

GreenLINK response to:

Shaping the future – for heritage, for everyone.

Consultation on the Heritage Lottery Fund's Strategic framework for 2013-2019

SECTION ONE – OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND HOW WE WORK

Our strategic framework

To what extent do you agree or disagree we should express our current three strategic aims of conservation, participation and learning as a single aim in future – ‘making a positive and lasting difference for heritage and people’?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

The three current strategic aims of conservation, participation and learning are implicit in the suggested new and simplified single strategic aim. In demonstrating that a project meets the current strategic aims it is often difficult for an applicant to address the participation and learning elements without duplication and repetition. The proposed new strategic aim is intended to provide a simpler more direct focus which will be mirrored within the application process and guidance material and we welcome efforts to make the application process as straightforward and accessible as possible.

One slight concern exists around the loss of specific reference to conservation as a driver for HLF funding. There is a potential danger that the proposed wording of the new single strategic aim implies that a project's relationship with people and its popular support may be a determining factor. If a heritage asset is in decline and at a stage where it is in need of restoration it may not be a particularly popular, well-used or well-loved facility at the pre-restoration pre-applications stage but still needs and justifies conservation for its heritage value alone. The process of bidding and restoring, breathing new life into a previously forgotten asset is in itself a catalyst for renewed community interest and creating something that then makes a difference for people.

Balance and direction of funding

In 2010-2011 we expect to make awards totalling around £128m through our open programmes (Heritage Grants and Your Heritage) and £70m through targeted programmes and strategic initiatives.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should target more funds to identified strategic needs and reduce the amount of funding available through open programmes?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

Our sector, the parks and green spaces sector, is a beneficiary of a major targeted programme 'Parks for People'. As such, it is all too easy and in our interest to push HLF towards investing more in its targeted programmes. We certainly hugely appreciate the current level of commitment from HLF to the sector and strongly advocate for continued HLF investment in parks and green spaces where there is still a desperate need to conserve, restore and improve thousands of historic spaces. However, we are also aware that the current and future funding available through the Parks for People programme is probably nicely balanced with the sector's capacity to develop projects and HLF applications.

As external stakeholders it is difficult to judge the merits of the projects that receive funding through the open programme against those that come through the targeted programmes and strategic initiatives. HLF are best places to assess the merits of the projects that come through the open programme and their ability to make a lasting difference for heritage and people and compare these to those derived from projects coming through the targeted programmes.

To what extent do you agree we should solicit applications more frequently, in order to focus our funding on strategic priorities for heritage?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

Again drawing on sectorial experience, we are aware that some organisations managing parks and green spaces have committed fully to the opportunities presented by the HLF programme and have secured funding for several schemes while other less proactive organisations, managing sites of equal heritage value and in equally poor condition, have failed to engage with HLF and made no applications at all.

We advocate opportunities for the social housing sector to benefit increasingly through access to funding through the HLF programmes. With stock transfers and new development, the total area of green space owned and managed by social housing providers is significant and could make a substantial contribution to green infrastructure nationally.

According to research undertaken by CABE Space, people living in deprived areas are more likely to have a poorer quality local environment with less access to green space. The most affluent 20% of wards in urban England have five times the amount of parks and general green space than the most deprived 10% of wards. Around 8.4 million people have social housing tenure representing nearly 18% of the UK population. These parks and green spaces are most easily accessible by people who might otherwise lack opportunities to make use of better quality parks and green spaces.

The process of park and green space restoration does much in the locality to raise awareness of the heritage role of these spaces and to redefine quality expectations amongst the local population. It also provides opportunities for increased knowledge and understanding amongst staff and expansion and improvement of the team's skills base. All of this can have a knock on beneficial effect leading to increased commitment to other green spaces in the area and a general uplift in standards. We would welcome any increased capacity directly within HLF or via sectorial stakeholders to engage those organisations that have not so far applied for HLF funding and offer tailored support resulting in at least one application and subsequent park restoration.

