

Terms of Reference

1. Background

- 1.1. Initially known as the Historic Environment Review Executive Committee (HEREC), the Historic Environment Forum (HEF) was established and initially coordinated by English Heritage following the preparation of *The Power of Place* (2000), a statement of the value of the historic environment in England.
- 1.2. Since then, HEF brought together senior members of staff from public and non-government heritage bodies and has met at least three times a year, to perform different functions, including: to oversee the production of an annual 'State of the Historic Environment Report' (renamed in 2003 as 'Heritage Counts'); to keep the sector updated in relation to political developments; to be a historic environment sector sounding board on issues affecting the work of the sector.
- 1.3. HEF has provided the basis for developing effective working relationships through the programme Heritage 2020 from 2014 to September 2020. Heritage 2020 worked on five strategic areas: discovery, identification and understanding; constructive conservation and sustainable management; public engagement; capacity building; and advocacy.
- 1.4. In 2019, HEF members agreed to improve the collaboration and capability of HEF to deliver outcomes through a new governance model, for which these Terms of Reference are set.

2. Scope and purpose of HEF

- 2.1. There are many definitions of the historic environment. The definition that carries most weight in England, because it is government policy, is that in the NPPF: *All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora*. HEF acknowledges that people understand, value, use and engage with the historic environment in many different ways.
- 2.2. HEF is a forum which, by working collaboratively, carries out a range of activities to encourage and support research, conservation, presentation, enjoyment and use of the historic environment. The aim of HEF is to help people benefit from the historic environment and to achieve the positive changes identified in the Strategic Framework.
- 2.3. HEF primary interests lie in matters that are relevant to England.
- 2.4. HEF identifies its priorities for collaboration in a 'Strategic Framework for Collaborative Action 2020-25', and is accountable for their delivery. HEF can seek funding for the delivery of its priorities.
- 2.5. HEF is able to formulate project proposals and bid for funding to carry out other activities on a time-limited basis. These activities are largely carried out through dedicated task groups.
- 2.6. HEF works closely with Historic England on the themes, research and production of content under Heritage Counts to develop and publish the evidence base that guides the design and delivery of HEF's Strategic Framework and the Heritage Sector Resilience Plan. HEF supports Heritage Counts through representation on the Heritage Counts Editorial Board.

3. Membership of HEF

- 3.1. Formal Members of HEF are organisations operating in England in the historic environment sector.
- 3.2. Formal Membership is established on the basis of key organisations which can contribute to HEF collaborative working and priorities, and which represent different aspects of the historic environment, as well as different types of organisation and roles. Members have equal rights and responsibilities concerning matters relating to the Forum.
- 3.3. Formal Members of HEF may be assigned additional responsibilities relating to the operational matters for HEF. This may include financial accountability, project assurance or employer responsibility for the HEF's secretariat. These responsibilities should be considered as practical in nature and may not influence the strategic direction of HEF.
- 3.4. Formal Member organisations should have a national remit and at least one of the following characteristics:
 - a. An advocacy function, in terms of identifying the contribution the historic environment can make to society, and proposing solutions to the Government and other stakeholders to help the sector increase that contribution.
 - b. Be an umbrella organisation with a network of members.
 - c. An intelligence/data gathering role.
- 3.5. Networks or committees comprising a wider group of organisations that meet the criteria set out at 3.4 may be eligible for formal membership. These networks may be represented at HEF by a nominated organisation from that network. The nominated organisation must be able to carry out member commitments set out in 3.6 on behalf of the wider network.
- 3.6. Formal Members should commit to:
 - a. Demonstrating that they are fully committed to HEF.
 - b. Using their contacts in support of the HEF's objectives.
 - c. Delivering delegated tasks and actions.
 - d. Actively contributing to HEF work and priorities.
 - e. Collaborating with other HEF members when in the sector's best interests.
 - f. Sharing news and information about HEF across their own organisation or network.
- 3.7. Current formal members of the HEF are those which are listed on the HEF website at: [link Membership - Historic Environment Forum]. This list is continuously updated to reflect changes in formal membership.
- 3.8. Organisations that wish to join HEF as a formal member are invited to check whether their scope and remit is already represented by any HEF member. If not, they can request to join HEF, setting out how they support the historic environment and how they intend to contribute to HEF, what level of resource they can commit and what value they will add not already available to HEF. Their appointment is to be discussed and agreed during the first HEF meeting scheduled after the date of their formal request.

