Areas of Focus year 5 evaluation report

09/12/2024

See all updates

We've explored the latest impacts of our targeted funding for under-served places across the UK, what's working and where there's room for improvement.

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PDF Gweld Areas of Focus year 5 evaluation report as PDF(516.22 KB)	516.22 KB

When we launched Areas of Focus as part of our Strategic Funding Framework 2019–2024, our aim was to increase access to funding and help deliver positive outcomes through heritage for the 13 identified areas.

Key findings

Our latest evaluation report found that:

- there was a 10% increase in applications in 2023–2024 from the baseline we started with, and successful applications have risen from 57% to 65%
- investment per capita has also increased from our baseline in 11 out of 13 areas, and in eight areas it is exceeding the national average
- qualitative data from five sampled areas revealed a direct increase in inclusion because of our funding – a wider range of people are engaging with heritage
- the potential for increased economic impact through funded projects is strong – our support has been pivotal in leveraging further investment

Projects reported that they valued the quality of our communication and the relationships we'd built between us. They also said our 'hands-on approach' helped bring together partners and generate new ideas. However, in a couple of areas Heritage Fund staff capacity/continuity challenges were cited as barriers to local delivery.

Data was also identified as an area for improvement – from understanding participation in knowledge sharing and funding advice sessions to projects' engagement with volunteers and partners.

Making a positive contribution

Across the majority of impacts we set out to deliver through the Areas of Focus initiative, our support and funding has made a positive contribution.

While the extent of this contribution varies across specific areas, this latest evaluation has found that our current achievement is in line with expectations at this stage of the initiative.

Explore more

Read the full evaluation report in the PDF attached to this page, and find out more about some of the inspiring projects we've funded in the 13 Areas of Focus across the UK.

The lessons we've learned from Areas of Focus, and will continue to learn from the sixth and final evaluation report ahead, will be incorporated into the delivery of our Heritage 2033 strategic initiatives, including Heritage Places.

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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A seashore scavenger hunt at Tendring, one of our Areas of Focus



Roman Baths, Bath © 2017 aroundworld/Shutterstock.

Heritage 2033 – our 10-year strategy



Torquay on the South Devon coast, with Torre Abbey in the foreground.

£200million funding for Heritage Places will boost local economies and pride in place