To what extent do you agree we should give priority to funding for heritage identified as being at risk?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

Declining heritage assets eventually reach a point where there is a danger of total and irreversible loss or reaching a condition where the cost of repair becomes prohibitively expensive. We would

support any increased opportunity for HLF to proactively target heritage identified as being at risk and to be able to take steps to initiate earlier interventions.

We would welcome the development of an ‘at risk’ audit of green spaces linked to the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, whereby a better understanding of which historically important green spaces were at risk could be achieved. We would also then welcome changes which empowered HLF to target these vulnerable heritage assets and take steps which increased the likelihood of their initial salvation and eventual restoration.

We highlight the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest as one way to recognise heritage at risk. However, we also acknowledge that there are many other sites which are of heritage value which would not be listed, such as small local parks. We suggest that these sites hold the same value and same level of urgency; if local people feel they are at risk.

Taking account of the achievements of Lottery funding since 2002 (see annex), what areas of heritage (if any) do you consider to be still in need of funding?

Heritage area	No funding need	Some funding need	Significant funding need	Don't know
Archaeology				*
Archives				*
Cultures and memories, languages and dialects				*
Historic buildings and monuments				*
Industrial heritage				*
Landscapes			Yes	
Library collections				*
Museums and collections				*
Parks			Yes	
Places of worship				*
Ships and maritime heritage				*
Transport heritage				*
Wildlife and nature conservation			Yes	

Why do you say that?

We know that there is still significant need within parks, landscapes and wildlife and nature conservation and that HLF represents the primary perhaps only source of the large scale funding

needed to address the requisite capital investment need. As a sector we are almost wholly reliant on the continued commitment from HLF in addressing this significant funding need.

We also recognise that there is a need to prioritise projects that bring benefits to new audiences. For many people, particularly those living in the most deprived areas; a paucity of good quality, safe open spaces near to where people live means fewer opportunities to engage with the natural environment. Investment in these landscapes and green spaces provide the greatest opportunity to engage new audiences and increase appreciation of our natural heritage.

With 33 million regular visitors to green spaces making in excess of 3 billion visits per year we are also confident that HLF's investment in these programmes, when measured against achievement of their existing or proposed new strategic aim, can more than compete with any of the other areas of heritage in terms of value for money and return on investment.

From our limited knowledge base regarding other areas of heritage, we feel it would be unfair to comment on the financial need that exists within these other areas. On this basis, we have some concerns about the validity of this question in a consultation such as this. The question is likely to generate substantially partisan opinion that may in many cases be based on inadequate knowledge.

How we work

How important are the following aspects of how we currently work as a Lottery funder?

A. Working closely with organisations and responding to needs at local level as well as Operating within a UK-wide strategic framework

Essential

Very important

Fairly important

Not very important

Not at all important

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

The UK wide strategic framework is important to ensure that the nation's heritage, in all of its depth and diversity, is recognised and supported making as effective use as possible of the available resources. However one of the great strengths of UK heritage is the local variations which help to define and refine the rich tapestry and diverse character of our physical and cultural landscape.

B. Providing support (as described) to applicants and grantees throughout the grant administration process

Essential

Very important

Fairly important

Not very important

Not at all important

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

For many potential applicants the process of developing a project and submitting an HLF application represents a steep learning curve whereby appreciation of heritage becomes massively increased. The process can be quite daunting and at the outset the knowledge base may be low. The support provided through the grant administration process is an essential element of maintaining demand, maintaining the quality of applications and ensuring that a good percentage of potential applicants get to the point where they are able to submit an application.

C. Giving locally-based help to organisations less experienced in making applications **Essential**

Very important

Fairly important

Not very important

Not at all important

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

The development of a restoration plan and HLF application is daunting even for experienced applicants and heritage professionals. Without locally based support, many previous applicants who have gone on to make successful applications and deliver really valuable schemes may not have got past the first hurdle. It is this support that helps to ensure a good diversity of schemes are funded and that community led, locally important projects, receive their fair share of the available funding.

Which statement below most closely reflects your opinion of the amount of work involved in the application process, bearing in mind that Lottery money is public funding?

