

Heritage Lottery Fund Consultation

Historic churches and other places of worship – points for consideration

Personal note by Trevor Cooper of HRBA March 2018

About the consultation

The Heritage Lottery Fund is holding a major consultation on its future strategy. This is an extremely important exercise. HLF will take account of every answer and it will affect our heritage for years to come.

HLF are using an online questionnaire. If helpful, you can prepare your answers in advance using a Word or pdf document.

www.hrballiance.org.uk/consultations-2/hlf-strategy/

The deadline is **Thursday 22 March 2018**

**Shortly after you start the online consultation,
you will be offered ‘a shorter questionnaire’.**

This note assumes you answer the full questionnaire, not the shorter one.

About this note

This note assumes you want to be an advocate for historic churches and other places of worship.

The note gives points for consideration. It focuses on just some of the questions, and is aimed at those who are not experts on heritage.

It is a personal note written by Trevor Cooper, and is not an official document of the HRBA.

How to answer the questions

Please use your own words when you answer the questionnaire. If you cut and paste anything from here, I am afraid it will devalue your contribution in the eyes of HLF. Please contribute your own thoughts to an important debate.

I have starred *** what I think are the key questions, and drawn others to your attention. However HLF are clear that you can answer as many or as few questions as you like – it's up to you.

To make a few obvious points – when you answer a question:

- Please if at all possible give at least **one reason** for your answer
- It's best to keep your reason **short and to the point** – someone is having to keep a score sheet of your and other people's reasons – try and make it easy for them!
- If you give more than one reason, I suggest you **use a separate sentence for each reason**, to help the reader

- **Please don't mention religion or spirituality**, as these are not of interest to HLF
- I think that, for each question, you will probably want to think **how to make it easier for a church or other place of worship to be awarded a grant**

* * * The questionnaire * * *

This note assumes you want to be an advocate for historic churches and other places of worship. It is aimed at those who are not experts on heritage and focuses on selected questions.

**Shortly after you start the online consultation,
you will be offered 'a shorter questionnaire'.
This note assumes you answer the full questionnaire, not the shorter one.**

About you

This is straightforward.

Part 1. HLF's role now and in the future

*** * * Do you agree or disagree that HLF's role in future should be to inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities?**

This is important. HLF will take this very seriously.

HLF say that **now** they use money to 'make a lasting difference to heritage and people' – that is, making a difference to *both* of them.

The **proposal** is rather different:

Inspiring, leading and resourcing the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future.

You will see it has *no mention of making a difference to heritage*, only of making a change to people and communities (via heritage). For example, it does not acknowledge the inherent benefit of preserving heritage for people.

When answering, consider: To what extent has the proposal got the balance right between people and heritage? If HLF organised their grant schemes in line with the proposal, how well would this match the aspirations of a church or other place of worship seeking a grant?

Part 2. Strategic priorities for heritage and people and measuring our impact

*** * *** *What do you think are the most important heritage needs or opportunities that investment from the National Lottery should address in the UK?*

This is your chance to act as advocate for what you think is particularly important.

Say **what you think are the most important heritage needs**, then give your **reasons** why this would be a good way to spend HLF money. The following three types of reason will be of interest to HLF.

1. Benefits. HLF and the Government look for heritage to provide a number of benefits. There is a list overleaf. In your own words, you could mention one or two benefits which would arise if grant money were invested in historic churches and other places of worship.

2. Importance of buildings. The Government has recently said it appreciates that historic places of worship are 'among our finest historic buildings'. Use your own words if you think this is a reason for spending HLF money on historic churches and other places of worship.

3. Community use. HLF are keen to see historic buildings enjoyed by the community. If you think this is a good reason for spending HLF money on historic churches and other places of worship, say how this works, in your own words.

Note: The religious importance of the building is unlikely to be of interest to HLF.

Benefits etc which HLF and/or the Government see arising from heritage in general *cut and pasted from various official documents*

- Great places/popular places to live work visit and do business.
- Character. Individuality.
- Focus for community pride, sense of shared history, sense of belonging.
- Historic buildings can provide a focus for social and economic activity.
- Wide appreciation of beautiful heritage.
- Foster creativity, attracts investment, business and visitors.
- Contribute to our economy
- Wellbeing (note that this is mental, social and physical wellbeing, not spiritual wellbeing)
- Regeneration of communities
- Volunteering. People engaging with heritage as students, workers, volunteers, visitors and enthusiasts
- Social cohesion, greater sense of identity, improved wellbeing, better learning and skills outcomes (some of this from volunteering)
- Community benefits
- Historic places that are well-maintained and well-managed add greatly to cultural life, community resilience and our individual and collective well-being.
- Placemaking and economic development
- Young people
- Employment opportunities for craft skills
- Enriching lives
- Looking for access to all, encouraging access to less well represented groups

**** * * Should HLF give priority to heritage considered to be 'at risk'?
and How would you define heritage that is 'at risk'***

Money is tight (lottery income has been falling) and HLF grants are heavily oversubscribed. So HLF are asking about their priorities.

