to cover all aspects and it may be difficult for small orgs to keep up to date. HEF could facilitate access it. Gaps identified around volunteering. It is not clear if Visit Britain's <i>Good to Go</i> scheme is still working. • Important to improve public confidence and highlight the value of exploration of areas in depth: Benefit of a campaign that encourages people to view heritage as a rich and diverse resource that can be found everywhere. • HEF as a forum to share lessons learned and good practices, in collaboration with HE.
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Breakout group 2: Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to gather evidence, especially resulting from CRF, and make it available so that organisations across the sector can learn from each other. • Important to connect historic environment agenda to related agendas (e.g. green agenda, agricultural grants), and help the sector to see its role in the wider context.
Breakout group 3: Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on previous activity of HEF Client Demand Task Group. Clarity needed around competitive advantage and digital skills. Important links with other agendas (e.g. climate change, levelling up). • Need for greater promotion and understanding of Kickstart Scheme: challenges for small businesses; huge opportunities for ED&I agenda. • Potential to highlight the breadth of opportunities across the sector. • Focus on upskilling people, not filling the gaps in heritage orgs.

4. Breakout session 2: Heritage Statement Themes

The aim of the session was to discuss collectively three of the the themes of the Heritage Statement, announced by the Heritage Minister Caroline Dinenage MP at the Alliance’s Heritage Day 2021: Recovery & Resilience, Place & regeneration (Levelling Up), Sustainability & climate change. The discussion was guided by some questions, based on the ‘Theory of Change’, circulated in advance to the group.

General discussion points in the three breakout groups:

Breakout group 1: Recovery and Resilience	<p>Our sector is strongly positioned after the pandemic to make the case for a holistic approach (natural & historic environment strongly interlinked). Sector is expert in change. Important to think what the historic environment (not the sector) can do and promote it – and how it can contribute to Govt agenda and the more widely shared public agenda. We can contribute to many policies. Suggestion for HEF to produce a headline statement drawing on the work carried out for Heritage Counts.</p> <p>3 areas suggested for inclusion in the Heritage Statement: fiscal levers (VAT), regulation (some beneficial deregulation but important to set limits), funding (support organisations that will be in danger – strategic funding objectives for the sector).</p>
Breakout group 2: Place & regeneration (Levelling Up)	<p>Sector is often perceived in relation to leisure, and less as a contributor to place-shaping. Challenge: need to better integrate with other sector, such as design; need to work together and show how heritage can transform places (and how that model can be replicated in those places targeted by Govt). Suggestion: collect case studies to demonstrate the successful</p>

	<p>contribution of heritage to place regeneration and that heritage can attract other investments, enhance local pride and contribute to wellbeing. This is part of a long-term agenda (although there are some tight timescales), pursued with a bottom-up approach. There's the need to better connect regional/national and rural/urban, and to develop skills locally.</p> <p>Aspiration: heritage sector should be front and centre of the Levelling Up White Paper.</p> <p>3 areas suggested for inclusion in the Heritage Statement: funding, regulation, celebration of success (+ capacity building and delivery mechanism).</p>
<p>Breakout group 3: Sustainability & Climate Change</p>	<p>Important balance to be struck – demonstrate the severity of threat whilst positively framing the contribution the sector can make/solutions the sector can provide.</p> <p>Unified approach across Govt bodies (DCMS, DEFRA, BEIS) needed.</p> <p>Unified approach across the sector (there is conflict on best approach) – and the longer-term view we can provide.</p> <p>3 areas suggested for inclusion in the Heritage Statement: (Green/heritage) skills re adaptation and resilience, carbon assessment/accounting support, integration across gov't and sector (and positive view of the contribution of the sector across all themes).</p>

5. Plenary discussion

HEF members had the opportunity to discuss collectively the topics raised in the previous session.

Main points of discussion included:

- The importance of a cross-departmental approach, that goes beyond built environment to include the wider historic environment, and of regional perspectives.
- Different agendas are highly interconnected and linked to the historic environment sector.
- HEF can play an important role in sector's recovery, if HEF members work collaboratively to deliver the actions of the Heritage Recovery Plan.

6. Next steps

The Foresight Day 2021 enabled members of HEF to discuss collectively and brainstorm about the delivery of the Heritage Recovery Plan, produced by Historic England with and on behalf of the Forum, and the themes of the forthcoming Heritage Statement.

The HEF staff and Steering Group have considered the outputs and the discussions held during Foresight Day and propose the following steps:

- The HEF Covid Task Group will facilitate the coordination between HEF members around the delivery of the Heritage Recovery Plan.
- The HEF staff will team up with the Heritage Alliance and will help DCMS to organise a series of digital events in the summer 2021 related to the themes of the Heritage Statement.