



Consultation response

DCMS: Heritage Lottery Fund Policy Directions

Date: July 2018

Description: This was an online consultation run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in July 2018, seeking views on the re-drafted Policy Directions for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

About us

Historic Houses represents the UK's largest collection of independently owned historic houses and gardens. Our family includes over 1,650 important historic houses, many with open doors, waiting to be explored.

The places we represent are not static museums, but personal, living examples of Britain's past, present and future. Between them they welcome over 26 million visits each year, and work with hundreds of thousands of education visitors.

We offer our 50,000 plus members unique access to hundreds of special places that tell a personal, living history of our four nations. We help the houses we represent to celebrate the past, secure the future, and speak with one powerful voice.

We are here to ensure these historic houses stay alive and accessible for generations to come. Nothing tells a nation's story like its homes – the places where human stories endlessly unfold.

UK-wide consultation questions

Is there anything in these directions that the HLF should not be doing? If yes, tell us what you think HLF should not be doing and why

Direction 1

We agree that HLF should take into account designation and level of risk when assessing the needs of heritage in the UK, and are pleased to see that Direction 1 encourages collaboration with other sector stakeholders on this. **It must be remembered, however, that heritage at risk is not only heritage currently on the 'Heritage at Risk Register' (HAR), or any other sector registers / watchlists;**

heritage at risk also means heritage assets that are facing an unsustainable future in both the short and the long term.

Short-term: Many heritage assets not formally on the HAR register are struggling to raise the funds required for urgent repairs to their fabric – which ultimately puts them at risk of having to close parts of the historic building, or potentially the entire historic building, to the public if funding for repair cannot be raised. Historic Houses places alone face a conservation backlog of over £1.38 billion in outstanding repairs and maintenance that needs to be carried out, yet between all 1,650 of them they can only afford to spend £85 million each year on repairs and maintenance. The vast majority of these places are not on the HAR register, but many are certainly ‘at risk’ of having to scale back their public-facing activities due to concerns over required repairs.

Long-term: Historic buildings can look forward to a sustainable future when they are well looked after and in active use, with sufficient income to ensure they can remain cared for and accessible into the future. For the majority of heritage assets open to the public, the income they need to become viable and to remain sustainable must be generated through diversification and commerciality. Historic Houses would support a greater focus from HLF on ensuring funded projects focus on securing long-term sustainable outcomes for heritage ‘at risk’ (i.e. not just heritage on the HAR register but also assets that are struggling to be well looked after and in active use). This ought to mean a greater emphasis on enterprise and commerciality as the vital ingredients to ensuring long-term sustainability.

In summary, we agree that the HLF ought to take into account designation *and level of risk*, but would urge a thoughtful, flexible approach to defining level of risk.

Direction 10

Heritage projects’ role in reducing economic and social deprivation is important, but the government should not require every HLF project to reduce deprivation.

A more nuanced, flexible approach is required to reflect the fact that some very worthy projects (finding viable new uses to save grade I and II* assets for the long term, for example) will be unable to demonstrate a significant causal impact on reducing economic and social deprivation. The public benefits of restoring an amazing building and opening it up to long-term, sustainable public access are clear in themselves and should be recognised in their own right.

Flexibility could be achieved by amending Direction 10 to include a similar qualification to that of Direction 13 - ‘to the extent that this is reasonable to achieve for different kinds of applicants in particular areas’.

England consultation questions

Is there anything in these directions that the HLF should not be doing? If yes, tell us what you think HLF should not be doing and why

Direction 1

Just flagging up a typo - 'they' should read 'it'.

Direction 3

The same points as made above in relation to Direction 1 of the UK-wide Directions apply here to Direction 3 for England, in terms of defining 'heritage at risk'.

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