

# Heritage 2020

## Summary of responses to 2016 Heritage 2020 Consultation

### 1 Introduction

1.1 Heritage 2020 is an initiative that focuses on where collaborative working can deliver benefits for understanding, protecting and engaging with the Historic Environment in England. It brings together organisations from across the historic environment sector to work together to address common priorities, in doing so, adding value to the work of individual organisations.

1.2 There are five strategic themes of: Capacity Building, Constructive Conservation and Sustainable Management, Discovery Identification and Understanding, Helping Things to Happen, and Public Engagement. The vision and priorities for each of these themes are set out in the [Framework document](#) that was finalised in 2014.

1.3 At the end of 2016, Heritage 2020 ran its first consultation exercise. The consultation took the form of an online survey that sought to:

- raise awareness across the historic environment sector of the Heritage 2020 initiative
- gain input into the initial areas for action that had been identified by each of the five working groups
- involve the wider sector in the Heritage 2020 initiative.

1.4 The consultation ran from 25 November to 20 December 2016. It was publicised through social media, at Heritage Day and through The Heritage Alliance's e-newsletter, Heritage Update. There were 55 respondents from people working at a wide variety of heritage organisations as well as freelancers and anonymous individuals.

1.5 The responses are summarised in this document under the five Heritage 2020 themes. The full responses have been made available to the Heritage 2020 working groups and have been used by each group to determine future priorities, which are also outlined.

1.6 This document concludes with identification of a series of 'next steps' that set out how the Heritage 2020 initiative will build on its first year during 2017-18.

### 2 Discovery, Identification and Understanding

Priority: Building stronger bridges with the higher education sector

Outcome: Joint working with the higher education sector will be extended and strengthened to address the strategic and front-line priorities for the historic environment.

The consultation aims to capture information about research needs.

Q1: with which sector do you most identify?

- historic environment sector
- higher education/ academic sector

Q2: what research do you (the historic environment sector) need that isn't being produced?

or

Q3: what research do you (the higher education / academic community) think that the historic environment sector needs that it doesn't know it needs?

2.1 The large majority of respondents (94%) identified as working for the historic environment sector rather than the academic sector (6%).

2.2 Regarding areas lacking in research, six key topics emerged:

- a. Evidence demonstrating the value and benefits of heritage to society, from social, economic, environmental perspectives. This was the most highly requested research topic.
- b. Better access to existing research and data. Respondents asked for research into means of communicating research that has already been done, and of facilitating access to cross-sector research and resources. The need for the heritage and/or historic environment sectors to make better use of the data currently available to them and connect with producers of relevant information was highlighted multiple times.
- c. Evaluation of current methods and their impact, in particular regarding interpretation, community engagement and the use of volunteers.
- d. Issues regarding conservation and sustainability of historic buildings
- e. Skill shortages and heritage training needs
- f. Regional rather than national or site-specific research

*"There are undoubtedly areas in which there is a dearth of research, however, it is often notable that we are not aware of existing research that is undertaken, whether by academics or within the professional sector. It would therefore be desirable to consider how we could share our discoveries better."*

2.3 Respondents from the academic/higher education sector called for more reflexive research, highlighting the need to consciously connect academe with practice and to better deliver intended outcomes.

2.4 The group reviewed the comments and ideas received through the consultation, and agreed:

- that the 'Helping Things to Happen' working group is addressing issues of evidence and its communication, so the working group will not duplicate this activity;
- it will build on its work to improve access to research and data by investigating the running of a symposium for Early Career Researchers aimed at promoting research that has specific relevance to professional practice;
- it will seek to engage with major infrastructure projects as one means of ensuring that research has regional (as well as national or site-specific) application.

### **3 Constructive Conservation and Sustainable Management**

Priority: Understand the impact of social and economic forces for change on heritage high streets

Outcome: Improved resilience of heritage high streets to social and economic forces for change

Q4: what examples can you give of how it has been possible to reconcile social and economic forces for change with the traditional identity of high streets?

3.1 This section generated only 11 responses. Examples of the conversion and reuse of historic building are cited, though not in much detail; respondents deemed them successful where they managed to “enhance the character” of the townscape or environment and draw in retail customers. Successful examples are highlighted as taking into account market reality, and being aware that change can be positive. One individual suggested looking to international examples such as Asia’s “living historic cities” as models.

3.2 Several respondents condemned the trend of “redevelopment behind frontages” as failing to achieve any real heritage conservation. Temporary uses of spaces (e.g. pop-ups, meanwhile uses) were cited as alternative methods of reconciling traditional identities of the high street with forces for change.

