



## National Lottery Heritage Fund: Areas of Focus – Year 2 Report, July 2021

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## Executive Summary

In August 2019, RSM UK Consulting LLP (RSM) was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the National Lottery Heritage Fund's (The Fund's) five-year Strategic Funding Framework (2019-2024) and its impact on thirteen 'Areas of Focus' (AoF). This report is the second of five annual reports aiming to provide key learnings and recommendations that can be incorporated into the delivery of the Strategic Funding Framework.

The Strategic Framework 2019-2024 aims to overcome perceived challenges around investing in heritage projects in under-represented AoF. AoF are defined as areas which have received less than average levels of funding from The Fund, and that are located within the 25% most deprived wards in the UK. As part of its commitment to generate additional investment in these areas. The Fund relies on the Engagement Leads and local teams whose role is to:

- work strategically with stakeholders, from within heritage and beyond, to identify the best way to support organisations to meet local needs;
- raise awareness of The Fund and the type of heritage projects it funds;
- support potential grant recipients to create heritage projects, including solicited bids, eligible for funding;
- raise confidence and capability of eligible organisations to apply for funding; and,
- explore new ways of raising awareness, understanding, promotion and participation in heritage initiatives.

In March 2020, The Fund suspended its open programmes to channel resources in its emergency Covid-19 package of support. Part of this response led to The Fund actively soliciting applications from organisations across the thirteen AoF to continue to support the strategic objectives and widening groups of beneficiaries.

The evaluation is grounded in a Theory of Change (ToC) and draws primarily on qualitative evidence collected through in-depth interviews with recipients of grant funding across Voluntary and Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, local government and delivery partner stakeholders, as well as Engagement and AoF leads. The evaluation also makes use of application and investment data which has been generated specifically for the purposes of this evaluation. Using the ToC and in-depth interviews, the study team has identified key findings around the delivery model, engagement methods, emerging impacts and strategic value added.

The evaluation study team is working closely with The Fund and has made a series of recommendations on key data fields and indicators that will need to be collected. This is crucial in order to infer a baseline point and to assess progress and impact. The new investment management system (IMS) is currently being implemented by the Fund, with a first data review expected to occur in October 2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also impacted negatively on project delivery and the generation of medium-term outcomes.

Therefore, as a result of the constraints highlighted above, the findings presented in this report should not be treated as definitive and instead, they should be used to inform future improvements and validate approaches wherever evidence permits.

## Key Findings

Findings to date suggest that across the areas, AoF activities are contributing towards key short- and medium-term outcomes. Organisations have experienced increased capability in defining heritage projects, in apply for funding and in identifying synergies in outcomes with potential cross-sectoral partners.

The analysis of investment in the AoF over the period 2018/19 to 2020/21 has identified increased levels of funding by The Fund in all but one AoF, as well as increased investment in larger projects. When investment in the AoF over the programme period is compared to an estimated average investment (total national investment divided by local authority areas over the three financial years), all AoFs except North Lanarkshire have experienced improved investment levels and the majority have moved closer towards the average investment per local authority area. In two AoFs, Luton and Rhondda Cynon Taff, investment levels have exceeded the average local authority area investment level.

## What works

- **Intensive one to one support:** Overall, organisations have benefited from the Engagement Leads' support provision. Stakeholders stated that without the one-to-one support in bid writing, they wouldn't have seriously considered heritage funding, or The Fund as potential funder nor gained the confidence to undertake the bid writing process. However, the findings also suggest that the value added of capacity building activities diminishes as the size of the organisation increases, with larger organisations perceiving their engagement with The Fund as a validation tool for their own activities. It should be noted that although intensive one to one support is shown to work, it is time consuming, often at expense of other aspects of delivery, and will require the adoption of new tools/approaches if it is to be progressed in the future e.g. commissioning of Heritage Fund consultants. Also, stakeholders have suggested that the level of funding (typically not provided by other funders) that The Fund can address via the programme is in the range of £50,000 - £200,000.
- **Endorsement/strategic Influencing:** Heritage activities endorsed by The Fund allows Engagement Leads and/or VCSE organisations to command attention with senior people in local governments leading to an increased prioritisation of heritage projects.
- **Communication:** Findings to date suggests The Fund communication efforts – including the Digital Confidence Fund – has increased the visibility of The Fund with organisations who wouldn't have previously considered applying for funding. However, more work is needed to understand the specific added value of campaign work into general AoF activities (see implications below).
- **Local area evidence led work:** Some organisations reported a level of mistrust associated with larger nationwide organisations like The Fund. The collation of area-based intelligence is key in ensuring adequate positioning and level of engagement activities, so that the wealth of knowledge accumulated by local heritage organisations is accounted for. Co-production is also key in ensuring local engagement.
- **Strategic framework:** Evidence suggests that the provision of nationwide heritage based strategic roadmap contributes to increasing the understanding of heritage, and how heritage activities can mesh with wider activities relating to well-being, health or confidence building. The Fund ought to maintain this authority. Key enablers to do so is the extraction and embedment of continuous learning – local and nationwide – as well as co-production of strategic tools.

- **Cooperation and coordinated working:** Local Government stakeholders are very positive about AoF activities. Key benefits supported by local government include the appointment of heritage specific staff, whose role is to develop a local understanding of the needs and opportunities for heritage work, as well as identifying key public/private/third sector partnerships. The Strategic Framework provides a heritage agenda key for local initiatives to get traction and attract area funding.
- **Application Quality:** projects generated by the formal solicitation process tend to be more ambitious and more sustainable, due to increased dialogue and collaboration, development time and provision of support at the application / inception stage and an increased confidence from the grantee following the solicitation request.

**Key enablers** supporting the development of heritage projects in AoFs were identified as being a desire from within the community and strong community identify; a supportive sectoral / local authority environment; and, an understanding of wider impacts of heritage.

#### What needs to be improved

Key barriers to the development of heritage were identified as being a lack of capacity within the local authority and community; a negative perception or lack of understanding of heritage; and, a mistrust / lack of relationships with local communities. The following were identified as issues requiring improvement.

- **Definition of Heritage:** Whilst communication material is generally well received, not all stakeholders agree that the current way in which heritage is expressed is most inclusive. Feedback highlights a so called 'while middle-class' stigma associated with heritage projects. More work is needed to convey the inclusive nature of The Fund work and benefits from heritage projects at a wider community level.
- **AoF selection criteria:** Findings indicate that using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) as a criterion to identify priority areas may not be the most appropriate tool. Further local based knowledge is required to ensure areas selected overall represent heritage opportunities. More communication work is also needed to ensure VCSE organisations understand that selection is based on a combination of IMD and funding historical data.
- **Clarity around AoF target outcomes:** despite good work in engagement activities, stakeholders are concerned at a lack of target outcomes for what The Fund hopes to achieve beyond investment. The AoF ToC and the associated target outcomes should be communicated to all internal and external stakeholders.
- **Continuity of support:** Organisations reported that staff continuity is key to ensuring ongoing trust levels and communication with The Fund. The Fund could mitigate the negative effect of staff departure by introducing an internal communication log which – at a higher level – will record Engagement Lead communication and support activities with organisations;
- **Attitudinal factors:** Whilst capacity building activities are well received, some organisations reported that it was not enough to overcome the risk averse attitude that beneficiaries may have. This is particularly the case with smaller VCSE organisations reluctant to invest in new activities. More work is needed in trying to understand the internal causes of this attitude with potential implications of extending the type of support offered, beyond bid writing skills.
- **Application process:** Evidence highlights perceived complexity around The Fund's application processes. A key aspect of this is the disproportionality of application forms with respect to size of projects and funding sought.

## Implications

Whilst findings from the evaluation are so far broadly positive -albeit restricted due to Covid-19 – there are a number of potential issues that could constrain the realisation of short- medium term outcomes, as well as the evaluation’s ability to capture evidence around these.

- **Timescales:** It is unclear how far eligible applicants are in their bid writing and/or project work, with many projects potentially being halted, or greatly impeded, by Covid-19. Inevitably, the degree of completion of project activities will affect the evidence base the evaluation will be able to draw findings from.
- **Data:** This report includes a discussion of the limitations of the current data collection, monitoring and impact evaluation processes at The Fund. We will work with The Fund to address these issues and to support the development of an effective monitoring and evaluation system, which will include the assessment of the impact of new funding products applied to the AoF (e.g. grant in aid).
- **Context and ‘place framework’:** Identification of area specific context will be needed to understand the varying level of success of the AoF programme (e.g. assessing the impact attributable to the programme intervention as opposed to competing factors). We understand that the ‘place framework’ could support this evidence gathering exercise and we will work with The Fund to understand the level at which this has been piloted and introduced in AoF.
- **Campaign work:** Campaign activities are complementary to wider AoF activities. Our evaluation design will need to ascertain the extent to which activities and outcomes have resulted from campaign funding as opposed to the wider AoF approach.
- **Intensity of engagement activities:** Consultations show it is a combination of engagement activities that lead to outcomes sought. This led the study team to recommend the capture of key metric around the type and count of engagement activities across AoF. Going forward, and combined with qualitative data, the evaluation will aim to capture a nuanced understanding as to which type of activities, and combination of activities, lead to outcomes – and if so, what level of activities is required before outcomes start to emerge.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### Report scope and context

In August 2019, RSM UK Consulting LLP (RSM) was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the National Lottery Heritage Fund (The Fund) five-year Strategic Funding Framework (2019-2024) and its impact on 13 'Areas of Focus' (AoF).

This report is the second of five annual reports aiming to provide key learnings and recommendations that can be incorporated into the delivery of the Strategic Funding Framework. It also aims to further consolidate our understanding of the AoF programme with an updated Theory of Change (ToC).

As with other programmes, the AoF has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which primarily impacted on the delivery of planned project activity and the implementation of a new internal data management system by the Fund. Contextual considerations are given in trying to understand what has happened as a result of Covid-19, and to what extent unanticipated learnings can be extracted and solutions incorporated into the ongoing delivery of the Strategic Planning Framework.

### Programme overview

The Strategic Framework aims to generate investment in projects across 13 AoF. AoF are defined as areas which have received less than average levels of funding from The Fund, and that are located within the 25% most deprived wards in the UK.

Key objectives of the framework are to overcome perceived challenges around investing in heritage projects in particular deprivation contexts. As part of its commitment to generate additional investment in the AoF, The Fund is committed to working with key local partners. The aim is to develop and promote active participation of key organisations and/or communities into heritage activities. To do so, The Fund relies on Engagement Teams whose roles is to:

- raise awareness of The Fund and the type of heritage projects it funds;
- support potential grant recipients to create heritage projects, including solicited bids<sup>1</sup>, eligible for funding;
- raise confidence and capability of eligible organisations to apply for funding; and,
- explore new ways of raising awareness, understanding, promotion and participation in heritage initiatives.

The AoF activities also benefit from **strategic and tactical campaign activity**<sup>2</sup> aligned to Strategic Framework key objectives. This year it has taken the form of grant funding of £10,000 and mentoring from a digital expert (equivalent to £2,500) to support local authorities and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to expand their capabilities in delivering communications aligned to heritage high level outcomes e.g. providing organisations with social media, website creation and maintenance and digitising of archives.

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<sup>1</sup> Solicitation of bids is a tool to bring out investment into targeted communities and AoF. It is part of The Fund Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024 and aims to call for priority heritage projects in the thirteen AoF.

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/decisions/applications-solicited-national-lottery-heritage-funds-areas-focus>

<sup>2</sup> The Digital Confidence Fund: <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/article/digital-confidence-fund>

## Overview of the Areas

The 13 AoF are:

- Brent (Greater London);
- Corby (Northamptonshire);
- Enfield (Greater London);
- Inverclyde (Scotland);
- Knowsley (Merseyside);
- Luton (Unitary Authority);
- Neath Port Talbot (Wales);
- Newham (Greater London);
- North East Lincolnshire;
- North Lanarkshire (Scotland);
- Rhondda Cynon Taff (Wales);
- Tendring (Essex); and,
- Walsall (West Midlands).

## AoF socio-economic characteristics

As part of our year one (2020) evaluation activity, we developed a socio-economic baseline of the thirteen AoF. This socio-economic profile is included in this report as an appendix (see Appendix 4) and it will be updated in subsequent annual evaluation reports, which will provide an opportunity to reflect the impacts of Covid-19 on the areas.

Key socio-economic characteristics of the 13 AOF are as follows:

- all English AoF are in the 25 per cent most deprived local authority areas.
- Scotland and Wales measure multiple deprivation at a ward, rather than local authority area level. North Lanarkshire has 10 per cent of Scottish wards in the 15 per cent most deprived data zones and Inverclyde 6 per cent. Rhondda Cynon Taff has 18 per cent of wards in the top 10 per cent most deprived in Wales, Neath Port Talbot 15 per cent.
- all AoF, with the exception of Corby, have above average economic inactivity rates and for all but three areas (Brent, Enfield and Newham), gross weekly pay is lower than the national average (and in many cases, it is significantly lower).
- population change accounts for the biggest variation across the AoF, with some areas witnessing significant growth and others, decline.

## Heritage status and potential

The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) Heritage Index provides a snapshot of the strength of heritage in terms of historic build environment, people, parks and open spaces, industrial heritage, landscape and natural heritage and culture and memories. The Heritage Index was last updated in October 2020. The index is a useful guide for need for heritage intervention in the area. RSA index for England is ranked from 1 (highest) to 316 (lowest), with the English Areas of Focus position shown in Table 1.

Table 1: RSA Heritage Index England 2020

Local Authority Area	RSA Heritage Index Rank (2020)	Change from 2016 Position	Heritage Potential
Tendring	132	-31	14
North East Lincolnshire	134	24	114
Brent	300	-2	56
Enfield	273	22	207
Walsall	297	5	61
Corby	256	55	13
Newham	304	12	47
Knowsley	316	7	136
Luton	306	19	159

Table 1 Description: A table showing the nine English Areas of Focus and their RSA Heritage index rank for the year 2020 in the second column. All Areas of focus rank low. The third column designates rank change from 2016 ranks, and the table shows seven areas have increased and two have decreased. The fourth column highlights heritage potential, showing that the rank for Areas of Focus Heritage potential greatly exceeds current heritage rank.

Table 2: RSA Heritage Index Scotland 2020 shows the Scottish areas of focus, ranked from 1 (highest) to 32 (lowest).

Table 2: RSA Heritage Index Scotland 2020

Local Authority Area	RSA Heritage Index Rank (2020)	Change from 2016 Position	Heritage Potential
Inverclyde	13	6	1
North Lanarkshire	31	1	11

Table 2 Description: A table showing the two Scottish Areas of Focus and their RSA Heritage index rank for the year 2020 in the second column. All Areas of focus rank low. The third column designates rank change from 2016 ranks, and the table shows both areas have increased in rank. The fourth column highlights heritage potential, showing that the rank for potential exceeds current heritage rank, with Inverclyde ranking number one in Scotland for potential.