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- 3.9. Organisations with an interest in HEF but who are not able or eligible to participate as a formal member may be able to join as a corresponding member (subject to HEF agreement).
- 3.10. Corresponding members are partners who are kept directly informed of news relating to HEF activity, are able to participate in HEF's working groups, and can occasionally attend meetings of the HEF in the capacity of attending individuals or observers (see 4.8).
- 3.11. Corresponding members are not able to contribute to decision making processes in matters relating to HEF.
- 3.12. **Chair** – The HEF is chaired by an independent person able to commit sufficient time to fulfil this role. The Chair's term is limited to 3 years and can be extended for a second term, subject to HEF agreement.
- 3.13. The recruitment of the Chair is managed by an appointment panel formed of at least 5 voluntary HEF members able to commit sufficient time to fulfil this role, against criteria agreed by HEF. The role of the chair will be set out in a role description.
- 3.14. The responsibilities of the Chair include:
 - a. Chairing in-person and virtual HEF meetings and HEF Steering Group meetings.
 - b. Facilitating and mediating the debate between members, in order to identify areas of fruitful collaboration between HEF members and encourage HEF to progress actions and deliver outcomes.
 - c. Approving the meetings' agenda and ensuring that the minutes reflect the consensus decisions made by members.
 - d. Ensuring that all members are equally represented in HEF meetings, and their views are reflected in the decisions taken.
 - e. Monitoring HEF members' commitment and holding members to account on the delivery of the actions assigned to them during HEF meetings.
 - f. Providing supervision on HEF governance.
- 3.15. In the absence of the Chair, a member of the HEF Steering Group can stand in as a temporary deputy.

4. HEF Working method: meetings

- 4.1. Members are represented at the HEF meetings by the most appropriate person from the organisation, usually a senior member of staff, with appropriate skills and expertise, and a mandate to speak on behalf of their organisations.
- 4.2. The Chair has to be notified when members want to change their representative.
- 4.3. HEF members meet at least three times a year, in person or remotely. Face-to-face meetings are normally held in London. The dates of the meetings are scheduled the previous year. The agenda can include: policy priorities by Government departments and arm's length bodies; activities carried out by the HEF Task Groups and Topic Groups (see sections 7 and 8); information related to 'Heritage Counts'; debates suggested by HEF members. The discussion can be supported by short papers, briefings or slide decks circulated to HEF members by the secretariat.