*“The most successful and attractive shopping areas are often those historic buildings housing independent shops as well as multi-nationals, from historic cities to market towns. The lack of character in many high streets does not make them attractive places to visit; if we can introduce or enhance character then people are more likely to enjoy the environment more. The question wording does infer that all change is negative and that it therefore is automatically a problem; however, some change can be positive. It also suggests that social forces for change mean that all shoppers and visitors want the same things in high streets and there is no longer a desire for characterful places with different shops.”*

*“Retailing as a consumption activity, combined with leisure uses, mean many high streets are probably ok if increasingly chain bland.”*

Priority: Collaborating on a package of guidance and support for the transfer and disposal of publicly owned heritage assets.

Outcome: Preventing and tackling heritage at risk

Q5: what advice or guidance do you know of that is available to support local authorities, private developers or community groups to take on and manage publicly owned heritage assets.

Q6: what would you identify as the priorities and/or concerns of each of the groups of local authorities, private developers or community groups, relating to taking on and managing publicly owned heritage assets, that aren’t being addressed through existing advice and guidance.

3.3 Half the respondents claimed to be aware of some or much of the advice and guidance available – often citing their own organisation’s published policy and guidance – while the other half complained of a lack of available guidance or awareness of it.

*“There is much advice already”*

*“I do not know of any”*

3.4 The following bodies are cited as providing guidance and advice: Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), Asset of Community Value (ACV), Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), Historic England, Bristol City Council, HELM, “Pub is the hub”’s Plunkett Foundation, Heritage Trust Network (HTN) (for members only), Prince’s Regeneration Trust (PRT), as well as some local authorities (unspecified).

3.5 The following advice and resources are cited as already available:

- Measures and indicators on heritage and planning outcome quality
- Framework of statutory, regulatory and related considerations

- Guidance on community-led development
- Guidance for Local Planning Authorities
- Contextual or case-specific information

3.6 Respondents felt advice or support is needed to address the following:

- Guidance, training and access to specialist and project skills, in particular:
  - Conservation (for condition assessment, etc.)
  - Project/asset management and business planning (esp. for community groups)
- Advice for long-term planning and sustainability
- Clearer advice to help local authorities, private developers or community groups identify the help available to them

*“Business planning for community groups or charities taking on a heritage asset; considerations for ensuring a site and its operating model remain viable in the long-term; more advice on meanwhile uses; advice to Local Planning Authorities on how to support groups to whom they have divested assets; advice to Local Planning Authorities on when to step in.”*

- Model examples
- Concrete implications of broader heritage policy (e.g. listed status)
- Advice on meanwhile uses

3.7 The group has reviewed the actions associated with its two priority areas and has agreed, in the light of the consultation responses, that next steps for 2017-18 should include:

- a focus on increasing access to, and communication about, existing advice and guidance for key stakeholders and community groups;
- sharing information on activities that relate to heritage high streets, ideally in a way that enables others to contribute.

## 4 Capacity Building

Priority: Identify core Local Authority service provision with respect to the historic environment.

Outcome: A sustainable model for Local Authority conservation and archaeology services

Q7: What do you identify as the core services that should be provided by Local Authorities with respect to the historic environment?

4.1 There were several very detailed responses to this question. In summary, respondents identified the following priorities in core services that Local Authorities should provide with regards to the historic environment:

- Maintenance of and access to Historic Environment Records
- Planning advice and guidance on planning legislation
- Provision of specialist staff and heritage expertise, in particular Conservation Officers and archaeologists
- Community outreach, education and interpretation of the historic environment, to promote broader public benefit through local engagement.

4.2 Several responses not only listed core services but also mentioned why they are important and who the services should benefit. For example:

*“Archaeological planning advice and the curation of an historic environment record. Interpretation and understanding of the historic environment to ensure that local groups and communities appreciate what is important and why.”*

Priority: Understand the new Apprenticeship landscape and its role in developing the capacity of the workforce to provide high quality advice and skills

Outcome: A more integrated and focused approach to education, training and continuing development of heritage professionals.

Q8: How do you see the new Apprenticeships models as best building the capacity of the workforce of the historic environment sector?

Q9: What other means are there to increase the capacity for the protection of the historic environment including, for example, contributions of volunteers?

4.3 The new Apprenticeship models were welcomed by most respondents as addressing the issues of diversified access and succession in the workforce as well as capacity building, and seen as an opportunity to provide skills not covered in universities.

