

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into the Welsh Government's Historic Environment Policy Response from Heritage Lottery Fund



Introduction to HLF

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is the largest non-government funder of the UK's heritage, currently distributing around £375 million a year.

Since 1994, £5 billion has been awarded across the UK to a broad range of heritage projects - from national icons and collections to small, neighbourhood projects; from landscapes, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to castles and piers; from steam trains, museums and parks to oral history and local traditions.

HLF will publish a new strategic framework in July 2012 outlining the direction of grant giving over the next five years (from April 2013 onwards). The framework renews HLF commitment to making a positive impact on heritage and people, economic development, tourism, regeneration and heritage skills. Alongside established programmes which benefit the historic environment like the Townscape Heritage Initiative, a new programme aimed specifically at heritage buildings and social enterprise will be launched. The Framework includes more support for private owners and start-up grants for community groups wanting to take responsibility for heritage assets. It also maintains our emphasis and interest in young people getting actively involved in heritage, through our targeted programme Young Roots.

HLF approach to grant giving is driven by the nature of its funding coming from Lottery players. We support heritage that is valued by the public and helps them to get involved with and learn about it, thereby sustaining heritage for future generations.

Across the UK more than 34,000 projects of all sizes have been funded, with grants ranging in size from £3,000 to over £20 million.

HLF investment of £5 billion has been matched by partnership funding of £3.8 billion giving a total of over £8.8 billion for the UK's heritage since 1994. In Wales, £244 million has been invested, matched by partnership funding of £168 million, giving a total of over £412 million invested.

Response to Inquiry questions

We have sought to confine our responses to those areas in which, as a UK-wide distributor of Lottery funds, we are appropriately placed to comment.

How appropriate and successful are the current systems employed by the Welsh Government for protecting and managing the historic environment in Wales?

We consider Cadw to be experts in protecting and managing the historic environment.

Cadw's approach to making heritage sites in their care accessible and enjoyable places to visit, for employing high standards of craftsmanship and for attracting new and broader audiences, is entirely complementary to the approach which HLF encourages through grant giving.

Heritage Lottery Fund has three aims in grant-giving which relate to **Learning, Conservation** and **Participation**. To receive a grant, a project must:-

- Help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage.

A project must also do either or both of the following:-

- Conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy;
- Help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage.

Depending on the nature of an application we commission expert advice from Cadw, RCAHMS, CyMAL or Countryside Council for Wales which then forms an essential part of our assessment and decision making process. Cadw provide partnership funding to many of our projects, particularly through the Townscape Heritage Initiative and Repair Grants to Places of Worship schemes.

Cadw is well placed to provide support for the sector, building the wider infrastructure and developing capacity i.e. providing policies for heritage protection, supporting and encouraging local authorities to maintain building at risk registers, undertaking urban characterisation studies. This is hugely valuable to those organisations who then seek funding from HLF and underpins and supports many applications. HLF and Cadw therefore have complementary positions: Cadw in supporting the sector by providing context which then informs applications on which HLF can provide lottery grants.

Alongside other key heritage agencies, HLF sits on the Minister's historic environment group (HEG). As well as having an advisory function, HEG also stimulates coherent cross-sector communication and partnership working initiatives such as the recent heritage skills summit at Caerphilly Castle.

How well do the Welsh Government's policies promote the historic environment in Wales (for instance, in terms of interpretation, accessibility, attracting new audiences and tourism)?

Projects funded through the Heritage Tourism Project (Wales-wide European funded project led by Cadw) have added significant value to HLF existing investment and have increased opportunities for interpretation, accessibility, audiences and tourism e.g. Oystermouth Castle (Swansea) and Copper Kingdom (Ynys Mon).

How well do the policies for the historic environment tie in with wider Welsh Government policy objectives (such as the regeneration of communities)?

Sustainable development is the central principle of the current programme of Government, aiming for social, economic and environmental well-being of people and communities. In difficult economic times the Welsh Government can play a key role in adopting innovative approaches which integrate broader regeneration and skills agendas (which clearly contribute to sustainable development) with the needs of the historic environment.

Heritage can be a very important ingredient in successful regeneration projects and we would welcome the continued support of the Welsh Government in promoting heritage as a key aspect of regeneration policy. For HLF, regeneration of communities needs to start with what people already have – which could be local iconic buildings, distinctive housing and streets, historic parks and other open spaces or the civic buildings in the area, including museums and galleries. We also believe it includes things which are not physical – customs, traditions, a collective ‘memory’. Heritage projects in deprived areas – including activity projects – have the potential to contribute to regeneration. Good heritage-led regeneration is based on what people value locally and helps communities to determine their own future.

Welsh Government provided significant partnership funding through the Community Asset Transfer programme to heritage projects such as Cardigan Castle, Insole Court and Penarth Pier. While these projects are yet to reach fruition, it is already obvious that there is a demand from within the sector for a similar scheme.

The recent announcement on WEFO policy and priorities from 2014 does cause some concern as it could reduce available partnership funding at a point when local authorities and other sources are already reduced. In considering the way forward it will be important to take into account how regenerative projects such as Llanelly House, Newbridge Memo and Nant Gwrtheyrn, could have taken place without a matrix of funders which included both HLF and WEFO.

What would be the advantages and disadvantages of merging the functions of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales with the functions of other organisations, including Cadw?

As a UK non-departmental public body we do not feel it is appropriate for HLF to comment on the structure and functions of other public bodies. However, we would urge thorough consideration to ensure that instability is avoided and that the necessary skills, experience and range of services which we and the public rely on, are sustained and well resourced throughout any process of change.

What role do local authorities and third sector organisations play in implementing the Welsh Government’s historic environment policy and what support do they receive in this respect?

HLF can award grants to local authorities as well as third sector organisations and considers both to be essential in delivering heritage projects. Participation at a local level is absolutely key to all our projects and a requirement of our funding. We encourage strong partnership approaches, particularly involving local authorities and the third sector.

In Wales, £98 million has been invested in 300 projects led by local authorities (40% of total) and £145 million has been invested in 1,700 projects led by the third sector* (59% of total).

Local authorities in Wales have been more successful than any other region or country across the UK in attracting Townscape Heritage Initiative grants from HLF and delivering successful

projects. To date, over £27 million has been awarded through the programme (attracting a further £47 million in partnership funding), to 36 projects. Through these grants, local authorities have regenerated conservation areas displaying particular social or economic need acting as a catalyst for building and consolidating funding partnerships. Cadw has contributed to every THI scheme in Wales. The nature and requirements of the programme have also facilitated closer and more regular dialogue across funding and project partners in Wales, which then brings benefits in other work areas, such as Cadw's Urban Characterisation work or the work of the Historic Environment Group (HEG).

Under the Strategic Framework for 2013 – 18 we will provide further support to community organisations which aim to take a greater role in managing heritage assets by providing start-up grants.

In awarding grants in the future, we will also take greater account of heritage which is at risk, so local authorities having up to date building at risk registers will help us in our decision-making process, in particular in assessing and understanding where the need for HLF investment is greatest. Some local authorities in Wales may require more support to do this particularly where conservation officer roles do not exist or are under threat.

HLF continues to provide a range of advisory and development support to applicants so that they can bring forward viable applications for Lottery funding. We also work alongside successful applicants to ensure strong implementation of their proposals, both mentoring and monitoring their progress. Overall, this means that HLF contributes strongly to improved and increased capacity across the heritage sector.

* third sector defined as non-governmental organisations that work for a community or cause on a voluntary or not-for-profit basis, including national organisations (e.g. National Museum Wales) and charities.