The lasting legacy of our investment in place

21/06/2023

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We take a look at the ongoing impact of our Great Place Scheme in England, a year on from our original end of project evaluation.

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The Great Place Scheme was a joint funding programme that supported heritage and culture organisations to collaborate to make a bigger impact on local economies and communities.

In partnership with Arts Council England and Historic England, we invested £15million in 16 projects across England in 2016.

A year on from our final evaluation of the programme, we commissioned BOP Consulting to carry out further qualitative research with eight of the funded projects.

We wanted to learn whether – and how – they had achieved longer-term change beyond the duration of their grant funding.

In our new 10-year strategy, Heritage 2033, we will apply this learning through investment that boosts pride in place and connects communities and visitors with heritage. We will boost the capacity of local places and communities to develop partnerships.

> By learning and applying what works locally, the places are seeing economic and social returns that will support future work and collaboration.
>
> *Jacob Eliot, Head of Policy at The National Heritage Fund*

What we found

Activities and partnerships

All eight projects reported that many of the activities and partnerships developed during their projects have been made permanent and led to spin-off activities and networks that are delivering social, cultural and economic outcomes in their area.

Increased influence

In the majority of places, the profile and influence of heritage within local government has increased, contributing to a better understanding of its economic and social value. Legacies range from stronger partnerships within local authorities, to the creation of new locally embedded cultural organisations and strengthened relationships between

councils and cultural organisations.

Maintaining the legacy

To maintain momentum and ensure the legacy of the Great Place Scheme, projects said they needed:

- shared objectives and ongoing support for their communities by funders across the UK
- to prioritise high impact activities, rather than trying to do everything
- strong partnerships that retain and share institutional knowledge
- effective ways to measure and understand their impact at a local and national level

Sustained success

Jacob Eliot, Head of Policy at the Heritage Fund, said: “The evidence of sustained success from the Great Place Scheme is inspiring and instructive. The eight places featured in this report have created compelling offers that bring heritage and culture together to engage communities and create lasting partnerships.

“By learning and applying what works locally, the places are seeing economic and social returns that will support future work and collaboration.”

Explore the full report attached to this page to find out more.

We are committed to supporting communities to connect with their local heritage, boost pride in place and attract more visitors.

In Heritage 2033 we set out how we’ll invest at least £200m over the life of the strategy to support places to put heritage at the heart of local approaches to regeneration, renewal and wider work to make areas better places to live, work and visit.

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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Heritage 2033 – our 10-year strategy