Table 3 shows the Welsh areas of focus, ranked from 1 (highest) to 22 (lowest).

Table 3: RSA Heritage Index Wales 2020

Local Authority Area	RSA Heritage Index Rank (2020)	Change from 2016 Position	Heritage Potential
Neath Port Talbot	19	2	13
Rhondda Cynon Taff	21	0	14

Table 3 Description: A table showing the two Welsh Areas of Focus and their RSA Heritage index rank for the year 2020 in the second column. All Areas of focus rank low. The third column

designates rank change from 2016 ranks, and the table shows one of the areas have increased in rank and one remained the same. The fourth column highlights heritage potential, showing that the rank for potential exceeds current heritage rank.

Although across the AoF, there has been modest improvement in RSA index from the 2016 position, areas still rank towards the bottom of the rankings in the overall heritage score.

The above tables also identify a “heritage potential” rank score. Significantly, each area of focus ranks much higher in this scoring than in their current heritage position, with Inverclyde ranking top in Scotland and Corby and Tendering ranking 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> in England. This gap in current position and potential position reflects the need for targeted engagement to unlock the heritage potential of these areas.

## Evaluation overview

### Evaluation aims

The evaluation has the following aims:

- understand the effectiveness of processes involved in delivering support to VCSE organisations with respect to capacity building, networking, partnerships development and volunteers’ recruitment.
- assess short and medium-term outcomes, capturing indications of impacts wherever possible.
- establish ‘what works’; enablers and barriers that affect impact and delivery.

### Evaluation approach

The evaluation approach is built around the AoF Theory of Change (ToC) (Figure 1, page 17), which shows pathways through which the programme is expected to deliver activities and achieve its intended outcomes. The ToC details short and medium-term outcomes that are hypothesised to lead to long-term impacts and the delivery of five higher level impacts, namely:

1. Increased inclusivity
2. Increased investment in areas of focus
3. Improved environment and heritage preserved
4. Increased economic impact of heritage
5. More vibrant towns and cities.

Based on the timeline for outcomes, and stage of this study, the evaluation has so far focused on processes underpinning the delivery of the AoF activities, capturing indications of outputs and outcomes wherever possible. The ToC has also been updated on key assumptions and risks.

## Evidence base for this report

Evidence in this report is derived and synthesised from four strands of evaluation activity, namely:

- Analysis of investment data spanning across three financial years (2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021) and internal data collection processes;
- Five case studies of solicited bid projects; and,
- Consultation with The Fund's staff representatives, Engagement Leads and wider stakeholders, including local authority representatives and delivery partners. Table 4 summarises consultations completed so far over the period October 2020-March 2021, followed by brief explanations on objectives and approach with respect to each stakeholder type consultation.

Table 4: Consultations completed

Type of Stakeholder	Number of Consultations
The Fund internal staff	3
Engagement / Area of Focus Leads	16
Solicited Project Delivery Partners	4
VCSE organisations	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>

Table 4: Description: A table showing the number of consultations completed per number of stakeholders. The table shows that a total of 34 consultations have been completed. 3 with internal fund staff, 16 with Engagement / Area of Focus Leads, 4 with Solicited Project Delivery Partners and 11 with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

### The Fund internal consultations

- **Objective:** to provide an assessment of the internal monitoring processes of funded projects, as well as understanding of data collection and upcoming changes to central management system.
- **Approach:** 3 telephone interviews conducted October 2020 to February 2021 with core staff involved in overseeing and development The Fund data collection and monitoring processes.

### Engagement Leads consultations

- **Objective:** to provide strategic perspectives on the performance of support delivery processes and depth to the study team's understanding of engagement activities occurring on the ground across the 13 AoF, as well as to further our understanding of the processes involved in the AoF programme, key barriers to VCSE organisations applying for heritage funding and impact of Covid-19.
- **Approach:** 16 telephone interviews conducted over October 2020 – March 2021 with Engagement Leads - both linked to AoF and wider Fund activities.

Wider stakeholder consultations: Solicited Project Delivery Partners and VCSE organisations

- Objective: to provide an assessment of processes, activities, and outcomes (early signs) achieved to date. To inform the case study research.
- Approach: 15 telephone interviews conducted over January 2021 to March 2021 among delivery partners, local authority heritage leads or representatives.

### Key challenges and limitations

Findings reported in this report are intended to be formative and inform improvements to the delivery of AoF programme. They should not be treated as definitive and there are several factors that will lead to adjustments to the evaluation approach and/or the identification of additional findings within subsequent evaluation reports. These are discussed below.

### Ongoing changes to internal monitoring processes and creation of a baseline

The migration of current projects to the new grant management systems will need to be completed for the evaluation to identify data fields that can inform the study. It is currently unknown how existing, and upcoming projects will be recorded i.e. will the evaluation have access to a core set of metrics related to all projects upon which comparisons can be made over time? That said, the evaluation study team is continuously engaged with the evaluation core team and have set May 2021 as the time to identify new data fields and assess the extent to which these can populate and inform the evaluation framework. At a minimum, we expect application and funding data to be recorded (this data has so far been shared). See 2.4 AoF Investment Trends). However, we intend to supplement it based on suggested data fields (Appendix 3: Proposed Indicators for Integration into PMS).

### Gaps in pre-application data

Our data review (see chapter 7) shows that information on the bidding journey that precedes proposals submission is not systematically captured, analysed and reported. This limits the extent to which the evaluation can infer the extent to which support to organisations leads to writing and submission of effective and successful bids. It also limits our ability to contrast resources inputs and activities that have led to the submissions. The evaluation therefore runs the risks of only accounting for successful proposals at the awarding stage, not accounting for organisations that were unsuccessful – the latter information would be informative to understand the key barriers for organisations in submitting quality proposals directly relevant to heritage.

Our review has also identified that the current data collection process does not appear to capture information on what triggered the enquiry (i.e. to understand the effectiveness of engagement/communication channels/referral processes); whether the enquirer is 'new' to the Fund/the extent of prior engagement; identified support needs; or, outcomes other than a funding application.

RSM has suggested a series of key data fields and indicators aimed at mitigating these gaps and we understand that internal recording system and processes will integrate new data fields capturing the application journey wherever possible.

### Accessibility of events data

A considerable amount of resource is invested into networking and/or face to face events aimed at raising awareness of the Fund and the concept of heritage, but also in building skills for writing quality proposals. An assessment of the effectiveness of these 'events' to bring about key changes – as a combination of events or as a one-off event – will be crucial to understand 'what works' in generating heritage projects and quality proposals. At present, information on the applicant journey (from enquiry to application) can be built up manually by The Funds staff.

Appendix 3: Proposed Indicators for Integration into PMS indicates the events data that we would like The Fund to capture, collate and analyse as part of its routine monitoring processes.

### Additionality and complementary of other funding initiatives

The ToC identifies as a key output an increased number of quality application forms submitted to The Fund. To assess the extent to which this is the result of The Fund's activities, and not that of other external complementary activities, the evaluation will need to consider the scope and scale of activity that went into generating applications as well as the additionality of this i.e. would applications have come forward regardless, or have they occurred due to other complementary initiatives, and if so, to what extent are these complementary initiatives accountable for impact? Our future data collection will focus on capturing context specific information aimed at informing the synergies and complementarities of heritage initiatives (such as campaign activity).

### Local context

The National Lottery Heritage Fund Strategic Framework 2019-2024 aims to address capability and capacity issues, with respect to heritage projects, which are multifaceted and affected by myriad of influences. To identify what these contextual factors are, and assess their influences on the expected outcomes, stakeholders were, and will be asked during future consultations, what impact national policy, media focus and local political leadership, has had on their organisational activities. Although triangulation of sources of evidence allows the evaluation to study the effects from the AoF programme, from that of other programmes, the latent influences that contextual factors can have on VCSE organisations remains a significant area of exploration for the evaluation. We understand The Fund seeks to acquire a more refined understanding of the AoF local context. To do so, it is currently piloting the 'place framework' approach. This approach seeks to collate relevant AoF socio-economic and engagement information in order to develop the most appropriate funding response for VCSE organisations within each AoF. The evaluation will seek to examine this framework and gain an understanding of its piloting phase, success and deployment in future funding activities.

### Distinction between light-touch support and more intensive intervention

Engagement activities may vary in intensity with, in some cases, attendance at one event being sufficient for an individual to progress an idea, but in other instances there may be a need for more follow-up support over an extended period. The evaluation aims to capture the nuances in support provided and specifically assess how the various levels contribute to outcomes, and if so, to what level. To address this challenge, we have included key questions in our consultation topic guides aiming to understand the extent to which varying levels of support result in different outputs e.g. project created, proposals submitted. However, COVID-19 related delays in project start has limited the ability for the evaluation to assess outcomes. The evaluation therefore intends to revisit these key questions as part of the ongoing research. And we will aim to supplement the qualitative data with metrics on events attended as part of the data collection that can be dovetailed on current data collection efforts (see Appendix 3: Proposed Indicators for Integration into PMS). Our

aim will be to contrast findings across areas aiming to infer general findings and distinguish them from context specific findings.

#### Key stakeholder consultation fatigue

Covid-19 has impacted on the study team's ability to engage with stakeholders. Although we originally intended to facilitate focus group sessions, thereby reducing the burden on stakeholders, the lockdown has meant that individual telephone/ on-line consultations were conducted instead. These were also carried out considering COVID-19 competing priorities, for both The Fund and external stakeholders – some of them involved with The Fund for emergency funding. The result was that additional engagement work was required from the study team in reaching out and securing appointments with consultees who had limited time to offer. Findings in this report are based on evidence primarily collated from Engagement/AoF leads, and to a lesser extent from wider stakeholders. Whilst this is valuable to inform the baseline (in terms of data collection and recording processes), the evaluation team will closely work with the Fund to ensure ongoing engagement is as varied as possible – thus leading to multiple evidence sources as the study evolves.

#### Report Structure

The structure and content of this report reflects evaluation activities and findings available to date:

- Chapter 1 introduces the aims of the evaluation, AoF, as well as key limitations and challenges to the evaluation;
- Chapter 2 provides the revised AoF ToC with revised assumptions and risks as well as an overview of data collection and key limitations;
- Chapter 3 provides an overview of AoF investment trends to date;
- Chapter 4 presents the rationale for AoF intervention, as well as key barriers and enablers to The Fund AoF activities;
- Chapter 5 focuses on the approaches to engagement deployed so far;
- Chapter 6 focuses on emerging outcomes so far, solicited bids case studies and key strategic learnings;
- Chapter 7 summarises the findings of our review of data collection processes and monitoring systems; and
- Chapter 8 concludes and identifies a set of lessons for future implementation of The Fund 2019-2024 Strategic Framework.

## Chapter 2 Theory of Change and Data Collection

### Introduction

The purpose of the ToC is to set out a clear understanding of AoF activities, outputs and outcomes over time. It aims to provide an analytical reference point for the evaluation, defining the outcomes that will need to be examined and highlighting key assumptions and risks that the data collection will aim to further understand.

In February 2020, RSM met with the Engagement Teams to develop an initial ToC (Appendix 1: Initial Theory of Change). Resulting from this consultation, key points were highlighted. Namely:

- the role of the teams in working with community groups;
- the longer-term nature of desired outcomes – some of them falling outside the scope of the evaluation; and
- the key assumptions underpinning the realisation of these outcomes.

Further consultations with 21 stakeholders were carried out in Dec 2020-Feb 2021 (Table 4). Feedback from these consultations was analysed to further our understanding of the AoF programme, validate and further refine the ToC. As a result of the consultations, the ToC was refined with key changes being:

- streamline of inputs grouping The Fund staff resources into one element, and the creation of Local Authority Heritage and network of delivery partners (VCSE organisations) into newly defined elements;
- refinement of the volunteering input (time) which is also assuming to imply community groups and/or residents;
- removal of 'schools' as this input was not mentioned in none of our consultations as an input (however the role of schools as community hubs is mentioned in 'activities');
- removal of baseline setting as an activity, instead relegated as an assumption for the evaluation;
- adding succinct description/explanations for each elements, not limiting the mention to single words that only staff close to the AoF programme will understand; and
- addition of risks across sequential pillar (inputs to activities and output, outcomes and impacts).

Note that the high-level longer-term impacts remain unchanged. The resulting ToC is presented in Figure 1 with the section below describing the causal processes by which AoF programme is expected to delivery its intended results. N.B. it is intended that this agreed ToC will now be used by the Fund in shaping delivery and monitoring of the AoF.

## Structure of the Theory of Change

As described below, the AoF programme's ToC has six components, reflecting the stages needed to realise the programme key objectives. It also has underlying key assumptions and risks:

1: Inputs – this sets out the necessary means to implement the desired changes;

2: Activities – this sets out how the AoF programme will be implemented, with The Fund as a clear catalyst in capacity building work and support via the engagement leads; and

3: Outputs – this shows the expected results from the inputs and activities. By this stage it is assumed that eligible applicants are aware of The Fund and are in touch with the engagement leads.

## Outcomes and impacts

Below details the expected outcomes and impacts in the chronological order that they would be expected to occur. The outcomes are represented at the Area of Focus programme level.

- Short-term (0-3 years) – immediate outcomes related to capacity and capability work of VCSE organisations work with respect to heritage, greater awareness of the concept of heritage and cross sectoral work between public, voluntary and private partners;
- Medium term (3-5 years) – outcomes expected to follow from the ongoing engagement work but also initiatives and confidence of VCSE organisations to create heritage projects and apply for funding; and
- Impacts (5+ years): this set out the impacts at the area level and include improved heritage preservation, positive economic and social effects as well recognition, in the form of investments, of the heritage agenda. Impacts fall outside the scope of the evaluation timeline. However, the evaluation will consider and report on initial indications of impacts wherever possible.

