

These are the answers submitted on behalf of the Society to the HLF Forward Strategy consultation.

Aside from the first 12 pages, which are preliminaries, the main meat of the survey is in Parts 2 – 6.

Part 2 (pp 13-19) Strategic Priorities for heritage and people

What are the most important needs or opportunities for HLF to fund, nationally and locally to you? ***Helping as many people as possible recognise the relevance of the past for present and future generations; widening engagement in the study, debate and enjoyment of the past, and developing new approaches to this.***

Should HLF give priority to heritage at risk, and if so, what does this mean? ***Yes; identification of those remains, collections, traditions from the past which require investment to make them sustainable, and provision of enough financial support to build this sustainability, provided that they remain a resource for study and public engagement. Other criteria must come into play when HLF seeks to decide whether or not to invest is of public benefit (eg for projects which initiate or extend public access)***

How should HLF take account of different priorities in the 4 countries of the UK? ***1. By having a clear UK-wide strategy first, and 2. By adapting this as necessary according to the Policy Directions given by the relevant political administration***

Should HLF address areas which have not had so much HLF funding in the past? ***Tend to agree: HLF have to decide what their priorities are – is Heritage at Risk a priority or should it be under-represented areas? if the needs of heritage and heritage at risk are the main driver, these needs may not coincide with areas which have not received so much HLF funding. And equitable distribution of funds seems to the Society also to be an important consideration. There is already a danger here of having too many targets.***

Should HLF address areas which are seen as deprived? ***Tend to disagree; HLF should beware of having too many and different targets, but widening audiences in the study, debate and enjoyment of the past should continue to be one of the portfolio of outcomes that HLF seeks***

Should HLF target particular social groups in addition to those already targeted? ***Tend to disagree. See answers above – there are 7 target groups already, and trying to hit multiple targets (heritage needs, UK country policy directions, low-funded areas) plus a wider range of social groups is a recipe for falling between many stools. HLF support for projects should be driven by the significance of the heritage assets involved, and the opportunity to engage a wide public, within the context of the appropriate national framework, not solely through socio-economic considerations. Important to be clear about priorities: to be a credible distributor of lottery money, HLF must be demonstrably able to do what it sets out to do.***

How should HLF seek to provide more help to these groups and widen the range of beneficiaries?

HLF currently seeks to achieve 9 outcomes; are these the right ones? ***Strongly agree that these are right (I'm just a bit doubtful about no 9 "the local economy will be boosted", which is one which is not dependent on the heritage asset itself, but on local conditions)***

Part 3 (pp 20 – 31) Strategic Interventions and Partnerships

Should HLF put heritage at the heart of place-making across the UK? ***Strongly agree; heritage is fundamental to the identity of people and communities***

If so, who should be the most appropriate partners? ***Varied according to local circumstances, but should include local enterprise partnerships, building preservation trusts and community interest companies.***

Should HLF fund more commercially focussed approaches to support projects with a focus on enterprise and skills [*sic –the question is garbled SJ*]? ***Tend to disagree; there is always a danger that public funding will too generously buy out the risk for commercial partners rather than be just sufficient to encourage a focus on enterprise and skills, and other public benefits; without careful financial appraisal of each grant made, this could be a minefield, and one or more wrong decisions could cause major reputational damage to HLF. If HLF is to become more involved in commercial schemes, it must better develop its understanding and awareness of how commercial investment and development works if it is to obtain value for money through equity investment in projects.***

How can HLF best work with others to support viable use of existing under-utilised buildings? ***By recognising that all or many of the 9 outcomes may not be achieved through a single grant or campaign of works. There could be several stages (holding repairs, structural and external repairs, development of a viable full refurbishment scheme, audience and business plan development, full restoration and bringing back into use). The aim of HLF's investment should be to bring the value of an under-utilised building from negative to at least zero, most obviously through structural and external repair. This might be done by a building preservation trust which then markets the building to a commercial or third sector developer to take forward. Claw-back would then apply only to the extent of any positive sum achieved through open market sale, in a public and transparent process, rather than HLF needing to become involved in the risk and subjectivity of commercial development appraisal.***

The following questions are for Organisations to answer

How can HLF best support heritage organisations to become more enterprising and financially viable (ranked options)? ***1. Fund business support training and capacity building programmes, including in investment readiness; 2. Provide small-scale funding to help organisations build their fundraising capacity and skills; 3. Provide funding to individual organisations to achieve strategic organisational change***

Fit for purpose governance and project management capability are fundamental to having a sound business footing, which is a key requirement before any project should be funded.

What is your organisation's experience of non-grant finance? ***We have no experience of non-grant finance, and are interested in exploring it"***

What would make your organisation more likely to take up non-grant finance? ***The need to achieve long term security of occupation of our historic apartments***

What support would be most useful to your organisation to help you access non-grant finance? ***(1) Capacity building to support income generation; (2) Providing funding for projects as part grant/ part loan or equity investment; (3) Greater flexibility in what sorts of projects HLF will fund***

Should HLF provide match funding for organisations who use crowd-funding? ***We do not see any obvious reason why HLF should refuse to use crowd funding as matched contribution. Crowd-funding is a sign of genuine public support and interest***

How could HLF better support organisations to use digital technology (in a variety of specified ways/options)?

How could HLF ensure that their digital content is accessible now and safeguarded for the future?

How can HLF support innovation in the use of digital technology?

