Heritage 2033 delivery plan: 2026–2029

Governance

Board, committees and decision making

We're governed by a Board of Trustees that leads on strategy development, with day-to-day management delegated to the Chief Executive and Executive team. The Board makes final funding decisions on grant applications over £5m and holds a central investment budget for strategic initiatives and UK-wide programmes, drawing on the local expertise and recommendations of our area and nation staff and committees.

We have six grant making committees – in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and three areas of England (North, Midlands and East, London and South) – that decide on grant requests between £250,000 and £5m. These committees are made up of local people passionate about the heritage in their area, appointed through open, competitive recruitment, who collectively bring a wide range of expertise and insight to our grant making. Committees are now attended by our Future Heritage Leaders, young adults aged 18–30 who bring new perspectives to our decision making. Together with awards made by our Heads of Investment on grants under £250,000, this means that area and nation-based committees and staff account for 95% of all our funding decisions. This approach ensures that our grant making is informed by heritage expertise, local knowledge and is connected and responsive to the places and communities we support.

We retain a 'country reserve' for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for larger grant applications that can't be accommodated in delegated per capita budgets.

Allocated on a per capita basis, grant-making committees receive the following percentages of delegated budgets:

Area/nation committees	Delegated budget share
England, London and South	35%
England, Midlands and East	25.2%
England, North	23.7%
Scotland	8.4%
Wales	4.8%
Northern Ireland	2.9%

The processes for grant applications, decision making and monitoring are set out on our website.

Transparency

We recognise our obligations to National Lottery players and taxpayers in explaining how we use their money, working in compliance with relevant laws and our framework document with DCMS.

As a public-facing body, we are committed to making information readily available and easy to understand. See the Transparency section of our website for more details.

Managing risks

Our risk register is regularly reviewed by our Executive team, the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee. Our risk appetite is reviewed and approved by the Board once a year.

Our main risks and mitigations for 2026–2029 (as at publication in summer 2026) are summarised below.

Strategic risks

Implementation of the strategy is slower than planned or fails to deliver against the four investment principles

How we'll manage this:

- Ongoing training for staff to ensure consistency across the UK, which is being revised and refreshed.
- Regular review of our online Investment Management Service improvement programme.
- Monitoring of the extent to which funded projects meet our investment principles through analysis of application and grant data.

Insufficient data, insight and expertise to track and understand the strategic impact of Heritage 2033.

How we'll manage this:

- Implementation of the impact framework to measure and respond to evidence of our impact.
- Make changes as needed to the end-to-end grant journey to support collection of consistent, high-quality impact data at every stage.

Impact on our funding pipeline if existing projects incur major problems or fail, or new applications do not come forward due to economic risks.

How we'll manage this:

- Active monitoring of projects in line with our guidance by building relationships with grantees to identify issues early.
- Targeted use of external experts to better inform grant decisions.
- Improved understanding of the funding landscape and individual project risk by both assessors and decision makers.
- Support for organisations carrying out resilience projects prior to commencing substantial investments.

Social, economic and political risks

Fluctuations in the external environment lead to different funding and policy priorities for the heritage sector.

How we'll manage this:

- Close working and alignment with other heritage and culture arm's length bodies and National Lottery distributors.
- Strong relationships with DCMS, Whitehall, devolved governments, mayoral strategic authorities, the local government sector and other stakeholders.
- Measuring and communicating the impact of our investment in heritage.

Sustained material fall in National Lottery income means we cannot fund key projects to deliver our strategy.

How we'll manage this:

- Regular monitoring of income forecasts.
- Joint working with Allwyn and the National Lottery Promotions Unit to strengthen good causes marketing.
- Close monitoring of project progress.
- Scenario planning for a range of financial options.

Operational risks

Failure to attract and retain a diverse and skilled workforce leads to reduction in key knowledge and reduces delivery, capability and effectiveness.

How we'll manage this:

- Staff training and learning opportunities.

- Strong employee offer to aid recruitment and retention.
- Reporting and benchmarking of key workforce demographics.

Major sustained outage of systems or functions or compromise of data security.

How we'll manage this:

- Preventative access controls and detection tools.
- Monitoring and reporting software.
- Business continuity and critical incident plans in place.
- Systems segregation, staff training and awareness.
- Data security and policies in place and reviewed regularly.

Back to top

Previous Our plan for 2026–2029

Next Impact and performance