Figure 1: Theory of Change for Areas of Focus (revised)

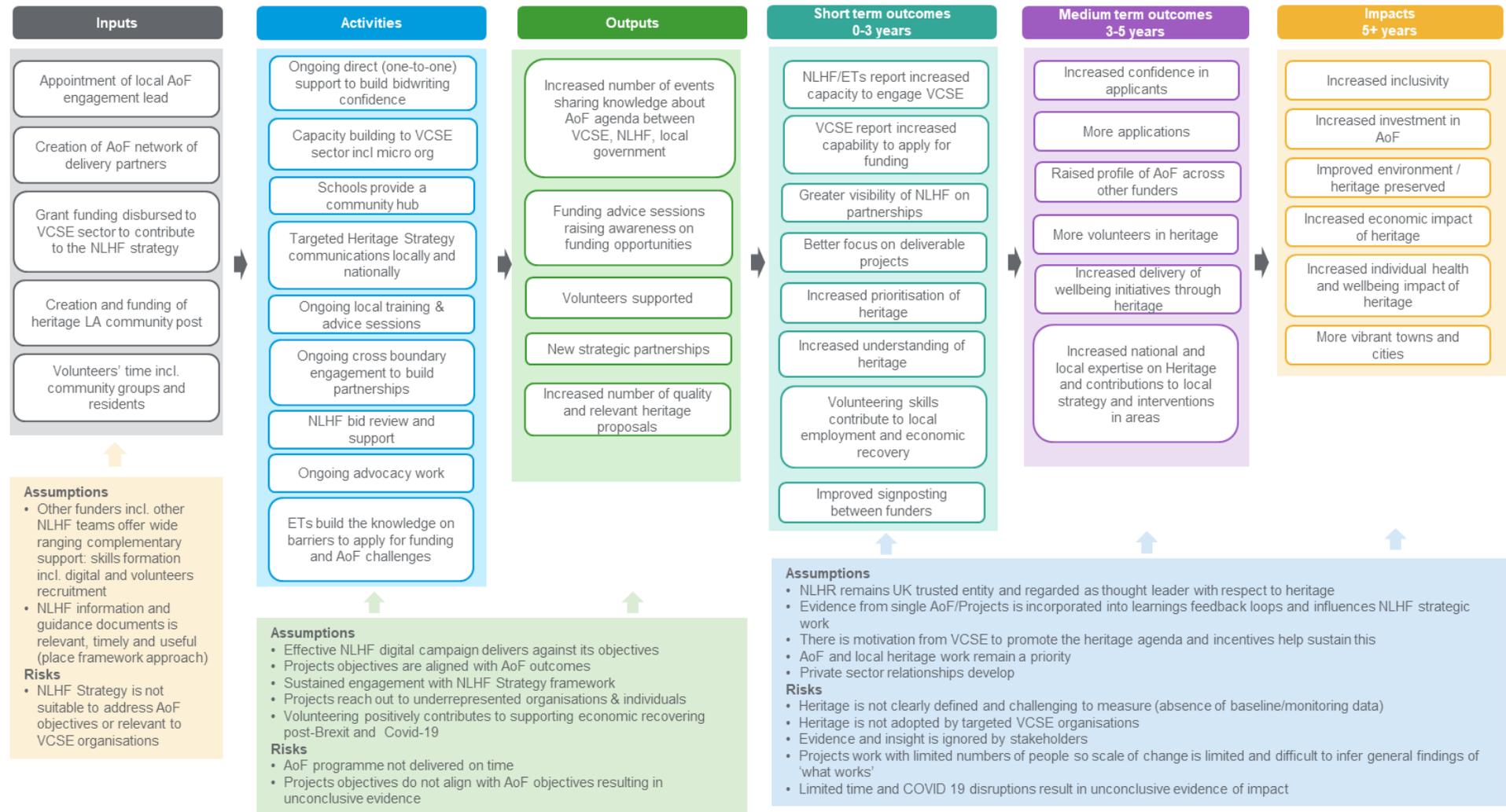


Figure 1 Description: This figure displays a theory of change, setting out the activities, outputs and outcomes in areas of focus over time. The figure is formatted as a flow diagram, with an input section on the left which includes inputs for example appointment of engagement lead, volunteer time, grant funding dispersed, etcetera. This flows to activities for example, one-to-one support, capacity building and training and then flows to outputs including funding advise sessions, increased number of events on area of focus agenda and new strategic partnerships. This flows to short term outcomes, Medium term outcomes and long-term outcomes. The figure also details the assumptions and risks for each stage.

## Inputs

As part of its Strategic Funding Framework, The Fund plans to award around £1.2 billion over the period 2019-2024, with project grants varying £3,000-£5 million. Following the suspension of open programmes in March 2020 for one calendar year<sup>3</sup>, and the ongoing impact of Covid-19 pandemic, it is unclear how much funding will be awarded to AoF. However, indicative figures are found with the amount awarded to solicited bids that so far account for £3,802,100<sup>4</sup>. The delivery of programme activities also absorbs volunteers, community groups and local residents' time as well as the creation of Community Investment posts. Based on our understanding of the programme, and consultations completed so far, key inputs include:

- Appointment of Engagement Team staff and their expertise;
- Creation of Areas of Focus network of delivery partners;
- Grants disbursed by The Fund ranging from small / micro grants to, potentially, strategic investments within and across Areas of Focus (chapter 3 Overview of Investment to Date).
- Community investment posts managed by other organisations such as Local Authorities, VCSE and Wellbeing partnerships;
- Volunteers' time including community, resident groups (time); and
- Targeted Heritage Strategy communications locally and nationally.

N.B: at the time of our fieldwork/ stakeholder interviews, Marketing and Communication support for the AoF was not fully developed. These inputs, and their associated activity, have since been established for the AoF and will be reflected in subsequent versions of the ToC.

## Key assumptions

- The Fund's other teams, such as marketing and digital teams provide national, complementary support to eligible organisations – implying a comprehensive approach to capacity building at the local level; and
- The Fund produces information and guidance documents that are graded to targeted organisations with respect to skills level (bid writing) and heritage knowledge – this results in relevant and useful documents providing a reference point for AoF activities.

## Key risks

- The Fund's Strategy is not suitable to address the AoF objectives resulting in insufficient engagement from local partners (public and private sectors) and targeted organisations.

<sup>3</sup> After which open programmes resumed

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/decisions/applications-solicited-national-lottery-heritage-funds-areas-focus>

## Activities

The AoF activities are dictated by the nature and scale of interventions, however, to develop community capacity and bring forward projects, activities include:

- ongoing direct support for bidding and project development – working with community groups and resident groups to build confidence among the community of their ability to manage and deliver projects;
- ongoing capacity building in liaison with other agencies – working with key agencies such as Local Authorities and local VCSE providers to build capacity, such as governance and project management skills;
- schools providing an effective community hub – enabling local organisations to attend learning and sharing events, as well as training sessions;
- targeted local communication activities aimed at increasing the visibility and awareness of the work of the Fund, its mission and vision but also funding available and eligibility criteria; This will also include targeted marketing activity focusing on the additional activity in the AoF to begin to address the inequality of investment and encompasses The Digital Confidence Fund<sup>5</sup>;
- ongoing training and advice sessions– some areas already hold regular funding events which have been well received and offer the opportunity to review, test, learn and perhaps roll out to other areas supported by the evaluation team;
- ongoing cross boundary work – working with other areas to share learning and, where viable, develop cross boundaries projects;
- ongoing advocacy work - engaging with strategic regional stakeholders to increase awareness of heritage, the benefits to local communities in having heritage projects, and, the social and economic value that heritage projects can generate i.e. wider outcomes such as local tourism and employment; and
- generation of internal knowledge for The Fund – exploring opportunities to modify the application and appraisal processes aiming at further streamlining the awarding process and encourage projects which might normally narrowly miss on support. This activity will also aim to understand the barriers that eligible organisations may face and aim to produce and disseminate material addressing these.

## Outputs

Covid-19 has had an impact on output delivery as the Fund reprioritised resources (priority funding), and VCSE organisations reviewed their priorities. However, key outputs pertinent to the AoF programme are set out below:

- Increased number of knowledge sharing events with respect to objectives set out by the AoF programme and Fund priorities – such events will be targeted at key area level partners including local government, VCSE organisations and Engagement Leads;
- Funding and advice sessions, working with local providers in each AoF to raise awareness of funding opportunities and to build closer working arrangements with other funders;
- Volunteer support – in Year 1 of the AoF, the programme supported an increase in the levels of volunteering and volunteer capacity. The focus of the AoF has now shifted to supporting volunteering to support economic recovery post Covid-19 e.g. in terms of volunteering translating into increased employment and training opportunities;

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/article/digital-confidence-fund>

- New strategic partnerships, reaching out to new partners from non-traditional sectors including housing associations, regeneration and wellbeing; and
- All of the above is expected to result in an increased number of quality and relevant heritage proposals.

#### Key assumptions (activities leading to outputs)

- The Fund continues to produce effective communication materials directly relevant to longer term impacts - including marketing and application guidance material.
- The provision of clear heritage related objectives at the area level results in the creation of relevant heritage projects aligned with the Fund objectives.
- There is sustained engagement between key partners including the Engagement Leads, Local Authority representatives and VCSE organisations.
- Heritage projects created reach out to harder to reach groups.

#### Key risks (activities leading to outputs)

- The AoF programme faces delays, with key activities not delivered on time and in a coordinated manner so as to bring about the anticipated outcomes – the evaluation acknowledges the impact of Covid-19 and will assess the impact it had on the planned delivery of activities.
- heritage projects are not aligned with AoF objectives – the implications being a lack of funding or generation of evidence not directly relevant and this not contributing to the evidence of ‘what works’.

#### Short term outcomes (0-3 years)

The AoF programme is expected to produce a range of immediate outcomes expected to lead to medium term outcomes and longer-term impacts. Assumptions and risks identify apply to short-/medium-term outcomes as well as impacts. Immediate outcomes include:

- increased capacity to engage groups/VCSE sector in heritage – internally, the Engagement Teams will have increased skills to engage and support community groups, while externally, partner organisations will be better informed and more able to engage heritage groups or groups with the potential to develop a heritage role;
- increased capability of VCSE to apply for heritage funding. The upskilling activities, and clear communications around AoF priorities may support the formation of staff into thinking of new heritage projects clearly aligned with The Funds priorities. The training in bid writing will in turn secure funding towards the development and delivery of these projects;
- greater visibility of The Fund at strategic ‘tables’ – through working with strategic partners, the Fund will be more familiar to strategic partners, thus able to influence local prioritisation of heritage projects, and the potential benefits of engaging The Fund better understood;
- better focus on deliverable projects – focusing resources on projects that have a better chance of success;
- increased understanding and acceptance of the concept of heritage – across all sectors, a greater appreciation of what we mean by heritage; and
- improved signposting between funders – ensuring major funders, including Lottery distributors, better understand the role of The Fund (and vice-versa).

## Medium term outcomes (3-5 years)

In the medium-term, the focus of the programme will deliver further changes at an individual, organisational and strategic level. The associated outcomes are set out below.

- increased confidence of bidders / more ambitious – individuals and organisations gain the confidence to engage with Engagement Teams, and over time become more ambitious, moving from small grants to larger projects;
- increase level of applications – overall an increase in the number of applications and, reflecting other outcomes, the quality of those outcomes;
- raised profile of AoF for all funders – many of the areas face similar challenges accessing other funding sources. Closer collaboration with these agencies, including Lottery distributors, will develop a stronger, shared understanding of The Fund and its role in promoting local development;
- more volunteers active in heritage in support of economic recovery – e.g. training and volunteering for skills; and,
- increased delivery of wellbeing initiatives through heritage;
- increased understanding and contributions of heritage – gradually building awareness and understanding of heritage and the different types of heritage assets – people, land and buildings, green environment. This can result in increased prioritisation of heritage in regeneration projects.

## Impacts (5+ years)

Beyond the life of the programme, it is anticipated that additional outcomes will be delivered for communities and demographic groups, as well as the heritage sector. These are set out below.

- increased inclusivity (including Young People) in heritage – there are demographic groups under-represented in the heritage sector, such as young people. As new volunteering opportunities arise, new opportunities for engaging young people could occur;
- increased investment in AoF by The Fund – the long-term ambition of the programme, new ideas lead to new applications and new investment. We did not develop this further – namely to reduce the gap between the better invested areas and the least – as too many external factors influence success or otherwise;
- improved environment / heritage assets preserved – as stakeholders become more engaged in heritage and recognise the potential for heritage to deliver wider outcomes, such as local regeneration;
- increased economic impact of heritage e.g. tourism – the heritage value of each area could act as a magnet for increased tourism numbers and spend in the AoF;
- increased individual health and wellbeing impact of heritage e.g. the heritage value of each AoF could provide opportunities to build connectedness and a sense of belonging in the areas, support individual confidence and self-esteem and provide opportunities for people to be active; and,
- more vibrant towns and communities – as heritage assets become better managed and recover their place at the heart of local communities.

## Key assumptions (short- and medium-term outcomes leading to impacts)

- The Fund remains the trusted entity for heritage governance and oversight – thus resulting in an accepted prioritisation of heritage projects at local and national level as key to contribute toward inclusive areas and positive economic and social impacts.

- Evidence from funded projects is incorporated into further funding rounds and strategic work – resulting in a growing evidence base of ‘what works’ in terms of heritage work and contribution to positive impacts.
- AoF remain a priority – with competing demands for funding managed by The Fund, it is important the Engagement Team and wider departments in The Fund work together to maintain the Areas of Focus a priority.
- Private sector relationships develop, not just with Housing developers and regeneration developers but private sponsors.

#### Key risks (short- and medium-term outcomes leading to impacts)

- Heritage concept is not clearly defined with tangible examples for organisations to report on and absence of a baseline to measure impacts against – this result in challenges to measure what works at area level and across projects.
- Heritage concept, as defined by The Fund, is not adopted by VCSE – thus resulting in a discontinuation of heritage projects once AoF funding ends.
- Projects work with limited/low number of end-beneficiaries which may result in a limited inference of findings at general level.
- The timeline for generation of outcomes and impacts, along with Covid-19 disruptions, does not allow for the materialisation of impacts.

## Chapter 3 Overview of Investment to Date

### Introduction

This chapter analyses investment within in the AoF by The Fund, covering 2018/19 (the baseline year), 2019/2020 and 2020/21. It incorporates a review of applications, awards and investments and compares them to national level metrics. Further analysis of the level of application and investment associated with five case study areas is profiled within chapter 6.

### Applications and Awards

Table 5 and Table 6 detail the applications, awards and investment since the AoF programme began and includes the 2018/19 financial year as a baseline year for comparison. Figure 2 presents graphically the information in Table 6, detailing the investment in each AoF as a percentage of the national investment value.

Table 5 identifies that when the 20/21 year is compared to the baseline year, five of the thirteen AoFs generated a higher number of funding applications, two generated the same number and six generated a lower number. When the number of awards are assessed, seven out of the thirteen AoF experienced a higher number of awards in 20/21 compared to 18/19, and six generated a lower number.

When the number of applications and awards are assessed against national averages, in 2018/19 year, eight (c61%) of the AoF were generating more than the average number of applications and in terms of awards, seven (c54%) were receiving more than the national average. These numbers increased in 2019/20 and were largely maintained in 20/21<sup>6</sup>.

### Investment levels

Investment data from 2018/19 (Table 6) identifies that the thirteen AoF accounted for a very small proportion (1.04%) of the Funds total investment. This increased to 5.08% of The Funds total investment in 2020/21.

Investment in the baseline year ranged from £9,800 to £1,460,700, with an average across the AoF of £270,169. This average level of investment per area increased to £319,554 in 2019/20 and £508,385 in 2020/21. Significantly, the lowest amount invested increased from £9,700 in 2019/20 to £218,700 in 2020/21.