- **The work involved was in proportion to the amount of money we asked for**
- The work involved was excessive in relation to the amount of money we asked for
- The work involved was relatively little in relation to the amount of money we asked for
- We have never applied for Heritage Lottery funding

Why do you say that?

Our experience is mostly around large scale grants where it might be expected that a substantial amount of work is required to secure a substantial amount of money (especially public funded money). On that basis we have ticked the first of the options available. However, at times the amount of work does seem excessive and sometimes there is too much repetition within the grant application process. For our sector, too often this means that large chunks of development costs are needed to cover the costs of specialist consultants.

We would welcome efforts to relax some of the requirements and where possible for HLF to be a little less prescriptive that every project must fully address every criterion (every project must tick every box). The amount of documentation and research required seems to have progressively increased over the years. Sometimes it can feel that some of the work is more about accountability, making sure public funding is not wasted, rather than about improving the project. Some early projects were funded with far less developmental work in place and still led to successful schemes equal to more recent projects.

What more could we do to improve our current grant-making processes?

Spread of funding

We focus our development work on geographic areas and communities who may not have applied to us before with the aim of encouraging good-quality applications. In deciding on a local basis where to focus these resources in future, to what extent do you agree or disagree that we should take account of the following:

A. Geographical areas that have received least funding from us in the past (e.g. local authority areas)

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

B. Social groups that have benefited least from our funding in the past (e.g. people with disabilities, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, Lower socio-economic groups)

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

C. Types of heritage that have benefited least from our funding in the past (e.g. archives, land and biodiversity, industrial, maritime and transport heritage)

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

Support for the changing needs of the UK's heritage

Protecting our investment

Which one of the following statements best reflects your view?

- A. HLF should give more priority to ensuring the financial sustainability of an organisation that has already received Lottery money, to build on what has already been achieved, rather than new projects
- B. HLF should give more priority to new projects that will bring new and different benefits, rather than to projects that have already received Lottery money
- C. HLF should aim to strike a balance between the two**
- D. None of these
- E. Don't know

Why do you say that?

The recent economic downturn has altered the position for many grantees over the last two years. Many of the business plans and financial models intended to provide project financial sustainability may no longer be fully viable. This may in turn jeopardise some of the investment made by HLF with restored assets once again in danger of neglect for the lack of comparatively small amounts of revenue. The likely duration of the current economic climate is unknown but may continue for several years; long enough to see a decline in the standard of restored heritage assets. It would seem churlish and foolhardy to not support HLF in providing at least some measure of transitional assistance to grantees who find themselves in this position. Equally, HLF should be careful to ensure that cynical grantees do not use this concession as an excuse for reducing financial support to a project simply because they know HLF will step in with a financial bale out.

Notwithstanding the current economic difficulties, HLF should still prioritise new projects bringing new and different benefits to new and different audiences. HLFs work in firstly saving and then improving the nation's heritage assets is in normal circumstances the primary objective.

A harder issue is the question of whether or not HLF should ever enter into longer term revenue relationships with grantees where the salvation of an important heritage asset does not equate to a sustainable and viable financial business case. In these instances, it is difficult to do nothing while the risk to an important asset increases alongside the eventual capital investment needed to save it. If the current financial climate continues beyond the short term, HLF may find itself facing this dilemma more frequently.

Building a more resilient heritage community

As a Lottery funder, to what extent do you agree or disagree that we should seek to extend our role to build the financial sustainability of voluntary organisations with initiatives to support organisational development?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

When the salvation of an important heritage asset cannot go forward on a sustainable financial basis for the want of a small amount of investment to develop the voluntary organisation taking responsibility for the asset, HLF should consider financially supporting that organisational development. As local authority capacity to develop projects dwindles and the future of heritage assets becomes increasingly reliant on the efforts of the voluntary or third sector the likelihood of this type of scenario occurring will increase.

In many cases the fate, and the financial sustainability, of the voluntary organisation and the heritage asset will be inexorably linked. HLF should support the organisation to develop and operationally evolve if this is preventing the organisation from reaching a genuinely sustainable position.