How could HLF support the heritage sector to engage internationally and deliver benefits for the UK? ***HLF money cannot be spent outside the UK (and that means not in IoM, CI, Gibraltar etc), and the menu of questions offers 2 suggested ways of helping UK organisations to market UK abroad. Plugging a gap in tourist board funding seems to be entirely a wrong step, despite the recommendations of the Tailored review, since it is a poor fit with most if not all of the 9 outcomes. "Knowledge exchange with overseas organisations" appeals most to the Society.***

Should HLF involve the public in decision-making? ***No – it is very difficult to achieve within the existing rules for deciding on public expenditure and accountability.***

What options for involving the public in decision-taking should HLF explore? ***Several of these options can be explored, but some rely on giving grant-making powers to those other than HLF Trustees or their committees. Treasury rules make devolved grant making very difficult. And public voting is equally tricky (eg the Restoration TV series, where the HLF Board had to agree that all the contestants merited an award/met the grant criteria before the programmes could go on air), effectively making 20+ grant decisions.***

And what level/size of grant might this apply to?

Part 4 (pp 32-39) Our portfolio

Do you have any comments on our proposal for an open grant programme for all types of heritage project? ***For small grants to deliver against the full range of 9 outcomes is a tall order; and some forms of grant (eg the international ones mentioned earlier) will struggle against the full range of 9 outcomes. There may need to be some proportionality and some specific targeting of selected outcomes. If so, HLF should consider relaxing some of the strict 9 outcome criteria for certain types of buildings – eg for Places of Worship***

Do you agree that HLF increases the ceiling for single-stage grant from £100k to £250K? **Yes**

Should HLF have an upper limit on grant awards? If so, where should it be? **£10m**

How should HLF strike a balance between larger and smaller awards? ***Equal weight to smaller and larger awards; people should be encouraged to apply for what the heritage needs, not what they think might be successful***

What heritage needs should HLF prioritise for strategic campaigns in the early years of its next framework? ***Rural churches (see the Taylor Report); museum collections management and storage – see the Redesdale/Howell report ; access for researchers***

Do you see benefits in HLF offering fixed rate grants for certain types of project through strategic campaigns? ***No; there is enough competition for HLF awards already without setting up more***

What partnership funding requirements should HLF have in place – as existing, or new ones? ***No change; smaller organisations find it hard to raise cash, but should be encouraged to do so (eg by crowd-funding etc), and not be held back by not having resources (other than their people/volunteers).***

How should HLF achieve balance between open programmes and strategic interventions? ***Equal weight to open funding and to strategic investment. Strategic investments become part of the “normal” grantmaking for HLF after the time-limited period anyway, provided that all grants are assessed against the 9 outcomes. If strategic investments have different outcomes, should they be part of the strategic grant-making anyway?***

Should HLF embed environmental sustainability into its assessment criteria? ***Tend to agree; in practice it is difficult to give sustainability factors due weight against the needs of the fabric and costs of the project***

How should HLF ensure projects follow best practice in this area, and address climate change issues? ***Project guidance would be a good first step***

Part 5 (pp 40-42) Improving the experience for customers

Which resource would be most helpful to applicants (ranked options)? ***1. Application guidance documents and Help notes; 2. Digital peer to peer support; 3. “Top tips” videos from successful grantees***

The existing documentation needs to be sharpened up and made as clear as possible. The experience of successful grantees would be the most useful

Should HLF introduce an early screening process for larger awards, and encourage discourage applications at “expression of interest” stage? ***Tend to agree; as long as the expression of interest is assessed against clear criteria, and does not result in applicants doing loads of work***

just to get through the screening. This implies no supporting documentation, but it is not clear how such a process could be objective, with little background information for HLF to use in deciding on their preferred candidates. This would only work if the expressions of interest were based on facts rather than on interpretations/intentions (eg Heritage at risk). As HLF's funds diminish, there is a danger that the total cost to heritage bodies in making an application will go up, and the potential grants available go down. Is this an area for HLF research – to try to estimate the costs versus the benefits and identify the trend?

Was the work you had to do to apply proportionate to the scale of funding applied for? **Yes; but it took considerable investment, and we do not understand how other organisations with lesser resources could actually manage it**

How could HLF simplify its application processes (using a variety of media) to make them more accessible? **The suggestions in the consultation are not really simplifications of the application process, just different ways of contacting applicants, or allowing applicants to contact HLF. So long as HLF requires applicants to demonstrate that they meet all 9 outcomes, the prospect of simpler application processes is some way off.**

How could HLF use digital technology to improve the customer experience for applicants and grantees? **The online forms need substantial refinement and improvement.**

(For those who have received a grant) How could HLF make its processes for managing the grant post-award more efficient? **Improve the portal**

Part 6 (pp 43-44) Final comments

Are there any other comments you'd like to make? **1. HLF appears to be being pressed to do certain things in response to the Tailored Review, and politically it will probably have to do them whatever feedback to this consultation says; 2. HLF Trustees must think carefully about their distance from DDCMS and Government: heritage has a long timespan for its outcomes, and today's political imperatives may not last for ever; 3. HLF cannot afford to make big mistakes – its support for the heritage is too important to lose; 4. The concept of additionality seems to have been eroded (eg Historic England grants cut back, NHMF continuing at a very modest level) as HLF is seen as the main player and occasional bale-out eg for NHMF – this is not especially healthy. 5 HLF has a big job to do in order to manage expectations: The whole tone of this consultation is of opening up possibilities, when realistically they will need to become more focussed. 6 The Society's experience is that monitors and mentors do a really good job, and without them, projects would flounder**