With the exception of North Lanarkshire, there has been an increase in investment in each AoF over the programme to date - both in terms of real value, and as a proportion of national investment. The level of change in investment across the areas varies, however, all but two areas (i.e. Inverclyde (+2%) and North Lanarkshire (-83%)) experienced a significant increase in funding. This investment in the AoF took place in the context of a 61% reduction the Funds investment at a national level.

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<sup>6</sup> In 2019/20, 11 AoF submitted more than the national average number of applications and 10 received more than the national average number of awards. In 2020/21, these numbers were 8 and 10 AoF, respectively.

Table 5: Awards and Applications in Areas of Focus

Area of Focus	2018 / 19 FY Applications	2018 / 19 FY Awards	2019 / 20 FY Applications	2019 / 20 FY Awards	2020 / 21 FY Applications	2020 / 21 FY Awards	% change (20/21 compared to 18/19) Applications	% change (20/21 compared to 18/19) Awards
National	3623	1921	2011	1158	1685	1184	-53%	-38%
<b>Average per local authority area<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-56%</b>	<b>-40%</b>
Brent	12	3	6	4	3	2	-75%	-33%
Corby	2	1	7	5	2	3	0%	200%
Enfield	5	1	6	3	6	5	20%	400%
Inverclyde	11	7	9	4	6	3	-45%	-57%
Knowsley	8	6	5	7	4	4	-50%	-33%
Luton	16	7	7	5	11	10	-31%	43%
Neath Port Talbot	11	7	8	4	14	6	27%	-14%
Newham	14	3	15	10	14	12	0%	300%
North East Lincolnshire	11	9	9	6	4	8	-64%	-11%
North Lanarkshire	15	6	3	1	3	4	-80%	-33%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	10	7	8	5	21	14	110%	100%
Tendring	3	3	6	3	6	7	100%	133%
Walsall	1	1	7	5	5	4	400%	300%

Source: National Lottery Heritage Fund

Table 5 Description: This table displays all thirteen areas of focus in the first column and then, for the financial years of 2018 to 2019, 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021, it shows the applications to the heritage fund and the awards made in each area. The final two columns detail the

<sup>7</sup> Average calculated using national investment across 408 UK local authority areas

percentage change in applications and awards made from 2018/2019 to 2020/2021 showing that across Areas of Focus, close to half have seen a decrease and half have seen increase in applications and awards.

N. B. Projects may apply and have decisions made on awards within different financial years. The awards above are based on hard commitments made to projects within a financial year. Hence, in some instances, the number of project awards may exceed the number of project applications.

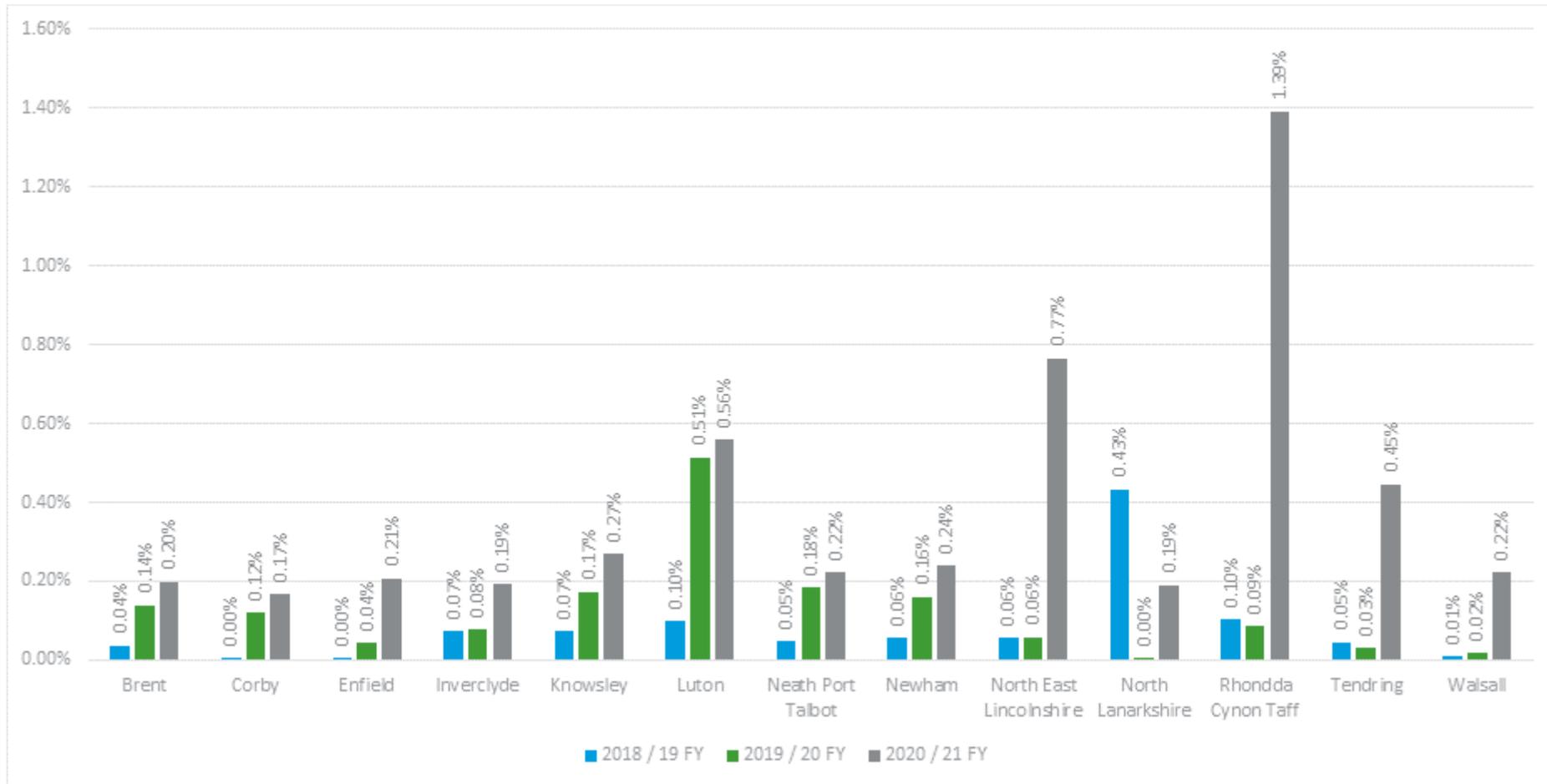
Table 6: NLHF investment in areas of focus

Area of Focus	2018 / 19 FY	% (of national)	2019 / 20 FY	% (of national)	2020 / 21 FY	% (of national)	% change (20/21 compared to 18/19)
<b>National</b>	<b>£337,175,416</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£258,504,256</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£130,386,585</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-61%</b>
Brent	£126,000	0.04%	£361,200	0.14%	£260,000	0.20%	<b>106%</b>
Corby	£9,800	0.00%	£314,000	0.12%	£218,700	0.17%	<b>2,132%</b>
Enfield	£9,800	0.00%	£111,500	0.04%	£270,100	0.21%	<b>2,656%</b>
Inverclyde	£244,000	0.07%	£197,500	0.08%	£250,000	0.19%	<b>2%</b>
Knowsley	£248,300	0.07%	£447,000	0.17%	£349,700	0.27%	<b>41%</b>
Luton	£334,800	0.10%	£1,329,300	0.51%	£727,000	0.56%	<b>117%</b>
Neath Port Talbot	£157,300	0.05%	£474,600	0.18%	£289,600	0.22%	<b>84%</b>
Newham	£193,900	0.06%	£414,500	0.16%	£312,800	0.24%	<b>61%</b>
North East Lincolnshire	£190,400	0.06%	£149,500	0.06%	£998,400	0.77%	<b>424%</b>
North Lanarkshire	£1,460,700	0.43%	£9,700	0.00%	£248,400	0.19%	<b>-83%</b>
Rhondda Cynon Taff	£350,800	0.10%	£221,200	0.09%	£1,810,800	1.39%	<b>416%</b>
Tendring	£154,600	0.05%	£81,000	0.03%	£582,100	0.45%	<b>277%</b>
Walsall	£31,800	0.01%	£43,200	0.02%	£291,400	0.22%	<b>816%</b>

Source: National Lottery Heritage Fund

Table 6 Description: This table displays all thirteen areas of focus in the first column and then for the financial years of 2018 to 2019, 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 it shows the value of awards made in each area and the percentage of the national investment per area, showing that for nearly all Areas of Focus, levels of investment have increased from 2018/2019 to 2020/2021.

Figure 2: NLHF investment in areas of focus compared to national investment

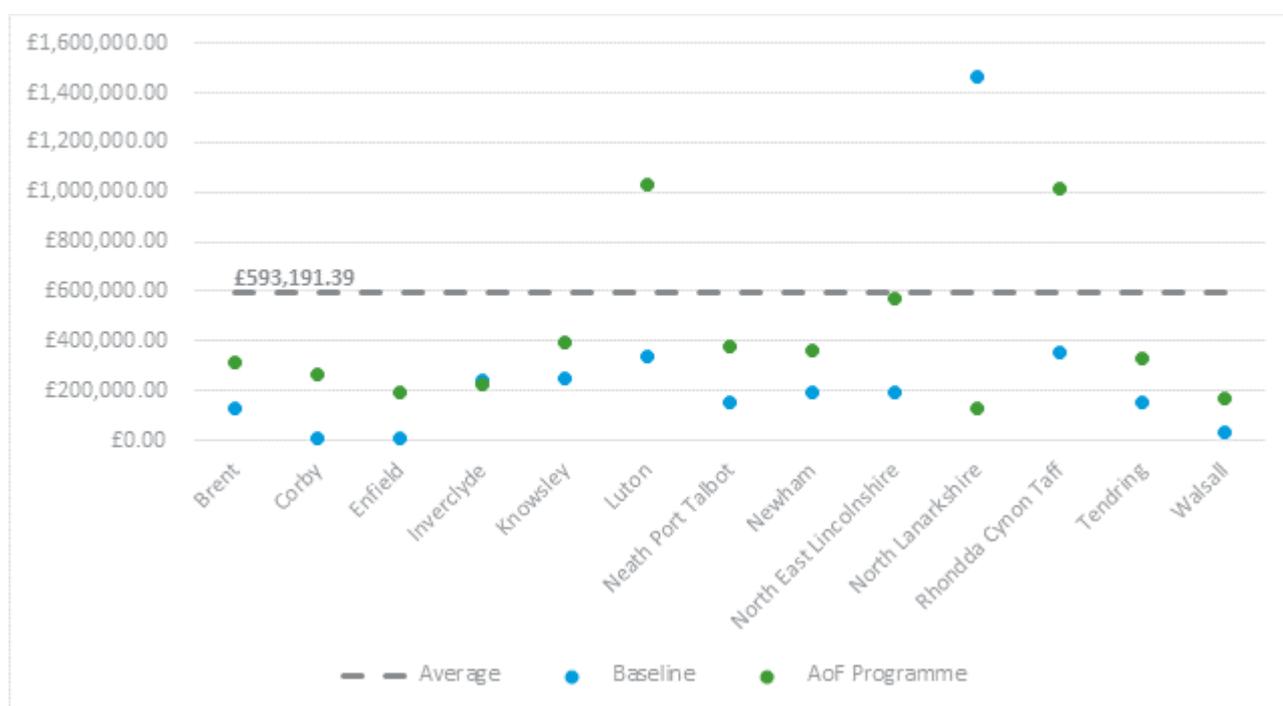


Source: National Lottery Heritage Fund

Figure 2 Description: NLHF investment in areas of focus compared to national investment. This figure graphically displays the information shown in the previous table. It shows for each area of focus, the percentage of total national investment from the national lottery heritage fund it receives, showing a general trend for each area of increase from 2018/2019 financial year to 2020/2021.

Figure 3 compares the investment in the AoF compared to an estimated average investment (total national investment divided by local authority areas over the three financial years) displayed in Table 6. The blue points illustrate the baseline year (2018/19 year) and the green points detail the average investment across the two years that the area of focus programme has been active (FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21). For all Areas of Focus, with the exception of North Lanarkshire, the baseline investment is below an average investment of £593k. The two years of the AoF programme of targeted activity has seen in all cases, with the exception of North Lanarkshire and Inverclyde, an increase from the baseline figure and a trend towards the average investment per local authority area.

Figure 3: AoF investment compared to average investment per local authority area



Source: National Lottery Heritage Fund

Figure 3 Description: This figure shows, for each area of focus, the baseline investment in the 2018 to 2019 financial year and the average investment over the area of focus programme. The figure also has an average investment in local authority areas nationally of 593 thousand pounds, of which all baseline and average area of focus investments fall beneath, with a couple of exceptions for Luton and Rhondda Cynon Taff, showing higher than average investment during the area of focus programme, and North Lanarkshire, a higher baseline than average.

### Key findings

This chapter highlights that when AoF performance is assessed in 2020/21 compared to 2018/19:

- higher numbers of AoFs appear to be generating applications and award numbers that are higher than the national average;

- investment in AoFs has increased as a proportion of The Funds total investment. This increase may be due to a significant decrease in total investment in 2020/21 due to Covid-19, but also the continued priority given to AoF;
- the average level of investment in AoFs increased from £270,169 to £508,385 (+88%);
- significantly, the lowest amount invested in AoFs increased from £9,700 to £218,700 in 2020/21; and,
- with the exception of North Lanarkshire, there has been an increase in investment in each of the AoFs.

When investment in the AoF over the programme period is compared to an estimated average investment (total national investment divided by local authority areas over the three financial years), all AoFs except North Lanarkshire have experienced improved investment levels and the majority have moved closer towards the average investment per local authority area. In two AoFs, Luton and Rhondda Cynon Taff, investment levels have exceeded the average local authority area investment level.

## Chapter 4 Rationale, Barriers & Enablers

### Introduction

This chapter utilises feedback from key stakeholders to confirm the rationale for targeted engagement intervention; explore barriers to engagement in heritage; and, identify potential enablers of engagement.

### Rationale for intervention

Feedback from consultation provides further insight into the rationale for providing specific and target engagement intervention in the AoF. Across all areas consulted, a **lack of capacity, both** within the community sector and local authorities, was identified as a key factor inhibiting the development of heritage projects.