To consider: For example, you might want HLF to prioritise grants to historic churches and other places of worship which are 'at risk' because, for example, they need major repairs. (For information, there is no longer any ring-fenced money for repairs to places of worship.)

On the other hand you might instead not want HLF to prioritise giving money to buildings at risk. You might instead feel the money should be prioritised for other things, for example those which improve the visitor experience (this is just one example).

If you define what you mean by 'at risk', I suggest you give an example or two of the sort of thing you are talking about. This is because 'at risk' is a term with particular meanings in the heritage world and can be misunderstood.

Are there groups you think we ought to prioritise in our Strategic Funding Framework?

When answering, bear in mind that, obviously, focusing on particular groups means less focus than there would otherwise have been on groups that are not specified. You may want to consider whether such focus would impose additional work on those applying for grants.

How could HLF respond to any specific barriers you know these groups face in applying for funding to support their community's heritage?

If you are familiar with HLF's application processes, you may wish to consider whether the application process encourages or discourages one or more of the specified groups, or encourages or discourages congregations in general.

**** * * Do you agree or disagree that HLF should focus on these nine outcomes? Why do you say that?***

You are asked about the outcomes that HLF will use to prioritise funding and measure impact. These are of **great importance** as they will be measured and acted upon.

A bit of background. At the moment, different grant schemes require different outcomes from a project, *often only a few*.

This list of outcomes is similar to the current set, though recast to be shorter. The **stand-out new one** is that 'people will have greater well-being' – this has risen up the agenda in recent years, as research has shown that heritage can have positive effects on people's physical, mental, or social well-being. Note that 'spiritual health' is not within the scope of 'well-being'.

When preparing to comment on the list: Think whether you agree with a suggestion in a recent government report that HLF could consider whether to 're-prioritise pure heritage conservation' – if you agree, how that would affect the list of outcomes? You could also consider which outcomes are most likely to be relevant to a church or other place of worship applying for a grant, and how easy they will be to use. Use your own words.

Part 3. Strategic interventions and partnerships

What is your organisation's experience of non-grant finance (e.g. loans, equity investments, crowdfunding) and other questions

If you decide to answer these questions for 'your organisation', you will want to **consider** carefully how appropriate these methods are to a congregation seeking funding for one purpose or another for their building.

Should HLF provide match funding for organisations who use crowd-funding to win support for their heritage projects?

You might consider whether HLF should treat money raised by crowdfunding in a different way from money raised by other methods, such as from congregations' own pockets or from other fund-raising. If it is to be treated differently, in what way, and for what reasons?

** * * Should HLF involve the public in decision-making?*

HLF ask whether the public should be involved in decision making. They mean, of course, members of the public over and above those who are already looking after the building or other heritage for which a grant is sought.

In answering, think about how public involvement in this sense might work in practice for the congregation of a historic church or other place of worship wishing to obtain a grant from HLF, and what the positive or negative effects would be.

Part 4. Our portfolio

** * * Do you have any comments on our proposal for an open grant programme for all types of heritage project?*

Background: HLF are planning to move away from grant programmes aimed at particular purposes. Last year they closed the GPOW scheme which had ring-fenced money for repairs to historic places of worship, up to £250k per grant; and more recently they have closed the dedicated parks scheme.

However, having closed GPOW, HLF have guaranteed that a minimum level of funding will be received by places of worship, but only for a period.

With a typical open grant programmes, applicants of all types are competing against each other. They are assessed according to how well their particular application will meet the outcomes for that grant programme. We do not yet know how the various outcomes will apply to the different programmes.

To consider: If there are to be open programmes, which of the possible outcomes would you like to see asked for and given priority when a church or other place of worship applies for a grant up to, say, £250k (the old GPOW limit)? (An 'outcome' is a type of difference made by a project. There is a list of all the outcomes below.)

And also to consider: Would you prefer a dedicated scheme for churches and places of worship? That's very different from what is being suggested, and would mean a change of direction for HLF – so if you think it's a good idea, you would need to say why. Would you want the guaranteed minimum to continue? If so for whom, and why? Would you want it focused on repairs, or more generally?

As a reminder, here is the proposed *complete* list of outcomes:

1. Heritage will be in better condition
2. Heritage will be identified and better explained
3. People will have developed skills
4. People will have learnt about heritage
5. People will have greater well-being
6. A wider range of people will be involved in heritage
7. The funded organisation will be more resilient
8. The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit
9. The local economy will be boosted

Do you agree with the proposal that we increase the ceiling for single-round grants from £100,000 to £250,000?

This is an important question, but I suggest you only answer it if you have some knowledge of HLF's single-stage and multi-stage grant schemes (the latter are at present more difficult to apply for).

Do you agree or disagree that all projects should embed environmental sustainability and that this should be part of our standard criteria for the assessment of applications

If you are knowledgeable about built heritage, you may wish to comment in your own words on the complexities faced in this area by old buildings.

Part 5. Improving the experience for customers

There are no particular questions I want to draw to your attention in this section.

Part 6. Final comments, review and submit

I suggest you reiterate one or two key points that you have already made.