*“The Apprenticeships are vital for the long-term survival of the historic environment, covering traditional technological skills and restoration measures as well as keeping up to date with current techniques and materials.”*

4.4 Nevertheless, the following concerns were raised:

- The need for Apprenticeship schemes to be promoted and encouraged by the sector as a serious alternative to higher education
- The need to include them in longer-term considerations, by designing them into larger projects or “indenture” systems
- The need for a clear path for career progression within and beyond the schemes.

4.5 Approximately a quarter of respondents were unfamiliar with new apprenticeship models in the historic environment sector.

4.6 Regarding other means of increasing the capacity for the protection of the historic environment, the following points emerged:

- Volunteers implemented as a substitute to core Local Authority services was a major concern for most respondents. Better partnerships with the voluntary sector, however, were encouraged, as were investing in and training volunteers to add value to existing professional capacity.
- Encouraging stakeholders to be better advocates of the historic environment, and “appealing to those with financial reserves”, was suggested as a means of protecting existing capacity.

*“I am very wary of the use of volunteers, wherever possible work should be undertaken by trained professionals.”*

*“Local Authorities should facilitate positive partnerships with the voluntary sector by providing guidance and agreeing priorities.”*

4.7 The group considered that the responses to the consultation supported the need for action in its priority areas of Apprenticeship Reform and Local Authority historic environment services. Action will include:

- working with the sector on the opportunities and challenges relating to the new Apprenticeship system;
- aligning with others in the sector to identify core areas of Local Planning Authority services with respect to the historic environment, drawing on the detail of the consultation responses as part of that work.

## 5 Public Engagement

Priority: To establish an ethos of cultural entitlement where everyone has a right to understand the value of cultural heritage; has a sense of ownership of cultural assets and advocates a collective responsibility for the cultural landscape.

Outcome: As many people as possible from all backgrounds involved in heritage.

Q10: What are the key challenges for improving diversity in public engagement with the historic environment in England?

Q11: Where do the opportunities for increasing diversity in public engagement with the historic environment in England lie?

Q12: What are the (one or two) most important practical actions a heritage body with limited resources might take to increase diversity as a first step?

5.1 Consultation respondents identified the following key challenges for improving diversity in public engagement with the historic environment in England:

- A focus on “national” heritage and tourism assets to the detriment of local heritages and local communities as audiences. One respondent suggested looking at issues of belonging and identity, and not just attendance, when measuring participation amongst under-represented social groups.

*“The ordinary and average is also important for local community engagement. Local is good, every street forms part of the country’s heritage”*

*“the focus on tourist assets disenfranchises diverse audiences”*

- Lack of funding and/or staff for outreach programmes; public engagement considered low-priority when even core services lack funding.
- Lack of diversity in the voices and perspectives presented, often white and middle-class, stemming from a lack of diversity in professional bodies.

*“a more diverse sector will lead to a more diverse audience”*

- Inequality in public transport provision (lack of provision being a huge obstacle to participation).

- Heritage jargon as a barrier to engagement.

5.2 The consultation also identified the following opportunities:

- Increasing access and diversity within the professional workforce (currently being addressed, for instance, by Apprenticeships).
- A renewed focus on community leadership and greater public involvement in the planning and management process.
- Diversifying modes of engagement to make heritage appear more socially relevant.
- An increased focus on local heritage, promoting heritage as “story-telling” and inherent to place-making.
- The opportunity to work with schools (which tend to address diversity well) to make greater use of local heritage.

5.3 Respondents then suggested practical actions a heritage body with limited resources might take as a first step to increasing diversity, in answer to these opportunities and challenges.

5.4 For Heritage 2020, it was noted that support should be focused on the disadvantaged areas that need most help to save their heritage (more affluent communities tend to be more easily able to attract resources). Associated with this, the heritage sector should be arguing more strongly to protect public funding, particularly for disadvantaged areas.

5.5 As part of its next steps, the group will:

- look to work with a broader range of partners to address issues of engagement and diversity, including those that work closely with local communities;
- target diversity in governance as an area for action, seeking to collect and share information and models of good practice.

## 6 Helping Things to Happen

Priority: to better understand, (through collaborative research and evaluation activities), and reinforce, the evidence base, demonstrating the social and economic value of heritage to society.

Outcome: a long-term shift to a positive vision for the contribution that heritage makes to Britain

Q13: What support might you need from Heritage 2020 when talking to local politicians about the value of heritage?

Q14: Can you describe any specific projects where the historic environment enhances people’s sense of identity and wellbeing? How has this been achieved?

Q15: To what extent is the heritage in your area being used to promote economic success (jobs, investment, growth)? Please give any examples.