### Community Capacity

Feedback suggests that **there is an identified demand, but a lack of capacity and capability to convert this into fundable projects. This is the gap that engagement teams seek to fill through targeted work in supporting and signposting community organisations.**

- across the areas under consideration in this review, the general feeling was that there was a large number of groups within the community who would be keen to deliver a heritage project in the area, but it is a lack of experience in delivering such projects that influences their ability to progress a bid, gain funding and deliver a project:
  - “there is a huge amount of community groups that want to do projects – for some reason there’s a lack of experience around gaining funding”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
- stakeholders sought to explain this further, highlighting how a lack of knowledge of support mechanisms, as well as a lack of resource / staff capacity to develop future projects whilst delivering current portfolio, marked significant issues:
  - “...it’s the knowledge – trying to get that across - about who is out there to support”- VCSE organisation
  - “they are another sort of organisation that I was hoping would be keen to develop some projects and come to us – but they haven’t come to us. I’m not sure what their resources are but it’s a capacity issue”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams.

### Local Authority Capacity

Stakeholders also commented on the capacity of Local Authorities to support and provide a strategic overview in the area for heritage.

In summary, across the AoF, **heritage services within councils have lost out due to budget cuts, as well as to other priority areas** – particularly with AoF mapping onto areas of high deprivation - local authority resource and priority is felt to be placed elsewhere. Therefore, the need for engagement to raise the profile of heritage within councils, provide strategic intervention and show the alignment of heritage with other outcome areas, is key. Stakeholder comments illustrating this feedback are provided below.

- a lack of local authority capacity and cultural infrastructure within the council is identified as a key reason for selecting the AoF:

- “they have been an area of focus previously, for the same reasons as they have now. Same capacity issues, same reasons of [lack of] cultural infrastructure” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
- stakeholders, both within and external to local authorities, highlighted that budget cuts have been significant in reducing the capacity of councils to deliver heritage in their local authority areas:
  - “One of the challenges was their capacity. There were lots of opportunities of heritage to link into priorities of council, but they didn’t have capacity” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - “we are running heritage services on a couple of staff, but we need more staff to push it forward” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- this lack of capacity within the councils has led to a fragmentation of heritage activities, with little strategic overview and some places left without heritage strategies. Additionally, the absence of a joined-up approach fails to make the link between heritage and other policy areas and heritage suffers from competing with other council priorities:
  - “they [council] didn’t have a heritage strategy nor a dedicated officer. It was all very fragmented, so not much capacity to do heritage”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - “[the local authority is] lacking that strategic approach and commitment. There’s ad hoc projects and services, but not a strategic focus” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
  - “they don’t see heritage as a priority – the Local Authority won’t prioritise heritage because of other priorities” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - “all community groups face other competing interests. They see a need in the community that they see as needing addressed ahead as heritage” - VCSE organisation;
- one stakeholder also suggested that councils need support in knowing how best to direct resource to local communities themselves:
  - “there is a lot of organisations, all doing brilliant work, but in the past, there’s been a more top down approach with the council”- representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams;

### Funding Context

Stakeholders also identified issues regarding the funding context, which provides / supports the rationale for intervention.

- Stakeholders often found that the areas that they struggled to invest in (i.e. areas of focus) were also the areas that funders across the board struggled with, with similar large funders running similar priority schemes in similar geographic areas:
  - “there are low levels of investment in arts, culture and heritage and that’s across all funders. Arts council have same challenges. The Arts council give special attention the AoF as well. It’s the same as the Big Lottery Fund [now known as the National Lottery Community Fund]. These are long standing issues”- representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams;
- Stakeholders have suggested that there is a gap in terms of funds accessed by groups in AoF, in which The Fund can provide a key support to fill. The gap is identified in the range of £50,000 - £200,000. Many community groups are seen to be content to apply for smaller pockets of money, whilst the larger projects (e.g. large capital projects), tend to be undertaken by large and well-resourced organisations. Providing intervention to aid groups to make bids in this gap is a key rationale for intervention:

- “as well as the larger capital projects, smaller, £50 000 or less projects occur. The £50,000 – £200,000 range haven’t happened. The Fund can get these applications in, so this is where the added value of the Heritage Lottery Fund can be” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- “Longer term, we’re reaching a level where we’ve put in lots of small and medium bids. We’re looking now at really strategically bigger and bigger bids, so going from the £10,000 and the £50,000 to the £100,000 and upward of that. In that scale, the Heritage Fund are good at almost providing a pathway to develop the infrastructure and experience for putting together and managing to go to small, medium and large bids” - VCSE organisation;
- Stakeholders also identified the AoF areas as being priority areas for other large public funding initiatives, i.e. Towns Fund. One stakeholder suggested that the presence of The Fund in these areas also creates opportunities to attract other funding:
  - “Arts councils Heritage Lottery Fund, Community Fund - all of those chinks together then help to bring things like the town deal, because you can say to the Government and other bodies that there is a wealth of stakeholder buy in” - VCSE organisation.

## Key Enablers and Barriers to Engagement

### Enablers

A desire from within the community and strong community identity, a supportive sectoral / local authority environment, an understanding of wider impacts of heritage and the impact of Covid-19, were identified by key stakeholders as factors that enable The Funds work in the AoF.

#### Community desire/ identity

- A key enabler identified by stakeholders of heritage engagement is the presence of a shared community identity and a sense of community pride / a desire to celebrate that heritage:
  - “In my view the area is ripe for engagement. Community history is important, and people are proud and are knowledgeable about their individual and collective past” - VCSE organisation;
- Additional community appetite to take on projects and the presence of a well-developed community and voluntary sector in the area of focus are also key enablers:
  - “there’s masses of demand for support. No shortage of organisations who would like to do something” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams.

#### Local Authority support

- Support from local authorities who are receptive and open to the benefits that heritage can have is also identified by stakeholders as a key enabler of engagement. The presence of additional money (i.e. Town Deals) is reported as further enabling effective working relationships between the Funds engagement team and the local authority:
  - “You really need those local services to be on side and willing to help and willing to facilitate” – representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - “Now with the town deal, we have noticed that the local authority staff are brilliant and are really receptive to our targeted resource. It has got a lot better. we have seen some incredible forward-thinking programmes in terms of inclusion” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams.
  - ‘Don’t think heritage is high on [the council’s] priority list, but of the things they have done, it’s all about physical heritage because that’s a significant part of their asset base. They

wouldn't considering doing anything less tangible so local groups aren't inspired or see the Local Authority as an enabler for broader activities' -VSCE Organisation

### Recognising Wider Impact

- Understanding the wider benefit of heritage and its impact on other priority policy areas (e.g. Health and Wellbeing, social isolation, education etc.) is a key factor in aligning heritage outcomes with local authority priorities. This link will raise the priority of heritage and it will see its inclusion in wider local authority strategies and plans to deliver community benefit.
  - “The link between heritage and wellbeing which is being pushed by The Fund at the moment will be a great enabler in getting people excited about heritage and promoting a greater understanding of what it is” - VCSE organisation;
  - “I know one of the things that is an important is getting heritage recognised strategically by key stakeholders and the local authority. Getting it acknowledged in strategic plans and in wellbeing strategies. We see a really useful role for heritage in economic recovery, young people” - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams.

### Covid-19

- According to a number of stakeholders, the Covid-19 pandemic has created unexpected opportunities for engagement with new audiences (e.g. young people) and in increasing overall engagement in heritage:
  - “People have been contained within their local communities and in some instances that has fostered a sense of pride and ownership. We've all become more interested in the local, in supporting local businesses and causes. In particular, we've seen a surge in young people who are beginning to organise around local causes. I think there is a lot of potential to tap into that” - VCSE organisation;
  - “.. there are also new opportunities around green space and outdoor heritage because we're all using it” - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams.

### Barriers

Stakeholders identify the following as barriers to the development of heritage-based projects in the AoF: a lack of capacity (refer to the commentary above); perceptions / understanding of heritage; relationships with community; and projects selection criteria and application processes.

### Perception / understanding of heritage activities

- It was felt, by stakeholders, that heritage carried a perception amongst working class groups of being 'only for middle class communities' and therefore, the aspiration to take on heritage projects amongst those from lower socio-economic backgrounds was less:
  - “I think the term heritage itself isn't inclusive. A lot of people don't resonate with that word because it's associated with white middle class history” - VCSE organisation;
  - “[there is a perception of the NLHF as] a middle-class organisation which is not inclusive of predominantly working class grassroots groups” VCSE organisation;
- Stakeholders also reported that there was a lack of understanding within the communities and in some cases, local authorities, of what heritage is, with a common perception that it only pertained to built heritage and museums:
  - “if you're talking about heritage, people assume you're talking about the museums” - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - “The gap that we have at the moment might be quite a large one. Thinking about the communications that I've had from small community organisations and their understanding

of what heritage is and what the Heritage Lottery Fund think heritage is” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;

#### Relationship with communities

- It was also reported that small, tight-knit communities have low trust levels of outside organisations:
  - “there is an assumption that they [big organisations] don't and can't comprehend local dynamics and there is a fundamental distrust that such organisations would act in the best interest of small communities. As an 'outsider' it takes considerable time to make build trust with these communities” - VCSE organisation;
  - “small community groups can't identify with a corporate organisation or with its strategic language, so these small local organisations don't see themselves in our space” - representative from the Fund's Engagement Teams;
- Stakeholders suggested that a lack of previous heritage activity / investment in AoF was a key barrier contributing to ongoing lack of engagement in heritage, due to a reduced visibility of The Fund and a lack of active relationships with community groups:
  - “there's a general lack of awareness and I think sometimes if we invest more in an area, we then see more projects coming forward because people see that project and they become aware and they think they can apply” - representative from the Fund's Engagement Teams;

**Staff longevity and ongoing communication is necessary for trust** to emerge between VCSE organisation and The Fund, which in turn can bring organisations to adopt the heritage agenda and propose further projects aligned with The Funds strategic objectives. Staff changes represent a disruption to trust that may have taken months to create.

- “if that person then moves on from the Fund, you're back to square zero because they see it as a link to a person not the institution” - VCSE organisation;

Whilst the Fund cannot control staff movements, recommendations to mitigate this risk include: the involvement of more than one staff member with groups; and, for communications to be logged.

#### Projects selection criteria and application processes

- Consultation highlighted the potential inadequacy of the IMD as guiding tool in identifying AoF. This limitation relates to (sometimes significant) socio-economic variations within each lower super output areas that the IMD uses to rank the UK.
- Linked to the use of IMD, stakeholder feedback also questioned whether The Fund's assessment processes are sufficiently diligent to adequately determine a projects area of impact - this relates to a scenario where an organisation may have its postal address located in one deprived postcode area (or IMD lower super output area), but delivers its activities in other more affluent areas.
- Feedback also highlights that application forms can be intimidating due to their length, volume and level of information required, inadequate KPI definition and complicated approach. Stakeholders highlighted that application requirements need to be proportionate to funding sought, with The Fund accepting to forgo some information that organisations will not be able to readily provide.
  - “I think if the Heritage Lottery Fund are serious about targeting grassroots groups in deprived or challenging areas, then they need to address their application forms and accept a higher level of risk that there might not be a huge return of investment” - VCSE organisation;

It should be noted that the Solicited Bid funding process utilised a less onerous approach, whereby information requirements were tailored to individual bids and less detail was required from funding applications.

## Summary of Key Findings

- Feedback suggests that there is demand for heritage projects within the community, but there is also a lack of capacity and capability to convert this demand into fundable projects. In addition, there is a tendency for groups to focus on smaller bids, due to a lack of experience and confidence in taking forward larger projects, including embarking on the application process for larger investment proposals. The targeted support provided by The Fund via the AoF programme provides an opportunity to help address these capacity and confidence issues and stakeholders have suggested that the funding gap that The Fund can address via the programme is in the range of £50,000 - £200,000.
- Local authorities often have limited staff capacity to deliver heritage projects, as well as a lack of prioritisation of heritage at a senior council level. Therefore, there is a need for The Fund to raise the profile of heritage within councils and to demonstrate its alignment with other policy outcomes. The AoF can support these activities by continuing to be a visible element of The Funds delivery within the AoF areas and by maximising alignment between local activity and Strategic Funding Framework (2019 – 2024) objectives.
- Key enablers supporting the development of heritage projects in AoFs were identified as being: a desire from within the community and strong community identify; a supportive sectoral / local authority environment; and, an understanding of wider impacts of heritage. The focus on 'local' brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic was also identified as something that has created opportunities for funders and groups to engage with new and wider audiences.
- Key barriers to development were identified as being: a lack of capacity within the local authority and community; a negative perception or lack of understanding of heritage; and, a mistrust / lack of relationship with local communities. A number of the funded solicited bids have aimed to address these barriers. Their success and the resulting impacts will be evaluated in subsequent years of this evaluation.
- Stakeholder feedback suggested that the IMD is too geographically broad to identify underrepresented areas i.e. it doesn't reflect (sometimes significant) variations within a defined geographical area and that further due diligence is required by The Fund to assess the projects area of impact and the socio-economic conditions that prevail within that area. In addition, a number of stakeholders questioned the level of proportionality being applied by The Fund to the application process.

## Chapter 5 Approaches to Engagement

### Introduction

This chapter seeks to understand how engagement teams approach engagement in the AoF. Drawing on consultation findings, this chapter will address the motivations for engagement activities, outline the activities undertaken, highlight the key partnership opportunities and the barriers / enablers to taking these opportunities in order to explore lessons regarding how engagement activity occurs.

### Motivations for Engagement

#### Overcoming barriers

As is identified in **chapter four**, there are barriers to engagement in heritage, but delivery partners and grant recipients, in highlighting these barriers, outline the key role that specific engagement activities can play to overcoming them.

- With regard to a lack of capacity and confidence within community groups to take projects forward, either from an idea stage, to application, or from receiving funding to delivering a meaningful project, stakeholders are clear that providing funding alone will not do enough, but rather what is required is activities that will build group capacity and provide resource to develop ideas into projects:
  - “[Council staff has come across project ideas] and I think that would be such a Heritage Lottery Fund project and they could benefit from one-to-one support. We’ve not just gone for a grant programme; we need an on the ground officer” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- the absence of existing relationships can be overcome through engagement teams building up relations with those who have existing links with local / grassroots community groups – this requires active relationship building from The Fund.
- Stakeholders also highlight that engagement work is key in developing an understanding of what heritage is. For one stakeholder in Enfield, they found that they were being asked by the community to help save a museum from closure, and this, to the stakeholder was a key opportunity for advocacy to change understandings of heritage to align with The Fund’s priorities:
  - “for the Heritage Fund, we’re not wedded to heritage in a building – however in places like Enfield, we are called in by communities to take the other side of the argument. That’s an interesting one for us and requires us to do engagement with community and say that buildings aren’t a good investment but getting heritage to people’s doorstep is a good investment” – representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams;

#### Developing a pipeline

**Chapter four** highlights how AoF areas tend to receive low levels of applications and awards for projects. Thus, a key motivation for engagement is to build a pipeline of projects that are potentially fundable by The Fund.

