Driving long-term positive change through place-based funding

03/03/2022

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We investigate the impact of our funding for placemaking and explore how our we can better support people and places to thrive across the UK.

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PDF Gweld Heritage and Place research report as PDF(1.39 MB)	1.39 MB

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is committed to funding heritage projects that create better places to live, work and visit.

We commissioned Wavehill, in partnership with DC Research, to assess our place-based work over the past 10 years.

The Heritage and Place Report looks at how we are meeting our strategic objective to demonstrate how heritage helps people and places to thrive. It also looks at which place-based approaches to funding are most effective.

> We hope these findings will encourage more people to apply for impactful place-based projects, which we will continue to celebrate.
>
> *Amanda Feather, Head of Built Heritage and Regeneration Policy UK at the Heritage Fund*

The research took a range of approaches including interviews, analysis of grant data and project sampling.

Wavehill's report highlights the changes the Heritage Fund can achieve through place-based projects. It gives a series of options for how we might adopt a stronger place-based approach in the future. The report was completed in January 2022.

What we have taken from the report as a funder

The importance of place-based working

Place-based working is an investment approach that can maximise the impact of projects aiming for long term improvements for heritage and communities.

The term 'place-based' is used to describe a range of approaches. Common to a number of them is moving beyond targeting a specific geographic area to supporting multiple local partners to deliver significant, longer-term change.

Place-based projects have been some of our largest and most successful investments to date. They allow us to work more strategically and proactively through our funding.

Encouraging more place-based working

However, the number of grants identified as place-based continues to be small relative to the rest of our investment. While 27% of our funding was awarded to place-based projects, only 6% of applications were identified as being place-based between 2013 and 2021.

To encourage demand for this type of funding, we need to keep a broad approach to the type of work that we consider can contribute to improvements in local areas. Our work should reflect the wide understanding of what is effective in place-based working.

Amanda Feather, Head of Built Heritage and Regeneration Policy UK at the Heritage Fund, said: “We are widely seen as an organisation that benefits heritage and people. This report shows how National Lottery investment over the last ten years has benefited places significantly as well.

“We hope these findings will encourage more people to apply for impactful place-based projects, which we will continue to celebrate.”

Successful place-based working

Whilst people view place-based approaches in different ways, common features seen in successful working include:

- a clear understanding of the place that a funder or project is seeking to shape – sharing data and intelligence can help identify an area’s needs and priorities
- the development of strong partnerships and a culture of collaboration at all levels, from community members to decision-making authorities
- ensuring a project fits in and contributes to the broader vision and aims of the area in which it is focused
- engaging and giving leadership to communities – involving them in creating the aims of projects looking to improve their local areas

Find out more

Download the report from this page to discover its full findings into heritage and place.

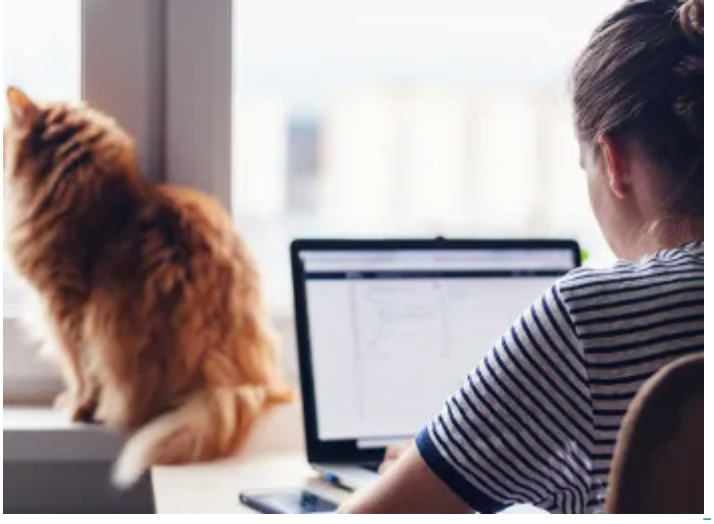
Explore our area-based scheme good practice guidance to learn more about how you can run a successful placed-based project. Our funding outcome – the local area will be a better place to live, work or visit – explains what we expect projects to achieve.

If you’ve got an idea for a place-based project, check what we fund. If you need more information or advice on your idea, contact your local office.

Our research and evaluation

We regularly conduct research to discover what is happening in the heritage sector, and we evaluate our work to better understand the change we are making. Read more of our insight.

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