Encouraging a culture of giving

What role should HLF play to encourage philanthropy and more private supporters for heritage at all levels?

Consider the potential for attracting major national donors willing to supplement lottery funding with their own philanthropy. Priority should be given to using this additional money to assist

organisations who cannot secure match funding from elsewhere, to support organisational development within voluntary organisations struggling to reach a sustainable financial situation, and for encouraging applications in heritage areas and geographic areas which have so far been poorly represented.

What more could HLF do to help achieve a thriving and resilient heritage community in future?

SECTION 2 – OUR CURRENT GRANT PROGRAMMES

General Grant Programmes

Small Grants from £3,000 to £10,000

To what extent do you agree or disagree with a simplified approach to grants under £10,000?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

Medium-sized Grants from £10,000 upwards

To what extent do you agree or disagree we should offer a medium sized grants programme with a single round application process?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

What should the upper threshold be for an open, single round community heritage programme starting at £10,000? (tick one)

£50,000

£100,000

£150,000

£200,000

Other amount (write in)

Don't know

Do you have any other comments on small and medium sized grants?

Heritage Grants (grants over £50,000)

What should our requirements for partnership funding contributions be after 2013?

A. Return to their previous levels?

B. Stay the same as they are now?

C. Be reduced even further?

Don't know

Do you have any overall comments on our Heritage Grants programme?

We have indicated that your requirements for partnership funding contributions after 2013 should stay the same as they are now but this does depend entirely on the economic circumstances. We are assuming that the current recession may still be significantly affecting the capacity of local authorities and voluntary organisations to apply for grants and secure match funding. If there is significant financial recovery and increase in local authority budgets then we acknowledge that there may be some merit in gradually increasing the level of partnership funding contributions required. Having said this, the parks and green space sector, in relation to the Parks for People programme, has often found it difficult to secure the 25% partnership funding requirement even before the current economic downturn occurred. This difficulty in securing partnership funding often causes unnecessary delays and extends the development period.

We welcome increasing the upper threshold for an open, single round community heritage programme to £200,000 as this will provide a valuable opportunity for communities linked to smaller green spaces, who might not be eligible through the Parks for People Programme (e.g. tenant and residents associations, housing providers and community groups who want to improve green spaces on a housing estates) to benefit from much needed investment in local green spaces.

Targeted Programmes

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following continue to be the right priorities for our targeted programmes?

Young people

Landscapes

Parks

Places of worship

Townscape regeneration

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

Why do you say that?

The current balance of open programme and targeted programmes seems effective. HLF may in future wish to add other new targeted programmes if a consistent demand arises through the open programme for support for heritage assets/heritage projects of a particular type. However, unless the heritage asset/projects require a particular unique development and delivery approach there may not be a need to create a specific programme.

Young Roots

What should the upper limit for Young Roots grants be? (tick one)

£25,000

£50,000

£75,000

Other amount (write in)

Don't know

How could our Young Roots programme be improved?

By increasing the upper limit of the grants HLF opens up the possibility for bigger more expansive projects and for employing paid staff as part of the project. This represents a significant improvement. We would also have supported a proposal to increase the upper limit further in order to potentially also lengthen the permitted duration of Young Roots projects to 24 or even 36 months.

Landscape Partnerships

What are your thoughts on our proposals for the Landscape Partnerships programme? How could they be improved?

We support the increased emphasis on nature conservation and biodiversity outcomes and the review of the current maximum size of the Landscape Partnership areas.

Parks for People

What are your thoughts on our proposals for the Parks for People programme? How could they be improved?

We support HLF's acknowledgement regarding concerns about the future of parks as non-statutory local authority services. We also support the recognition that only 46% of local authorities have so far received an award whilst it is likely that most if not all have parks that would fit HLF's criteria and are in need of restoration funding. Many local authorities that have received Parks for People grant funding will also be able to identify other parks in their area still in need.