- Engagement teams are actively looking for opportunities to build a pipeline of projects, using engagement tools to bring project ideas to applications and develop heritage support capacity within local authorities to become active in this regard as well:

- “We don’t receive applications. We’ve had our Phase One open since the end of November, and we haven’t had an application from [an AoF]. I don’t think we have had a [specific AoF]-based enquiry... if you haven’t got people submitting ideas, then you haven’t got that material to work with in the first place. But we know there’s ideas out there because the call for projects was done quite locally; there was significant engagement and kept locally, so there are some ideas there but it’s about trying to say to them...” - representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams.

## Mechanisms for Engagement

### Increased understanding of support needs

As is outlined in **chapter 4**, AoFs have specific contexts that increase barriers to engagement and investment in heritage.

- Understanding support needs and identifying ways to address these needs is a key piece of engagement work undertaken by engagement teams in the AoFs. This knowledge stems from conversations with relevant sector stakeholders and those in strategic positions within local authorities:
  - “we are identifying needs at all the levels of engagement... in [the council’s] museum they have a heritage manager who was a traditional archivist, but their strength wasn’t community engagement and designing projects which deliver impact. What they’ve done with the solicited bid was separate the role with someone who can deliver community engagement which is what we look for” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
- Engagement teams report taking a systematic approach to understanding the area and identifying potential opportunities for investment and partnership. Engagement teams build an understanding of all the local strategic and community organisations relevant to heritage to determine how to allocate resource and leverage the greatest impact:
  - “I started making my way through lots of different organisations, smaller and larger. We started to identify a couple of strategic opportunities and some bigger capital projects that would change the physical feel of the town”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - “what we’ve tried to do is set a profile of our investment in the area and look at key relationships in the area such as Historic England, Arts Council. We have also developed an action plan for the area”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams.
- Activities that increase understanding in the area has led to further engagement activities that match the needs of the area and address key barriers. Support needs identified by stakeholders i.e. a lack of capacity in councils and lack of community confidence to submit applications could be addressed through additional engagement:
  - “because of what we’ve learned about the area, we were planning to do the roadshow for small grants because we were getting feedback that people found application quite scary, so we wanted to break down barriers and have surgeries in localities in the area” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - “It’s around the meetings and key contacts. Having had meetings with the Chief Executive, that’s given insights into the challenges they’re facing and what the local authority are facing. It’s quite easy to give the impression that council are the default organisational partner”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams.

## Engagement activities

Stakeholders identified engagement activities that they undertook at both an operational and strategic level. Some areas had a focus on certain activities depending on the support needs that they had identified. For example. In Rhondda Cynon Taff, a lot of first time applicants have applied for significant grants without a lot of organisational capacity / experience and as such, mentor / consultancy support has been a priority area, whilst in Walsall, one stakeholder felt “*people wanted to celebrate heritage in their community, but there were no definite plans*” and therefore, funding surgeries (workshops) were a key aspect of engagement activities. Below are the various engagement activities reported by stakeholders.

### Operational Level Engagement

- **Workshop and group events** were reported as activities undertaken across the majority of Areas of Focus, either as The Funds organised events or organised with a partner. These events tend to be opportunities to engage directly with the community, to encourage projects to come forward, to shape projects so that they meet core Fund objections and to overcome any barriers in the application process. Stakeholder comments are listed below:
  - “We put on funding surgeries and they were popular, so we had to put on others to deal with all the enquiries. There were quite a lot at quite an early stage...-We said first Tuesday of every month was in the One Walsall office and there we did funding surgery - we were very visible” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - "Every now and then there will be a workshop, encouraging people to put in bids... They're very good at promoting and encouraging people to make bids – we find them to be very helpful and very understanding of the challenges that everyone’s been facing" - VCSE organisation;
  - “I went to one of the new heritage webinars and was really impressed with what I saw... There was really good engagement, with groups asking questions and sharing experiences with each other. I'm excited to see where it goes”- VSCE organisation
  - prior to Covid-19, a representative from The Fund ran project/application clinics out of the One Walsall premises. This was well-received by the organisation 'added value to our offer to local groups because we did not have huge capacity to provide intensive assistance. It's certainly helped get more people engaged in heritage projects and has encouraged more applications to the Fund.' – VSCE organisation
  - Online events have been great for reaching individuals who would not normally come to the office or other events. I guess there is more anonymity and opportunity for to learn passively which is great for people who don't have as much confidence. They're also so much more accessible as there is no travel time. - VSCE Organisation
- Engagement teams provided **one-to-one support** and engagement to groups with a potential to put in applications, as well as to wider sector stakeholders who could signpost to funding. This was seen as the basic engagement activity.
  - “What works well generally is getting out an about and getting to know the organisations and finding out what they do on their terms. Finding out what they do on their patch. It's spending an afternoon to get to know an organisation. From that you'll get two or three others”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
- However, one stakeholder did question the efficacy of the one-to-one engagement model in every context, suggesting that whilst it works well for larger organisations who do have experience in delivering projects / a good understanding of what heritage is, for small community organisations that don't have a full understanding of what heritage is and what it relates to, a workshop model might be more appropriate.

- As community organisations often lack experience in writing applications and designing projects, some areas have prioritise offering **mentor support** to these groups to build capacity and ensure applications are of the best quality and are the most likely to be successful. As well as support community groups, mentor support has been used to increase council capacity and develop heritage strategies:
  - “They’ve provided a National Lottery Heritage Fund mentor to the group which has been great as they just simply don’t have capacity to give the hand holding required for these sorts of groups” - VCSE organisation;
  - “I’m trying to work to draw down on mentor support to challenge organisations to help them plan properly. The more support we can provide to organisations who are doing a project for the first time, will make the application easier” - The Funds Engagement Team;
- From projects identified either through calls for projects, events, or through the submission of an enquiry form, engagement teams may become involved in **shaping projects / applications** prior to them being submitted. The enquiry form will trigger feedback from engagement teams. If a project looks ready, they will push for it to be submitted, flagging that it is from an Area of Focus to investment teams, and if it is felt that it needs more work before this, engagement teams will become involved in this part of the process:
  - “If it sort of looks like a nugget of an idea and is led by one of our target communities: either one of the more deprived areas or led by an ethnic minority or some other combination, or if it will look at particular bits of history like LGBTQ history, we will be proactive in our approach, and think about whether we can meet with them and just try and talk about their ideas and I help shape that project – make them see how that project would need to be to fit our criteria – encouraging always to own their own project” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - “From the arts angle they are good at pushing you to think out of the box and creatively, and come up with some very creative ways to look at heritage... We’ve put in a couple of bids where there’s been a significant artistic element, but the outcome has always been more people know more about history, about the local collections. They’re good at allowing those vehicles, kind of out of the box vehicles for people to actually learn about the collections and about the history” - VCSE organisation;
- However, to this point, one stakeholder suggested a need for caution that engagement teams wouldn’t just become “*surrogate bid writers*”. The stakeholder suggests that engagement teams focus should be kept on proactively seeking opportunities and signposting organisations to the fund:
  - “I’ve always been uncomfortable with engagement having to do project development... I say this with reservation because this isn’t a popular view within The Fund. I think our role should be a broker and a sign-poster” - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams

### Strategic level Engagement

- A key aspect of engagement in the AoF is **influencing at a strategic level**. Stakeholders reported meetings / discussions with decision makers / key partners at senior levels within the local authority areas to try to push increase the prioritisation of heritage and to advocate for an understanding of the impact that heritage can have on wider outcome areas e.g. health and wellbeing, social isolation, economic development and regeneration:
  - “There is a piece of work for me to do to engage with the senior stakeholders in the area – councillors and MPs... [previously] we haven’t had much collateral – not had the projects to provide examples of this is what you could do with this money – now we have examples to

- bring to senior members of the borough to think about strategic opportunities for heritage"  
- representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
- "We had some good meetings with the chief executive of the council...They have ambitions around turning the area around. My role is trying to understand what their key drivers are" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - "We had a project inception meeting which [The Fund] brought senior people and they invited senior council people which helped with that engagement higher up" - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- engagement teams highlighted the absence of **network groups** for those involved in heritage and cultural activities within AoFs, however, it was also stated that the development of networks / network organisations is being undertaken in multiple AoFs, to enable knowledge transfer between members, access new groups and ultimately encourage more heritage projects:
    - "I think strategically, the creation of a forum which connects the third sector and grassroots community groups will be a great tool for engagement for Heritage Lottery Fund" - VCSE organisation;
    - "We convene the town fund north group and convene comments on the towns investment plans and when we came to Grimsby they submitted before Christmas – we all, Community Fund, Arts England and Historic England, had a good discussion. That can help collaborate going forward and help community development" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - Engagement teams have also sought to do **advocacy work** to broaden the understanding of heritage and move understanding away from commonplace interpretations of heritage as buildings and history, to include The Funds broader focus and priorities:
    - "There's a perception of us that we need to change. people think we fund old stuff and buildings, but we're much more focused on projects that engage people and heritage" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
    - "We've done communications through One Walsall around what heritage is and dispel myths about what heritage is. People don't realise what heritage means" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - There has also been a focus of engagement to **increase the visibility** of The Fund more generally in the AoF. This, to stakeholders, has involved positioning The Fund on local forums and groups, as well as reaching out to key institutions where relationships had gone cold:
    - "in Barnsley, the key ingredient was we went every week. We sat on every forum; we were instrumental on the development of project on town hall (£2.3 mill) we will extrapolate that [for North East Lincolnshire]. We will go to all forum meetings, as many as we can"- representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
    - "[the team met with the Local Authority Culture and Leisure trust which] stimulated them into remembering that we existing and it encouraged them to think that they were an Area of Focus and that we would give priority to projects from that area... we had previously not entered into their minds. In terms of impact, they were interested in coming to a project immediately. We have funded a digital capacity building project and are looking at an LGBT history project" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams.

## Outreach and communication

Communicating to and reaching new individuals and organisations is a key piece of work for engagement teams that underpins all the above engagement activities. Stakeholders reported a variety of activities used to connect to new individuals.

- Teams launched initiatives (e.g. Call for Projects) to incite and draw out projects in the community. This was done with in partnership with anchor organisations such as the local council or CVS's.
  - “through a call for projects campaign... they met with hundreds of projects” - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - “when we were planning on doing the roadshow [of funding surgeries], we were going to do what at with partners, using their networks and promotion”- representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
- Engagement teams have also utilised pre-existing networks and communications already embedded in the local communities to extend their reach beyond the traditional and ‘known’ institutions in the area:
  - “One Walsall had a number of forums – youth forum, general funding events – we made sure to be at those to get the word out. We also made the most of other people's communication tools – The One Walsall e-bulletin and website - to get info out” - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - “when we do funding events, we invite [National Lottery Heritage Fund] along” - VCSE organisation;
- They have further sought to communicate to local authorities (and others) The Funds strategic approach in AoF and the fact that their area would receive priority from investment teams as well as targeted support from engagement teams. This has given confidence / encouragement to previously unengaged local authorities to put in bids:
  - “I know the lottery have ran some events that told the council it was an area of priority for funding heritage projects. Very clearly communicated. [The engagement team member] followed up with us to see if we had any projects. That led one project just before lockdown”- VCSE organisation;
  - “I'll give the local authority as an example – the cultural and leisure trust. When I met with them, I don't think they had anything planned for us. It stimulated them into remembering we existed, and it encouraged them to think that they were an Area of Focus and that we would give priority to projects from that area” - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams Team.

## Assessing engagement

**Chapter 6** will assess the impacts of engagement / targeted activities in the AoF thus far, however, an important point raised by stakeholders was a lack of understanding of what engagement should look like. Concerns centred on a lack of defined outcomes / targets for AoF beyond increasing investment, as well as a perceived lack of sustainability, with one stakeholder highlighting that some current AoFs had previously been priority areas and yet there was no evidence of impact:

- “We need to be clear what we're trying to achieve, and we haven't been clear internally. We've been looking geographically for years with the Heritage Lottery Fund. Inverclyde was one of our previous focus areas. North Lanarkshire was a previous area. My predecessors would have built up contacts, but they've fallen by the wayside... We had targets in how

many applications and how much funding, but I suspect that applications would be low, and impact would be low now... "we're coming up to halfway through the programme and we're still unsure what success is" - representative from the Fund's Engagement Teams ;

- "What we don't have is a set of outcomes across our thirteen areas... We at The Fund need to go back to the beginning and do some of the research and desk work. When we did Area of Focus work, our objective was just 'let's get money into the Local Authority', but now we need to think about the area we need to help" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams.

## Partnership Working

### Key partnerships

Stakeholders have identified a range of key partners that they have sought to build strategic relationships within their AoF. **Local Authorities** were the most obvious partner organisation, with engagement teams keen to assess council capacity and commitment to heritage, as well as the presence of and potential to implement heritage strategies. Teams have also identified **CVS's / Third Sector Interface organisations** as key points of contact to provide links and insights into local community organisations and provide opportunities to use pre-existing communications and networks. Partnering with **other funders** (e.g. the Arts Council or Historic England) to understand their priorities and look for areas of synergy was highlighted by some stakeholders as an important mechanism for leveraging larger impact. Other **Third Sector Groups** (e.g. not-for-profit housing association; cultural / heritage trust) were identified as significant potential partners. **Partnership groups** (e.g. groups involved in delivering Towns Fund) were also reported as key opportunities for partnership working to promote heritage in the delivery of regeneration.

Targeted engagement activity in AoF with local partners has led to the following:

- The Fund is able to gain an understanding of local area needs from closer working with organisations already embedded in the community:
  - "We piggyback on groups because that's where we pick up a lot of intelligence. A lot of good community engagement" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - "Some of the work we're interested in is bringing [NLHF] funding into the sector and using us as a vehicle. We would be a vehicle, because we have the local knowledge – VSCE Organisation
- Match funding has been secured from partners who had pre-existing links and who can see the wider social and economic benefit of the projects for the local community;
- It is also a priority for The Fund to encourage inter-organisational meetings in the area, with all those interested and involved in heritage to share knowledge and ideas. In the AoFs that the evaluation team consulted, there was no formal methods for this to take place and therefore, the creation of a network was a priority piece of work for engagement teams:
  - "they are keen for people working in heritage to be in contact with one another... these workshops – you can chat about obstacles that you come across and share tips and spark ideas"- VCSE organisation;
  - "there's no heritage forum that represents heritage in that area. Working with a museum partner, we then had started to have a conversation to set up a heritage forum to look at the interest of heritage across the borough" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;

## Barriers and enablers

This section outlines the barriers and enablers associated with strategic partnership working, as identified by stakeholders.

### Barriers

Stakeholders identified relatively few barriers to partnership working, with most suggesting that partnership working had been a positive and easy experience. However, a number of issues were encountered that have hindered the success of strategic and operational partnerships.

