Great Place Scheme puts culture at the heart of



The dramatic Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland Chris Hill/NT

The Great Place Scheme – one of the flagship measures from the Government's recently published Culture White Paper – will pilot new approaches that enable cultural, community and civic organisations to work more closely together.

The aim is twofold: to ensure that the considerable investment in culture made by organisations like HLF and ACE has the maximum positive impact on jobs, economic performance, educational attainment, community cohesion and health and wellbeing; and to persuade civic organisations and local businesses to invest in and put culture at the heart of their thinking.

Grants of between £500,000 and £1.5m will fund a range of activities in 12 pilot areas, such as:

- new ways to include arts, culture and heritage in the provision of local education or health services
- research into the contribution made by arts, culture and heritage to local economies
- funding for people working in arts, culture and heritage to build networks and increase their skills
- exploring and piloting new ways of financing cultural organisations

- encouraging the use of existing powers that allow communities to support their local culture, such as the Community Right to Bid or listing local landmarks as Assets of Community Value
- development of local strategies that turn conversations and creation of networks into action to maximise the community benefit that local arts, culture and heritage can deliver

The Great Place Scheme, using funds raised by the National Lottery, will initially be piloted in 12 locations across England and is likely to include everything from city-wide schemes to groups of rural or coastal local authority areas. Funding comes from HLF and ACE, each of which will contribute £7.5m for projects lasting up to three years. There will also be complementary support from other organisations where relevant, such as Historic England through its Heritage Action Zone initiative.

Single organisations cannot apply. Applications must come from partnerships, which are likely to include:

- arts and heritage organisations
- community/voluntary groups
- social enterprises
- businesses
- local authorities
- parish councils
- local economic partnerships
- other public sector organisations.

Heritage Minister Tracey Crouch said: “A strong heritage and cultural sector supports tourism, wellbeing and economic growth. By celebrating and preserving history, architecture and art, communities can transform their local area. The Great Place Scheme will showcase just what can be done when you put culture at the heart of local plans and policies.”

The Great Place Scheme follows on from a joint project between HLF and the Royal Society of Arts to understand which areas could make better use of their heritage assets in order to drive local identity, improve residents’ wellbeing and increase levels of tourism. The Heritage Index, published in September 2015, included a challenge to local communities, businesses and cultural leaders to make greater use of their heritage in order to grow their economies and improve local residents’ wellbeing.

HLF Chair Sir Peter Luff said: “The Great Place Scheme is a challenge to communities to work together to put culture at the centre of their local plans. HLF invests a huge amount to make communities better places to live, so we want to be sure that National Lottery players’ money is being used in the most effective ways possible. An area's culture - including arts and heritage - is important not just for its own sake; this scheme will show how it can also boost jobs and local economies, improve education and life chances and promote community cohesion and wellbeing.”

ACE Chief Executive Darren Henley said: “The Arts Council’s investment has already been instrumental in transforming places up and down the country, and we look forward to working with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England on the Great Places scheme to continue this and work with new places. This pilot will enable local arts and cultural organisations and partners in a place, who have great ideas but need that additional support, focus and coordination to work together and make them a reality, and thus ensure that the arts and culture support priorities such as education, health and well-being and community cohesion.”

Historic England Director of Engagement Deborah Lamb said: “At the heart of the Great Place Scheme is the idea that culture and heritage can be drivers of economic development as well as a way to build community pride and a sense of

belonging. Historic England will also be seeking Heritage Action Zones in areas where wider cultural benefits can be achieved, complementing the Great Place initiative."

Notes to editors

- FInd out more on the Great Place Scheme website
- The Great Place Scheme will initially fund 12 pilot projects in England. HLF is in discussion with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the scheme is expected to open in those nations later in 2016-2017
- Potential applicants should first discuss their proposals with HLF or ACE. The next stage is to submit an expression of interest by **6 October 2016**. Online applications will be open from **1 November 2016** to **2 January 2017**

Further information

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