The inclusion of public cemeteries as a category of designed landscapes eligible for Parks for People funding seems appropriate in that there is a high degree of similarity between historic parks management issues and those of cemeteries. In many cases the management of parks and the management of cemeteries is undertaken by the same green space team and even when this is not the case there is likely to be good relationships between the two relevant teams which will allow sharing of experiences and cross team working which can support the development of better cemetery projects and applications for grants. We also welcome the proposal to simplify the programme's requirements to make good schemes more easily achievable and reduce the resources needed to develop a project to approval stage.

We do have concerns regarding the ten year management and maintenance plans and the ring-fencing of monies to support the delivery of these plans. With pressure to reduce local authority budget deficits these budgets may become vulnerable to cuts and HLF's support in ensuring senior decision makers honour these commitments may become critical. This may be an area where HLF's potential introduction of transition funding to protect their investment could prove useful. There is a danger that parks teams will face disproportionate cuts to their budgets and then be told to honour commitments to HLF funded sites from within their reduced budgets, at the expense of other parks within their management portfolio. This would be very undesirable.

Places of Worship

What are your thoughts on our proposals for supporting places of worship?

How could they be improved?

Again we feel that HLF has got things about right in relation to focussing its Places for Worship programme on urgent repair needs. There is no doubt that churches and places of worship are an important element of cultural and architectural heritage and many are in need of urgent repair. However, there are also potential concerns about allocation of public funds to institutions which by their very nature represent particular faiths and ideologies and are therefore not wholly representative of the population. Inevitably the many less historically established and more recently

introduced minority faiths will be overshadowed by the mainstream majority faiths established in the UK cultural landscape many centuries earlier. We therefore also welcome the proposed emphasis on making places of worship more sustainable in the future through increased community use and involvement.

Support for local places and communities

To what extent do you agree that heritage-led regeneration should continue to be a focus for HLF?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

Don't know

How can HLF best support place-based heritage, and communities' engagement with it?

The Townscape Heritage Initiative demonstrates that heritage can have a key role to play as a catalyst for wider regeneration, raising awareness of the value of heritage and acting as a magnet for other investment monies. We agree that demand for support, in relation to the transfer of heritage assets into community ownership, is likely to grow across the next few years and we support HLF's efforts to provide guidance and support for community groups taking on the increased responsibility of ownership.

SECTION THREE – ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Challenges of climate change

How strong would you say your support for our proposals to address climate change is on a scale of one to five where one means your support is very weak and five means it is very strong?

1 = very weak support

2

3

4

5 = very strong support

Don't know

Why do you say that?

We support HLFs position regarding inclusion of climate change mitigation and adaptation as an additional area of assessment but we are unclear how this fits with HLFs stated aim of simplifying the application process. We do have concerns regarding the stipulation that ‘all projects asking for a grant of more than £10,000 will be asked how they will be affected by predicted changes in their local environment’. Our worry is that the £10,000 threshold is set too low and that many smaller projects will be able to achieve very little in relation to climate change; we suggest raising the threshold and perhaps being more selective about which types of projects need to address this issue i.e. schemes with substantial building structure elements offering the potential for modernisation and revision of its energy systems, or scheme with substantial landscape and planting scheme elements. Appropriate and proportionate should be the by-words for this new aspect of assessment.

We do however appreciate that introducing this concern for all projects has value in that it raises awareness of this issue as an area of urgent concern. All work activities have a potential impact on the climate and most organisations could do more to ensure that their working practices are more sustainable and occupy a smaller carbon footprint. Perhaps in most cases it would be better for HLF to present this assessment area in relation to more generalised sustainable practices rather than specifically climate change; how is waste and energy use minimised, are goods and materials being sourced from sustainable local supplies etc.

In our sector we are keen to learn as much as we can about mitigating and adapting to the challenge of climate change. We therefore support HLF’s plans to support projects that will help to develop and trial new technologies, skills and knowledge and hope that at least one of these might be parks based and that the knowledge and learning from the other initiatives also has transferable elements. If HLF are to fund projects such as these it is the dissemination of the resulting knowledge and learning that will be critical.