- One respondent suggested that a **lack of understanding** of the Fund's role and desired objectives in the AoF had meant that the local Third Sector Organisation had not facilitated further partnerships, and had instilled a funder-grantee relationship, limiting potential for engagement:
  - "Third Sector Interface has been a key contact in the area. They haven't been able to do any project in the area, but because they see us as a funder rather than someone who can be beneficial across the local authority, they haven't introduced us to any other contacts" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
- Stakeholders also identified that whilst anchor organisations such as local authorities and large local bodies were natural partners, the strategic position of The Fund meant that smaller, local community groups felt an **inability to identify** and partner with the organisation:
  - "I think the fact that we are a big organisation with a perceived big budget, on the one hand, I think it's really helpful, but on the other, I think it can be a bit of a hinderance, as small community groups can't identify with a corporate organisation with strategic language"- representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams.

### Enablers

The Fund and its delivery partner stakeholders also identified factors that were key in enabling and facilitating strategic partnerships in Areas of Focus.

- To some stakeholders, the value of **accessibility** to a key contact within the fund whom they could approach with queries and ideas was invaluable to ensuring a meaningful partnership. Delivery partners reported welcoming the input from the Fund's staff on projects and ideas whenever possible:
  - "being accessible and willing to chat is important to bring people to that stage" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - "If I have a query, I can pick up the phone to speak to [the engagement team] or email. An example was a project I was working on, I asked, 'does it really fit with heritage?', so it's having those conversations"- VCSE organisation;
- However, some engagement partners did suggest that the provision of **core funding to provide capacity** to local authorities was also key in The Fund gaining access at the higher senior / strategic level; this level of access and thus collaboration, stakeholders felt would not have been afforded if not for funding provision:
  - "having someone like [delivery partner], she has a busy job and she probably / possibly wouldn't be making the time if we weren't providing funding and strategic input. If it was just the strategic input, she'd probably give some time, but given that we're giving money, I think we get more time and then can make more impact"- representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams.

- Engagement teams reported spending time **understanding the ambitions** and objectives of partners / potential partners. This will enable effective partnership working and allow the fund to pitch their activities to partner needs:
  - “We had some good meetings with the chief exec of council. It’s a lot of making contacts, finding the right people... My role is trying to understand what their key drivers are”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Team;
  - “What works well generally is getting out an about and getting to know the organisations and finding out what they do on their terms. Finding out what they do on their patch. It’s spending an afternoon to get to know an organisation”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Team.
- Related to this, stakeholders reported on the importance of finding partners with **priorities align** with The Fund’s priorities. This will enable engagement teams to identify partners to co-invest in projects, and develop projects of their own which meet the Funds objectives:
  - “We have to make [our budget] work quite hard for us. As a by-product of that, the majority of projects are modest. The purpose of strategic conversations is to find a project that other partners equally value, and that we couldn’t do on our own, to work together on the project to make big things happen”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Team.
- Stakeholders have also suggested that by **marking out AoF** as priority areas for support is an enabler for partnership working, as it empowers and incites local authorities to become partners in heritage and use the opportunity of the Area of Focus programme:
  - *“[the delivery partner] feels she has a stronger platform with our backing to influence internally for resources / support”* - representative from The Fund’s Engagement Team.

## Engagement with private sector

Partnerships with the private sector was something that was notably absent from discussions with stakeholders, who with regard to building strategic partnerships, had focused on local authorities and the Community and Voluntary sector, rather than private business.

One wider stakeholder did comment that this was a piece of partnership work that smaller, local partners could not contribute to, and was where the strategic influence of The Fund could be useful, in influencing at the Chief Executive level of private business. This, to the stakeholder, was an important next step for partnership going forward:

- “We, the troops on the ground are very aware of the potential of things. It’s the Chief Executive level and Chief Executives of private business as well, I don’t know if Heritage Lottery Fund have given that the central role that it could have. It would be great if some of those gaps could be bridged, much like the way they bring together people from different organisations with an interest in local heritage. If it could be done at that much more senior strategic level, so there’s much more of a strategic tie in. There would be better understanding of what developing heritage can achieve and the vehicle that it can play for different projects. You’d see some more ambitious things happening” - VCSE organisation;
- That said, there are reports of private companies becoming more aware and engaged in the role that heritage can play – for example:
  - “speaking in terms of partners, the company Engie who do a lot of the physical and structural works they are now an awful lot more aware of and involved in heritage projects around the town” - VCSE organisation.

## Summary of Key Findings

The chapter highlights that:

- Engagement activity will aid The Fund to overcome the barriers of limited capacity, lack of relationships and poor understanding of heritage. These activities provide a key step in developing a pipeline of potential fundable projects.
- Spending time understanding the specific needs in an area is a key piece of work for engagement teams. A systematic approach is taken by some, developing a baseline of partners and opportunities.
- Operational level engagement activities undertaken includes workshops; one-to-one meetings; mentor support; and support writing bids.
- At a strategic level support will involve strategic influencing; advocacy; developing networks and increasing visibility.
- Despite good work in engagement activities, stakeholders are concerned at a lack of target outcomes for what The Fund hopes to achieve beyond investment.
- A lack of understanding of The Fund's objectives and a mismatch of organisational size / position also appears to have limited some partnership activity.
- Enablers to partnership includes: the accessibility of engagement team; the provision of core funding to provide capacity to local authorities as leverage; understanding the ambitions and objectives of partners; finding partners with priorities aligned with The Funds priorities; and marking out AoF as priority areas.
- There has been limited engagement with private sector partners.

## Chapter 6 Emerging Impacts and Strategic Added Value

### Introduction

The AoF delivery model centres around the Engagement Leads leading on area-based networking activities coupled with one-on-one or group-based support, as well as coordination of support with VCSE organisations and/or local authorities' representatives. From March 2020 to the time of writing this report, AoF engagement activities have been significantly impacted by Covid-19, making it challenging for The Fund to deliver AoF activities as depicted in the ToC. In turn, the varied approach and extent of support delivered – where some areas may have benefited from more support than others due to being at different stages of the AoF programme activities– makes it challenging for the evaluation to decipher the exact pathways through which outcomes have occurred. That said, the findings below reflect feedback from key stakeholders on emerging outcomes resulting from the work carried out to date.

This chapter concludes with case studies of five areas in which consultation activities occurred. These case studies will focus on the applications solicited from partners in these areas and will report on the impact of this process thus far, reflecting how solicitation has aided delivery in AoF.

### Emerging Impacts

This section highlights stakeholder feedback on the Fund's impacts in AoFs through targeted engagement activity.

### Capacity Building

Whilst AoF activities were overall well received with respect to understanding the type of heritage projects eligible for funding, **the value added of the support varies depending on the size of the recipient organisation**. Evidence suggests that the larger the organisation, the more in-house knowledge it has due to having more staff dedicated to social projects (e.g. housing, well-being, confidence building or employment support) which reduces the added value of capacity building activities. Therefore, whilst engagement activities were overall praised for 'doing the right thing', adding clarity to what heritage is, and validating current approaches to heritage activities, it seems that when it comes to offering support to larger organisations, The Fund ought to consider the pre-existing knowledge of 'what works' in specific areas and across specific social policy remits, and adopt a co-production approach to its engagement work, as opposed of applying a 'one-size fits all' support model.

*"They've definitely been encouraging but I wouldn't say they've changed the scope or the activities of the project, if anything I think we impressed them more with our ideas."* - VCSE organisation;

### Network lead

Stakeholders highlight the value of The Fund supporting networking activities, which provides greater visibility of heritage. However, long term added value depends on **continuous networking activities** that The Fund can instigate and maintain, as opposed as one-off or sporadic events organised in response to VCSE organisation feedback. Evidence indicates the expectation for The Fund to provide a clear roadmap on how organisations can engage with The Fund and between themselves, having clear sight of the higher-level strategic ambitions for heritage.

*"The Fund have provided useful insight into the formation of the network but I would say has acted more as a critical friend rather than a driver at this stage in development (...) I think a way for the Heritage Lottery Fund to add value at this stage is to ensure progression is made as I think*

strategically, the creation of a forum which connects the third sector and grass roots community groups will be a great tool for engagement for Heritage Lottery Fund” - VCSE organisation;

### Risk averse attitudes

Consultees confirm the positive contribution one-to-one support provides in increasing confidence to complete application forms and bid writing skills (i.e. understanding the key funding criteria and demonstrating how local heritage projects align with the 2019-2024 Strategic Framework). However, there is scope for The Fund to further adapt its approach by considering the **attitudinal factors** that can still inhibit ambitions of smaller organisations. Evidence suggests how these organisations have traditionally sought smaller funding and adopted a risk averse attitude once funding is secured by reluctantly spending resources, fearing that they wouldn't be able to secure further funding. This suggests that sensibility of attitudinal factors linked to size of organisation, and its management style, is required for The Fund AoF investment to realise longer-term impacts.

“We were awarded £10,000 but not a penny of that has been spent because the group is deathly afraid of spending that money and do not have a clear enough understanding of NLHF processes/expectations to proceed meaningfully. I think this really exemplifies how grant money alone isn't enough to overcoming barriers to engagement, it's about growing group capacity, skills and confidence and NLHF cannot do that alone” - VCSE organisation;

Interviewees also highlight the positive impact of AoF activity on the quality and size of applications/ bids. However, consultations highlighted that without the ongoing communication with The Fund, applicants would have not appreciated the scale of funding available for their organisation. This inhibited ambition of potential applicants may create a barrier to longer-term outcomes.

### Gathering area specific intelligence

Heritage specific posts are key in gaining an area-based understanding of heritage, as well as barriers or key enablers for heritage projects to occur. Evidence across **local authority councils** demonstrates the value added in appointing heritage specific personnel whose responsibilities include the collation of socio-economic context information – identifying the needs – as well as understanding the types of heritage projects that can address local socio-economic issues – the opportunities. Having local government staff whose job is to assess the local heritage opportunities has also been key to developing focused communication activities around what is meant by heritage. This is of value added in light of public spending cut where heritage potential is left unattended. Gathering area specific intelligence can also help to identify the most effective capacity building activities and question whether 'one to one is always the right way.' Evidence analysed therefore confirms the strategic added value of the 'place framework' currently being developed at The Fund.

"I think the workshop model that they (The Fund) were using is probably the appropriate starting point and then to be supporting larger organisations one-to-one. There are a few that are adept at literary grants. That one-to-one would shape their engagement" - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;

### Online engagement

The possibility to attend online events (e.g. webinars on heritage) with underrepresented organisations, such as grassroots organisations, has been positively received. Evidence shows that smaller organisation are the ones facing the lowest confidence to approach big funders such as The Fund. This relates to the belief that they are too small to be of interest to The Fund who will

want to create a bigger impact by funding larger scale projects. But it also relates to the lack of resources to cover travel costs and confidence to attend events where the attendees may not know anyone else.

“Online events have been great for reaching individuals who would not normally come to the office or other events. I guess there is more anonymity and opportunity for them to learn passively which is great for people who don't have as much confidence. They're also so much more accessible as there is no travel time” - VCSE organisation;

Evidence also indicates how **incorporating area specific knowledge into digital engagement activities** is key to motivate organisations to further engage on heritage projects. A key recommendation is however for The Fund to maintain their online presence showing area specific knowledge on heritage opportunities, key barriers, and enablers.

“The staff member was really knowledgeable and already seemed to have a good sense of what the challenges are for local groups in Enfield. There was really good engagement, with groups asking questions and sharing experiences with each other. I'm excited to see where it goes” - VCSE organisation.

## Perceptions of Heritage

There are **mixed opinions among stakeholders on their perceptions and experiences of heritage**. Although all stakeholders agree on the need to define area-based cultural assets – being places, people, collective memories, or historical events – not all agree on the use of term ‘heritage’ as posited by The Fund.

As highlighted in chapter four (section 4.2.2), findings from our consultations show a level of distrust from VCSE organisations for outside organisations to own and label the term ‘heritage’ to then apply it as a one-size fit all word.

“Groups aren't aware of them (The Fund) as an organisation and they come across as irrelevant middle-class organisation which is not inclusive of predominantly working class grassroots groups” - VCSE organisation;

Evidence shows this scepticism is counterbalanced by local authorities' representatives who welcomed the initiative of collectively define cultural assets that would otherwise not command the level of attention require to preserve them. Council stakeholders indicate that without AoF heritage activities, they would have taken longer to focus investments on cultural assets, with for instance, recruiting key people responsible for furthering the heritage agenda in an AoF.

“The position funded by The Fund “marks the intention to put heritage centrally to the work of the council” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;

There are significant hopes that learning from the AoF can influence improvements in how heritage is expressed and conveyed. Whilst there are no doubts that AoF activities contribute to increasing the focus on the preservation of heritage assets, there are varying level of focus between tangible (e.g. buildings) and less tangible (e.g. communities, area based groups) assets – with the tangible assets benefiting of more attention. Evidence suggests that with value of work/activities being easier to attribute to tangible assets such as museums or libraries, the value of including activities

with less tangible assets such as communities and culture is relegated as secondary work, thereby reducing the impact that coordinated activities across both type of assets could have.<sup>8</sup>

“Heritage is split across three teams in the council - museum and archive, the customer service team including libraries and then the culture team (...) three heritage officers have updated the heritage strategy. They are more focused on buildings and haven’t linked up with community engagement or culture teams.”- Solicited Project Delivery Partners;

## Building Partnerships

The AoF programme of work adds clarity on how heritage encompasses organisations across sectors. Consultations shows how the provision of a clear heritage roadmap help investors understand how heritage work can be cut crossing across local authorities, private, public and VCSE partners. However, **endorsement** by The Fund is critical. This is particularly so for VCSE organisations seeking support from local authorities.

“I’ve met with investors and they were interested in seeing who else was investing (...) It’s the whole package together that does – if you can say Arts councils, Heritage Lottery Fund, Community Fund, all of those things together then it helps to get things like the town deal because you can say to government and others that there is a wealth of buy-in”- VCSE organisation;

Evidence confirms the added value of a **co-produced** roadmap for the VCSE and The Fund to work on. This is due to communities having a mistrust for initiatives and decisions being taken centrally, as opposed of regionally and based on community interest. Co-produced action plans also enable VCSE organisation to understand which organisations may be applying to the same funding, therefore inviting collaboration as opposed of conflicts.

“Communities have a mistrust for people coming and doing regeneration for the people -that’s why community action plans are a good basis to do heritage work.” - VCSE organisation;

However, as highlighted in chapter four (section 4.2.2) Engagement Leads also mentioned how building partnership is difficult to achieve and is a much **longer process in ‘cold spot’ areas** i.e. AoF with no prior relationship building between The Fund, VCSE, public and private organisations. Such areas may also see VCSE organisations managing conflicting priorities between local authorities and The Fund with no clear examples on how both set of priorities can mesh into common project activities.