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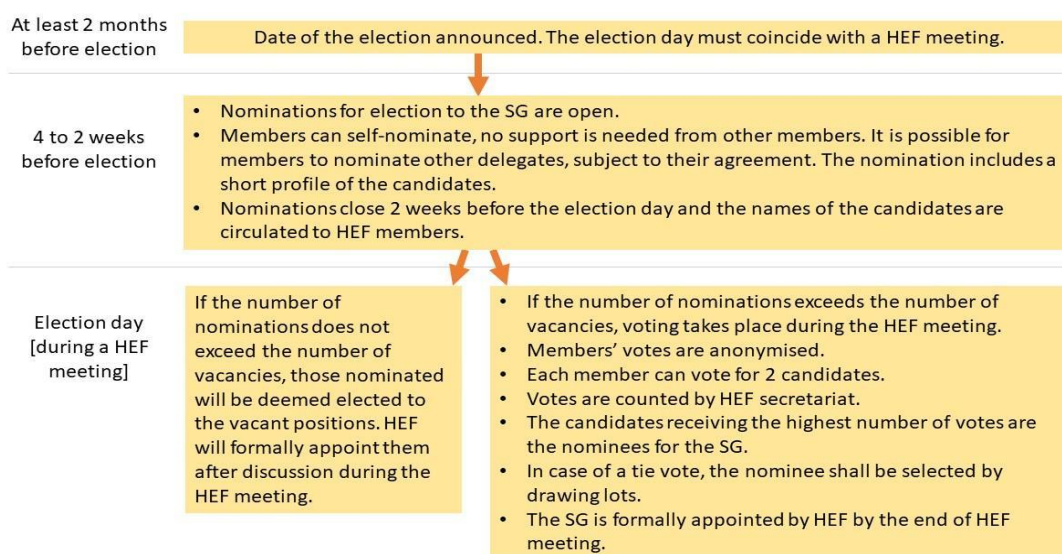
- 4.4. Virtual meetings may be held between the main meetings to respond to specific issues, if deemed necessary by HEF and if secretariat resources permit it. These meetings are to be used to progress work and actions to address the issues identified. The discussion can be supported by papers circulated to HEF members by the secretariat or by other means of communication (such as impromptu and slides-aided presentations, etc.).
- 4.5. The cost of attending meetings is to be covered by the attending individual's organisation, except for the Chair.
- 4.6. HEF meetings are not open to the public and are held under Chatham House rules. Members can use the information provided and/or discussed during the meetings, unless the content is marked as confidential.
- 4.7. Meeting minutes are confidential. A summary of the key messages, decisions and actions of the meetings can be shared to facilitate the involvement of the wider sector as part of the HEF Communications Plan.
- 4.8. The different roles of the individuals participating to HEF meetings are captured in the meeting minutes:
 - a. The **delegates** (1 per organisation) are expected to represent their organisations or network of organisations. They can present papers, make presentations to HEF and participate in the decision-making process.
 - b. **'Attending' individuals** can be invited to make a presentation. They are not themselves HEF delegates, though they may be employed by a HEF member organisation or by Governmental Departments. Attending individuals may include invited individuals from organisations who are Corresponding Members of HEF. 'Attending' individuals can present papers but are excluded from decision-making processes.
 - c. **Observers** (from member organisations or other organisations external to HEF membership) can be invited, subject to agreement with the Chair. They cannot present papers, nor participate in decision-making. They can be included in the correspondence shared with HEF members, subject to agreement with the Chair. Observers may include invited individuals from organisations who are Corresponding Members of HEF.
- 4.9. The UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sports (DCMS) and other Governmental Departments are welcome to attend HEF meetings as 'attendees'.
- 4.10. HEF seeks to take decisions by consensus.
- 4.11. HEF members are invited to participate actively in HEF meetings and commit to the delivery of the actions they are tasked with. Members are expected to contribute actively to the work of HEF, with their ideas, knowledge, skills and experience.
- 4.12. Meeting agendas are to be sent in advance (at least a week in advance), together with additional materials (e.g. papers) as appropriate to support the discussion during the meetings. Meeting minutes are circulated typically within a working week following the meetings. The HEF manager is responsible for drafting agenda and minutes, which are signed off by the Chair, and for circulating materials.

5. HEF Working method: Strategic Framework for Collaborative Action, 2020-25

- 5.1. The work of HEF's groups is guided by a Strategic Framework for Collaborative Action. Members agree to contribute to the development of the Strategic Framework and to progress, where they are able, the priorities agreed by HEF as a whole.
- 5.2. The Strategic Framework captures the areas in which there is consensus that collaborative working will deliver positive change in the five-year period 2020-25. These are expanded on in the priority actions of the Heritage Sector Resilience Plan.
- 5.3. The main mechanism for delivery of the positive change (or outcomes) of the Framework is the HEF Task Groups and HEF 'Topic' Groups. HEF chooses yearly the areas of the Strategic Framework on which to focus its activity, and does not commit to the delivery of the entire Strategic Framework.
- 5.4. HEF measures and champions the outputs of the Framework and ensures they are widely available to others.
- 5.5. The Strategic Framework for Collaborative Action can be revised, subject to decision of HEF members.

6. HEF Steering Group

- 6.1. The HEF Steering Group is composed of the Chair of HEF and up to 6 individuals elected by HEF.
- 6.2. HEF Steering Group terms are limited to 3 years; renewal of the Steering Group membership should be carried out in phases, with no more than two members stepping down in a six-month period.
- 6.3. Members of the Steering Group contribute to its meetings and work in a voluntary capacity, and to contribute with their skills and experience, which they apply to represent and further the interests of the whole of HEF. Steering Group members are expected to commit sufficient time to fulfil their role.
- 6.4. The Steering Group should include a breadth of experience and knowledge. HEF members can self-nominate for election, and can nominate other delegates whom they think may be a valuable resource for the Steering Group, subject to their agreement.
- 6.5. Election process.