Digital heritage

How strong would you say your support for our proposals for digital heritage is on a scale of one to five where one means your support is very weak and five means it is very strong?

1 = very weak support

2

3

4

5 = very strong support

Don’t know

Why do you say that?

We agree that digital media can increase access to heritage knowledge and information and support HLF’s shift in position regarding funding purely digital projects. Access to digital information through the expansion of broadband has now reached the point where most people can engage and learn online.

In the parks sector we would welcome the digitisation of information relating to parks restoration schemes. The resulting website could show the position of these places, provide information about facilities and activities offered as well as making available information about the research and development that supported the final restoration and management and maintenance plan. This could be a great resource to support increased community led restoration projects.

It would also be possible to develop applications that allowed visitors to access heritage information during a visit. The digital application could work with and complement on-site interpretation material creating informal games to enhance the visits of children and families or education programmes to support school visits.

What types of heritage should be priorities for digitisation, and why?

Priority should perhaps be given to heritage at risk, capturing information before the asset further deteriorates or is totally lost. In doing so, HLF would not only provide safekeeping for information that might later provide invaluable support for restoration schemes, it would also raise awareness of the plight of the asset and engender local support for action to save or improve it. A Wikipedia type approach could be taken which would allow viewers to upload their own recollections of the asset at risk, historic photographs and other memorabilia and stories which could really help the development of restoration proposals.

Many of the HLF funded projects addressing cultures, memories, languages and dialects would lend themselves to comparatively easy digitisation.

What types of innovation are most important for HLF to fund, and why?

Projects which support increased knowledge and learning and those that encourage visit to and interaction with heritage assets should be prioritised above basic cataloguing. We also feel that projects designed to link to formal education and encourage school visits would be particularly useful. However, at this early stage perhaps there should be no published preference and allow the full spectrum of applications to be assessed on their potential merit. This can lead to a more informed prioritisation and preference at a later stage.

Skills

How strong is your support for our proposal to run further targeted initiatives on skills in future, on a scale of one to five where one means your support is very weak and five means it is very strong?

1 = very weak support

2

3

4

5 = very strong support

Don't know

Why do you say that?

Many heritage sectors are currently experiencing a depletion of the skills base in relation to the traditional skills and working practices that are required to maintain heritage assets. In relation to our sector many of the skills and much of the knowledge exists within the older end of an already ageing workforce, many are nearing retirement anyway and their loss is only being accelerated by the current reduction in local authority budgets and threats to public sector pension arrangements.

Within our sector it seems that a popular approach to delivering parks and green space services within a reduced budget is to merge parks and grounds maintenance teams with larger departments delivering broader areas of service; parks specialists are being subsumed within streetscape and neighbourhood maintenance teams and the specialist is being replaced with the generic. Skills for the Future, alongside English Heritage's Historic and Botanic Gardens Bursary Scheme, appear to be the only programmes available to support traditional skills within the green space sector. Without an adequate pool of trained and skilled specialist staff there is a danger that HLF's investments will not be maintained to an adequate level.

What skills should be priorities for our support in a future initiative, and why?

We would like to see skills for the future extend beyond craft based skills (which should remain a high priority) to also include aspects of heritage asset management and development. In our sector this would include aspects of landscape design and management because as fast as we are losing skilled horticulturalists and botanists we are also losing managers who understand the difference between managing a historic designed landscape and managing a local recreation ground.

What role could or should HLF play in helping the passing on of knowledge and skills within the sector?

HLF should continue to develop its relationships with Sector Skills Councils and relevant professional Institutes to influence and support the development of appropriate training and learning opportunities and the passing on of knowledge and skills. It is almost certainly more effective to deliver support via these types of organisations.

Heritage in private ownership

To what extent should HLF do more to support heritage in private ownership?

A great deal

A fair amount

Just a little

Not at all

Don't know

Why do you say that?

If a private owner cannot afford to maintain their asset they should seek to sell it to an alternative owner with potential to invest and restore or they should seek an arrangement with the public or third sector. Public money should not be used to protect the wealth and investment of private

owners. HLF are perhaps best placed to determine when a unique set of circumstances might justify a departure from this basic principle.

