

Historic Environment Protection Reform Group

Terms of Reference

The Historic Environment Protection Reform Group (HEPRG) is a topic-group of the Historic Environment Forum (HEF). It operates within the wider principles of the Historic Environment Forum (HEF).

1 Role of Group

HEPRG's role is to suggest, examine, recommend and help to implement proposals, both reactively and proactively, for the reform of the planning and heritage protection system in England so as to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

2 Membership

HEPRG membership is open to all HEF member bodies and others, as appropriate (one HEPRG seat per body, with the exception of Historic England (HE) as host body), subject to the agreement of the Group, with a view to maintaining a broad balance of interest and expertise across the Group. HEPRG can agree via the Chair to invite observer and other expert members (who may be additional representatives from HEPRG member bodies) to join the Group and its sub-groups for meetings or initiatives.

3 Accountability

Members are representatives of the organisations from which they are drawn; as representatives, rather than delegates, they should make clear when they are speaking in a personal capacity. Their organisation may send an alternate or additional representative when a member is unavailable for a meeting or where specialist expertise would be useful (in accordance with 2) above). There is no limit to terms of membership except in the eventuality of a member leaving their organisation. The HEF member body in question will then invite a replacement member for the Group from that organisation.

HEPRG itself can take a view on a matter under discussion but, when it does so, member organisations retain the ability to comment independently on proposals.

4 Confidentiality

Members will report back to their organisations but, given the exploratory nature and potential sensitivity of some of the matters which are the subject of the Group's discussions, some matters are likely to be confidential. Unless otherwise agreed within the Group, matters should not be discussed outside their immediately relevant colleagues within their organisations.

5 Reporting to HEF

HEPRG normally reports to formal meetings of HEF. A short, written report, made by a reporter nominated by HEPRG and not a member of Historic England staff, is made to each formal meeting of HEF, based on notes and action points from those meetings, with written and verbal enlargement at HEF meetings where necessary. HEF Secretariat will provide HEF Communications Updates to group members and the Group will provide material for these Updates, as appropriate.

6 Resourcing

The Group has no resources itself, but HE provides the chair of the main HEPRG meetings, as convenor rather than as HEPRG Chair, and the secretariat, thus effectively underwriting the resourcing of the Group. Whilst no funding can currently be guaranteed, it remains HE's intention to support the Group.

7 Working methods

- HEPRG determines its workload considering priorities in the sector and in discussion within the Group.
- Chair and secretariat: HE provides the chair of meetings, as convenor of the Group rather than as formal HEPRG Chair, and secretariat for the Group, and both will be members of the Group.
- The Group meets three or four times a year – the formal HEPRG meetings – and at other times, and as working and sub-groups, as appropriate.
- HEPRG may convene sub-groups to consider individual initiatives where necessary. These may take the form of sub-sectoral groups. All HEPRG members can however involve themselves in all the work of the Group.
- HEPRG will normally seek consensus, but, where that is not achieved, a majority view of those at present at a meeting or otherwise communicating a view (one per member body) is sufficient to constitute HEPRG's formal view on a matter.
- See also Accountability (3) above.

8 Meetings

- Formal HEPRG meetings are timed to precede formal HEF meetings (currently 3 per year), ordinarily allowing time for deadlines for papers (i.e. more than two weeks before HEF meetings).
- Other meetings and meetings of sub-groups can be convened at any time.
- Meetings are convened by Historic England, following consultation with the Group (usually after agreement of a programme for future meetings).
- Extraordinary meetings can be called by any member at the discretion of the Chair and by agreement of the Group.
- Meetings may be in person or on-line or a mixture of the two.
- HE will organise the meetings, and will chair them and provide the secretariat, though sub-groups may be chaired by other members of the Group, and other members may carry out work on behalf of the Group.
- Non-members may be invited to meetings, as agreed within the Group.
- Papers and other materials circulated within the Group will usually be confidential, except where the Group decides to circulate papers more widely and invite wider discussion of matters under consideration.

- Member bodies may request that papers be sent to an additional nominee within their organisations, for information.
- Agendas and notes of action of HEPRG meetings are not normally made public, though summaries of meetings and activity may be published on its webpages (see 9 below); other papers prepared for HEPRG may be published more widely at its discretion.

9 Web space

HEPRG has space on the HEF website for the publication of papers, as appropriate, such as

- Summaries of activity and
- Other resources, including links to advice notes and documents produced by HEPRG.

Historic Environment Protection Reform Group: agreed – 22 June 2021

Historic Environment Forum: agreed – 20 July 2021