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- 6.6. If a member of the Steering Group steps down before the end of its term, HEF can co-opt another delegate to act as successor until the next election.
- 6.7. The Steering Group is accountable to HEF.
- 6.8. The Steering Group coordinates HEF activities. The responsibilities of the HEF Steering Group include:
 - a. Setting the agenda for HEF meetings.
 - b. Acting as the interface between HEF and the Heritage Council.
 - c. Overseeing the delivery of the Strategic Framework through the Task Groups.
 - d. Coordinating activities of HEF Task Groups and HEF Topic Groups against the priorities set out in the Strategic Framework for Collaborative Action, 2020-25.
 - e. Overseeing the bidding process, if HEF decides to bid for funding of specific activities and projects.
 - f. Mandating an individual or a member organisation to submit and manage funding bids and projects on its behalf.
- 6.9. The Steering Group can co-opt individuals to support its work for specific and time-limited tasks.
- 6.10. **HEF Steering Group Working method: meetings.** The Steering Group meets virtually or in person as needed. The cost of attending meetings is to be covered by the attending individual's organisation.
- 6.11. Secretariat and support to HEF Steering Group activities is provided by the HEF manager.

7. HEF Task Groups

- 7.1. HEF may seek funding for specific projects to be delivered by dedicated Task Groups as appropriate.
- 7.2. The purpose of the Task Groups is to collaborate on the delivery of clear outcomes and outputs as defined in the project documentation and guided by the objectives in the Strategic Framework.
- 7.3. The Task Groups are delivery-focused and should have a fixed term as short as is consistent with delivering the outputs, and not more than two years. HEF can extend the term if that is required to deliver the outputs.
- 7.4. The core membership of each Task Group consists of a Chair agreed by HEF members and an unrestricted number of HEF members, who can join on a voluntary basis. The composition of the Groups can vary over time.
- 7.5. The members of the Task Groups commit to participating actively in meetings, as well as to contribute to the delivery of the outcomes, sharing knowledge, expertise and ideas. They commit to fulfil the actions assigned to them during the meetings.
- 7.6. The Task Groups are to enable inter-disciplinary collaboration; key organisations (non-HEF members) which can contribute to achieving the outcomes with relevant expertise can be invited to join the Groups.
- 7.7. Each task group is responsible for the development of an Action Plan and the definition of outcomes with clearly linked objectives and outputs that are supported by measurable indicators.

7.8. **Task Groups Working method: meetings.** The Task Groups meet in format and frequency most appropriate to the task.

7.9. The Task Groups report their progress against their action plan to the Steering Group, and achievements towards the agreed outcomes and outputs to HEF.

7.10. Secretariat and support to the Task Groups is provided by Task Group managers.

8. 'Topic' Groups

8.1. Working groups whose scope aligns with topics of interest for HEF can receive HEF endorsement.

8.2. These Groups are intended to tackle longer term / ongoing issues (such as planning reform).

8.3. 'Topic' Groups endorsed by HEF can update HEF during meetings and seek input or direction.

8.4. HEF endorsement of 'Topic' Groups should be reviewed every two years to ensure that their activities are still relevant to HEF and that progress has been achieved towards agreed outcomes.

9. Communication

9.1. Internal communication within HEF is led by the principles of transparency, clarity, relevance, timeliness, accessibility and appropriate detail.

9.2. External communication takes place through a dedicated website, social media profiles, news updates in sector newsletters, and an annual event.

9.3. The HEF manager is responsible for drafting an annual Communication Plan related both to internal and external communication, subject to agreement with HEF.

10. HEF Secretariat

10.1. HEF should ensure that its secretariat is properly resourced.

10.2. HEF secretariat can be provided by one of HEF members but must serve HEF interests. The appointed staff must be considered as independent from the ordinary functions of the organisation which provides secretariat.

11. Relationship between HEF and its funding bodies

11.1. Funding applications in support of HEF activities must be discussed and agreed by HEF.

11.2. Funding to support HEF can be provided by one of HEF members; this may include financial support or support-in-kind.

12. Review

12.1. This document is to be formally reviewed every three years but can be reviewed more often if necessary.

12.2. Points of revision to be agreed by HEF members.

Last updated December 2023

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