Buying heritage items

To what extent do you consider the purchase of heritage items in future to be important?

Essential

Very important

Fairly important

Not very important

Not at all important

Don't know

Why do you say that?

How strong would you say your support for our proposal to simplify the process for urgent acquisitions is on a scale of one to five where one means your support is very weak and five means it is very strong?

1 = very weak support

2

3

4

5 = very strong support

Don't know

How strong would you say your support for our proposal for a new Collecting Cultures initiative is on a scale of one to five where one means your support is very weak and five means it is very strong?

1 = very weak support

2

3

4

5 = very strong support

Don't know

How strong would you say your support for our proposal for mainstreaming the principle behind Collecting Cultures within our general grants programmes is on a scale of one to five where one means your support is very weak and five means it is very strong?

1 = very weak support

2

3

4

5 = very strong support

Don't know

Why do you say that?

OVERALL

Overall what do you think HLF has done particularly well?

HLF's commitment to the parks and green space sector has been immensely valuable and in transforming heritage parks the Parks for People programme (and previously through the Urban Parks Programme) has made a considerable difference to the lives of millions of individuals and to whole communities. Parks are regularly visited by the vast majority of the population and have a significant impact on peoples' perceptions about where they live. By committing to a parks improvement programme HLF have ensured they have used their money wisely and achieved a great rate of return on their investment when measured against their strategic aim of 'making a positive and lasting difference for heritage and people'.

Without HLF investment many of these historic parks would have remained in a poor state of repair with more and more sectors of the local community ceasing to use the space and it becoming an increasing liability for the community rather than an asset. HLF have consistently shown a good level of understanding about the value of green space and the kind of impact that a good restoration project should be seeking to achieve. Furthermore HLF have been active in translating this to other organisations, providing advocacy for the sector and helping to raise its profile.

Real knowledge and expertise exists within the organisation and within the pool of monitoring officers that oversee the delivery of the projects. HLFs participation in working groups, steering groups and think tanks has always been of value and they have commissioned and led excellent research projects that have added to sectorial knowledge.

And what should we change?

Increased simplicity and accessibility. Whatever HLF can do to simplify the process and relieve some of the burden of undertaking a large scale restoration project will be well received. Many large scale parks restoration projects take many years to develop as applicants struggle to complete various required elements of the bid or to secure partnership funding. In some cases this delay has been beneficial and has been used as a catalyst for increased commitment from within and without the

applicant organisation, more often though it causes frustration and a loss of momentum with projects dragging on year after year.

The process now feels too daunting for any but the most ambitious of in-house teams and consequently successful projects are now by and large hugely dependent on external consultants delivering most of the work and developing the restoration plan and the management and maintenance plan. In the past, when an in-house team undertook most of the development work themselves there were great advantages to be achieved through increased and retained skills, knowledge and learning and the creation of heritage champions within the organisation. With so much of the work now undertaken externally the process no longer leaves teams and organisations as affected as they perhaps should be.

The consultation seems to be suggesting that HLF is working to simplify application processes wherever possible. Provided scheme quality can be retained, we support HLFs aspirations to change this aspect of what it does.

Please give us your views on any other issues you would like to raise with us.

The increased dependence on external consultants has also potentially significantly increased the costs of projects and therefore the difficulty in securing partnership funding. It also seems that because of the presence of HLF within the sector, the cost of many of the products and services needed to complete a scheme have inflated significantly across recent years. Would it be possible for HLF to control this inflation, perhaps through the creation of an approved tenderer list or by agreeing a schedule of rates with the suppliers which must be at the heart of eventual quotations and tenders?

With regard to the 'urgent acquisitions process' we suggest that it might need to be reconsidered in light of the expectation that green spaces and other sites of value to communities might be sold off under the CLG 'right to buy' proposals. In future, HLF money may need to be used to 'urgently acquire' land rather than objects; can provision be made for this?