6.1 Respondents hoped for support from Heritage 2020 in the following, when talking to politicians about the value of heritage:

- First and foremost, evidence of the tangible benefits of heritage (social, economic, in supporting development and innovation, etc.) in the form of facts, figures, memorable statistics and case studies.

*“Strong case studies/exemplars. Economic figures about the benefits of heritage-led regeneration, the economic value gained from heritage and the social value of heritage.”*

- Acting as a representative for the heritage sector, with a shared list of principles and statements, as well as a platform to share knowledge and best practice.
- Acting as a facilitator in the dialogue with politicians, organising events and setting broad sector goals against the political agenda.

6.2 A series of examples were given – unfortunately with little to no details – of specific redevelopment and/or community engagement projects where the historic environment enhanced people’s sense of wellbeing and identity through reinforcing local identities and appreciation of local areas, work with marginalised groups (e.g. prison service, dementia groups, etc.), or providing skills development and training programmes to the public.

6.3 Regarding the promotion of economic success, respondents cited employment opportunities, purchase and use of local produce, generation of local income via visitor spend, income from venue rental and opportunities for investment as the main economic benefits of heritage in their area.

*“Heritage craft industries are in demand; regeneration of heritage assets can act as catalysts for wider regeneration of historic areas.”*

Nevertheless, over half of the respondents were unable to provide examples of such economic successes.

*“It doesn’t appear to figure very strongly at the moment.”*

6.4 The group discussed the need for immediate tangible evidence that has emerged from the consultation exercise alongside its goal of achieving a long-term shift to a positive vision for the contribution that heritage makes to Britain. As an immediate step, the group will:

- build on its review and collation of evidence and produce resources that can be used by the sector to communicate the value of the historic environment.

The group recognise the value of engaging politicians with heritage and considered the role Heritage 2020 could play within the context of other sector organisations who are active in this space. It was felt that the working group had an important role to play in terms of foresight and the building of longer term relationships and alliances, with both parliamentarians and also within relevant non-heritage sectors. Over the short-term the group will:

- Identify and reach out to new ambassadors for heritage, and find ways to make it attractive to get involved in communicating the positive contribution of heritage.

## **7 Additional Comments**

Q16: Are there any other comments that you would like to make on this first phase of Heritage 2020 activity?

Q17: Is there anything else that you would like to contribute to these themes, e.g. research, case studies, priorities you’re working on, relevant concerns and opportunities?

Q18: Are you aware of any other areas for collaboration that are not addressed by the Heritage 2020 framework?

7.1 A series of additional comments and suggestions were provided at the end of the consultation. Recurring concerns mention funding, disappearing skills and roles, tackling issues at the strategic level and better strategic use of heritage assets as priorities. There are also several requests for better or further communication from the part of Heritage 2020.

## 8 Conclusion and next steps

8.1 The 2016 Heritage 2020 consultation exercise was a welcome opportunity to share the priorities of the five working groups with the wider sector and to receive input to the actions that will help to address those priorities.

8.2 The number of responses (and breadth of organisations represented) is encouraging and indicates that this phase of Heritage 2020 has reached a greater number of people than previous exercises such as the initial consultation on the Heritage 2020 strategic priorities in 2014.

8.3 However, the need for more frequent information about the activities that take place under the Heritage 2020 banner is clear and this will be a priority for the project team in 2017-18.

8.4 Steps that are being taken to build up communication include:

- A website (launched at the end of 2016) to share information about the activities of each working group as well as wider project initiatives: [www.heritage2020.net](http://www.heritage2020.net)
- A newsfeed that can be subscribed to at <http://www.heritage2020.net/sign-up-to-news/> to receive alerts when news is added to the website.
- Increased use of the Twitter account @Heritage2020
- A more proactive approach to engagement, including identifying organisations to notify of key outputs such as updated Action Plans. Organisations are to include both those that represent publicly and privately owned heritage.
- Development of a wider range of opportunities for people and groups to be involved in Heritage 2020, for example through contributing remotely to the activities of working groups or collecting and sharing information being generated by the Historic Environment Sector that addresses the Heritage 2020 priorities.
- Heritage Update, the e-bulletin of The Heritage Alliance, will be a key channel for communication and Heritage 2020 will contribute news to it regularly.

8.5 The Heritage 2020 working groups have already used the responses to the 2016 consultation to inform the development of their Action Plans for 2017-18. These Action Plans will be shared through the individual working group pages of the Heritage 2020 website, and with the Historic Environment Forum as the over-arching body responsible for the Heritage 2020 initiative.

8.6 Thank you to all those who took part in the consultation exercise and for the helpful and thoughtful contributions. A second consultation will run in the autumn of 2017 to reflect on activities and continue to shape future actions.

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