“Funding cold spot means poor relationships with partners and this needs to be developed from the ground up. I think the number of potential partners in the area is quite low too. There is also a conflict of priorities between the local authority and Heritage Lottery Fund (...) and the priority of local authority not meshing well with ours”- representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams;

## Heritage Project Pipeline

All stakeholders agree that having heritage outcomes and impacts defined add focus to their activities, leading to **greater number of heritage projects being defined**. A key enabler is the recruitment of heritage specific posts. Evidence shows that such roles make a significant difference in the organisational capability to pursue funding that organisations would have otherwise not be able to – that being in terms of having a person with the heritage expertise but also knowledge of The Fund and bid writing.

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<sup>8</sup> The evaluation will ensure that views and evidence of heritage activities across tangible and less tangible assets are captured as the study goes along. Key evaluation questions will be included in the upcoming evaluation framework.

Group workshops and/or one-on-one sessions have been effective forms of delivering AoF activities. A key outcome being a focus on internal discussions to position heritage activities as part of a web of area-based activities that account for strategic viewpoints among area key stakeholder. The evidence shows local authority councils scaling up heritage activities whilst accounting for strategic roles that VCSE and private sectors play.

## Strategic Added Value

This section reflects stakeholder feedback on the strategic added value of the Fund's work in AoFs, in terms of influence, leverage and coordinated working.

### Strategic Influence

Commitment to a strategic document and priorities spelt out by The Fund helps organisations expanding their heritage work. Engagement Leads referred how their work was easier by being able to draw into the decision-making meetings key strategic people i.e. Director of Development, Head of Culture. In turn, having regular meetings with such people allows the consolidation of a whole area heritage system – ranging from heritage network to inclusivity of activities and focus on clear outcomes.

"The economic regeneration parts of council are now more aware of the driver heritage can be in regeneration. They weren't there before but definitely are on the agenda now" - VCSE organisation;

However, success in getting local authority buy-in varies across AoF. Some Engagement Leads mentioned how a problem can be getting the project examples that they can refer to show councils how heritage work can benefit the area. A key recommendation is thus for The Fund to extract exemplarity case studies of work showing cooperation between local government, public, private and/or VCSE organisations where value added of heritage activities is clearly articulated with respect to socio-economic outcomes.

### Leverage

Evidence of The Fund's influencing investment decisions or leveraging in funding from private or public partners is limited. One respondent reported that this was an important piece of work for the future, but the level of grants in the AoF were not at the level to be leveraging in larger monies. Another respondent highlighted the low number of projects and potential partners as a barrier to leveraging additional investment. In these cases, engagement activities are at an earlier stage of capacity building and strategic influencing. However, in North East Lincolnshire, there is evidence of The Fund influencing the way the Town Fund regeneration money is being spent. One wider stakeholder highlights how The Fund have been involved from the outset influencing decision makers, highlighting how "their involvement has supported the change in landscape." Another wider stakeholder in North East Lincolnshire concurs, highlighting that the way the town regeneration money in North East Lincolnshire is being spent is as a result of The Fund influencing.

"...in the way town regeneration money is being spent to develop civic spaces. There's certainly more of focus on heritage than maybe what there would have been a few years ago. I think the conversations a few years ago would have been around just a general aesthetic in terms of development. I think the conversation has been very much steered around (...) how they can interweave local history and promoting local history as a means of understanding the area" - VCSE organisation;

## Coordinated working

Findings so far show **intentions** in terms of area-based organisations coordinating their heritage offer, with efforts stymied by the outset of Covid-19 pandemic. However, one example of coordinated working confirms the value added of Engagement Leads in realising work synergies. This relates to the Engagement Lead's communication work around heritage, explicitly spelling out the links of heritage with increased well-being, which led the VCSE organisation to develop a community based offer incorporating heritage into its wider work i.e. empowering residents to discover the history of different part of their borough whilst aiming to increasing their well-being, health and confidence.

"Strategically, I think this is exactly the right approach because so many housing providers do the types of community-based activities we do who perhaps not aware of Heritage Lottery Fund or the funding available. The focus on everything is heritage and the link between heritage and wellbeing which is being pushed by The Fund at the moment will be a great enabler in getting people excited about heritage and promoting a greater understanding of what it is." - VCSE organisation

## Solicited Grant Case Studies

This section presents details of the Solicited Grants issued to recipients in five AoF and explores the emerging impacts associated with the solicited grant process.

### Introduction

Solicitation of bids is a tool identified in The Fund Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024 to bring investment into target communities and AoF. Following the suspension of open programmes in March 2020, and the announcement of the Covid-19 Culture Recovery Fund, in July 2020, The Fund solicited applications that allowed it to meet its objectives in the AoF. Solicited bids led a total of £3,121,400 of awards, displayed in Table 7.

Five AoFs were engaged with by the evaluation team to obtain further information to present as a case study, however, the grant recipients in Rhondda Cynon Taff decline to partake in consultation and therefore it has not been possible to produce a case study for this AoF. Figure 4 details the percentage change in the value of awards made in the five selected areas from the financial year 2018/19. Case studies will begin with a brief account of trends, and assessment of local variations.

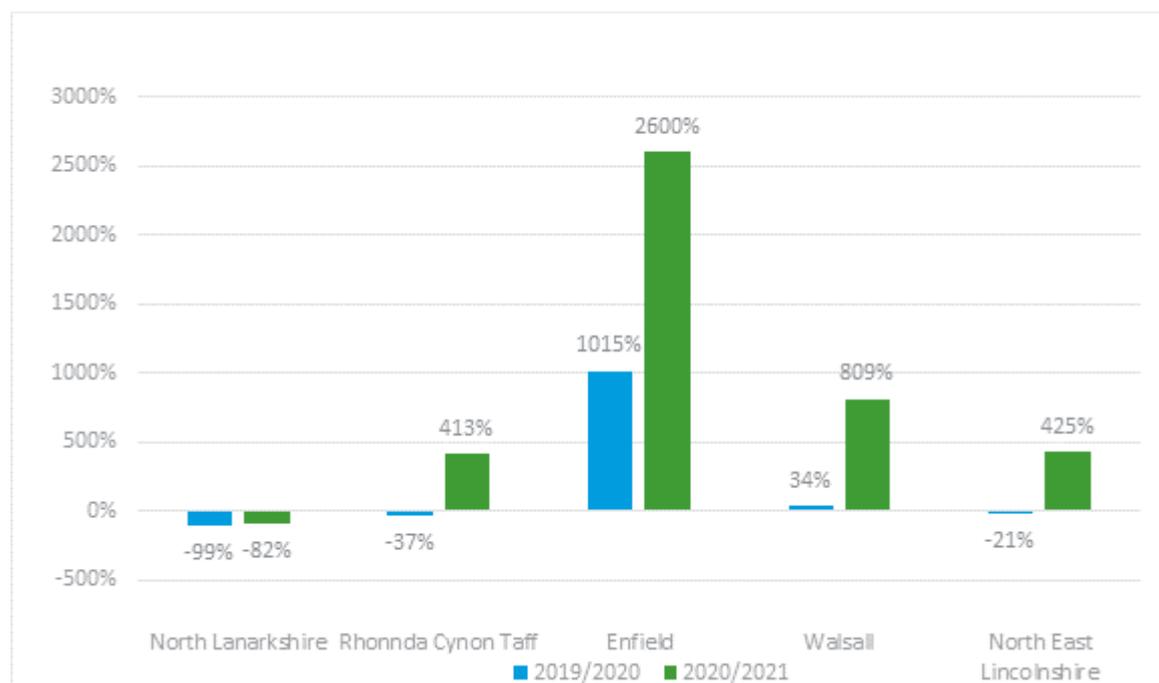
Table 7: Solicited grants

Area of Focus	Solicited Grant Recipient	Award Amount
Newham (Greater London)	London Borough of Newham	£180,000
Enfield (Greater London)	Enfield Council	£200,000
Brent (Greater London)	London Borough of Brent	£250,000
Knowsley (Merseyside)	Knowsley Borough Council	£250,000
North East Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire Council	£250,000
Luton (Bedfordshire)	The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire	£249,500
Luton (Bedfordshire)	University of Bedfordshire	£250,000
Tendring (Essex)	Essex Wildlife Trust	£250,000
Tendring (Essex)	Tendring District Council	£250,000
Walsall (West Midlands)	Walsall Borough Council	£249,900
Corby (Northamptonshire)	Corby Borough Council	£200,000
Inverclyde (Scotland)	Inverclyde Council	£230,000
North Lanarkshire (Scotland)	The Rural Development Trust	£200,000
Rhondda Cynon Taff (Wales)	Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council	£250,000
Neath Port Talbot (Wales)	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	£242,000

Source: NLHF

**Table 7 Description:** This table details each area of focus in the first column, the solicited grant recipient in the second column and the amount that recipient was awarded in the third column, with award amounts per AOF ranging from £180,000 thousand to £250,000.

Figure 4: Percentage change in awards value from baseline FY 2018/2019



Source: National Lottery Heritage Fund

**Figure 4 Description:** This figure shows for the five case study areas (North Lanarkshire, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Enfield, Walsall and North East Lincolnshire) the percentage change from baseline (2018/19) investment for each of the two years of the area of focus programmes (2019/20 and 2020/21). The figure shows either small percentage increase (or decrease) in the first year of the programme, and then a large percentage increase in the second year.

## North Lanarkshire

This case study has been informed by desk research, consultation with the solicited bid delivery partner in North Lanarkshire (Rural Development Trust) and consultation with two representatives from the North Lanarkshire Engagement team.

### Funding context

The baseline 2018/19 financial year in North Lanarkshire saw fifteen applications made to The Fund and six awards. This totalled £1,460,700 in investment awarded over the year. This level of investment can be attributed in the main to one key investment in the local authority area, the Creating Natural Connections with the Scottish Wildlife Trust in Cumbernauld, where £1,498,100 was awarded to the Scottish Wildlife Trust and partners to conserve green spaces in the Cumbernauld area.

This high baseline has meant that the percentage change in investment award in North Lanarkshire from the start of the AoF programme, compared to the baseline, suggests that performance has been negative, with a 99% reduction in the first year of the programme (£9,700 investment) and an 82% reduction from baseline in the second year (£248,400 investment).

There are multiple factors to consider when assessing investment in North Lanarkshire. The first is the significant decrease in applications from the baseline year from fifteen applications to just three in 2019/20 and three in 2020/21 (80% decrease for each year). The proportion of successful applications in the baseline year was 40% (6 awards made) to only one award in 2019/20 (33% success). 2020/21 marked a significant change, as for three applications, four awards were made.

Further, in 2020/21, although there was a percentage decrease from the baseline, there was a 2380% increase in investment from the previous year. Included in this figure was the £200,000 solicited grant to the Rural Development Trust.

### Background to the project

The Rural Development Trust in North Lanarkshire had submitted a bid to The Fund prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but with the onset of the pandemic and the close of funding, the application was withdrawn. With the emergence of Cultural Recovery Fund and the ability of engagement teams to solicit bids from organisations, the Rural Development Trust were asked to progress their previous application to The Fund.

The project that was taken forward was a rural and industrial heritage programme, which will run from September 2020 until August 2023, with The Fund providing £200,000 grant funding. The project will comprise of three key parts:

- developing heritage plans;
- capturing local intangible heritage assets (including delivering activities that engage those in heritage who face barriers to participation due to rurality and poverty); and
- pilot a small community grant scheme to support communities to deliver and lead heritage projects.

The project aims to:

- engage a wide range of audiences in exploring the heritage of the five rural communities included in the project;
- collaboratively develop and deliver project activities which explore, share and celebrate the intangible and industrial heritage of each area;
- proactively involve members of the community from Heritage Fund priority groups; and
- pilot a small community grants scheme with a heritage focus, providing support and assistance to lower capacity groups.

### Experience of Process and Impacts

Although the solicited project is still in its early stages and has not yet start to deliver projects, consultation with both the project delivery lead and Fund staff has provided some initial feedback on the potential impacts of project and the solicitation process.

- It was highlighted that an important part of the solicited bid process was identifying an opportunity that matched with The Funds priorities. This project was seen to be very much aligned to The Fund’s strategic priorities:
  - “It was an opportunity to engage similar communities that we wanted to engage with – it was the right combination and a good opportunity”; - representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams
- One stakeholder highlighted that although the bid would likely have been successful had it been received further down the line; the value of the solicited bid process was to speed up the application process by giving appropriate resourcing to the bid:
  - “The grantee’s time resources were all allocated under different projects and had different core projects and possibly wouldn’t have submitted until this summer (2021)”; - representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams
- It was evident from all parties that the process had led to the development of a collaborative approach to the bid, beyond a funder-grantee relationship, which led to improved quality of bid:
  - “we don’t have all the answers – we’re still developing the work. It’s that kind of collaborative approach which is need in areas that haven’t had a lot of heritage projects and recognising that heritage fund have a wider knowledge base of projects that have worked elsewhere” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
  - “we were able to say, how can we help you in this, not just fund. We were able to give our take – the project is around community action plans for heritage, so we were able to talk about climate change and asked them to build that into the bid. They were very receptive to it all”; - representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams
- Being solicited to put in an application gave the grantee the confidence to go for a more ambitious project than they might have otherwise opted for:
  - “[without the solicited bid] I think we would have continued with what we were already doing – we’d have another lottery project. We might have been able to go for more NLHF money, but to get a strategic view and long-term projects, rather than small ad hoc projects, is vital” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- A key point of the solicited bid identified by both Fund staff and the delivery partner was the value of providing capacity to the organisation / staffing resource:
  - “no other funder would have funded anything similar or a partnership approach and that’s really different for a third sector organisation. You don’t get core funding rather than development funding”- Solicited Project Delivery Partners;

- “the opportunity that we can offer is to address that resource gap. People can use us to address staffing cost”. - representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams

### Key Findings

Reflecting on the initial stages of the solicited grant provided to the Rural Development Trust in North Lanarkshire, it is evident that the process empowered a local organisation working with the Fund to develop a project that was aligned with Fund priorities, which would deliver wider community benefit.

Although it is likely that this application would have been successful had it gone through normal application process, the solicited approach sped up the process and enabled a collaborative approach to the project, which improved the overall quality of the application and ambition of the project.

The grantee reports struggling generally to find core funding to support staff costs, which has an impact on capacity to develop projects. The solicited bid, by including support for staff costs, has built the capacity of the organisation which would not have otherwise been possible.

### North East Lincolnshire

Consultation with the solicited bid delivery partner in North East Lincolnshire (North East Lincolnshire Council) and a representative from the North East Lincolnshire Engagement team, as well as desk research, has informed this case study.

### Funding context

North East Lincolnshire had a high baseline investment of £190,400 and in the 2019/20 financial year. There was a slight decrease of 21% to £149,500 in 2019/20 but in 2020/21, there was a significant increase from that baseline year to £998,400, reflecting an increase of 425%.

The baseline year was the strongest performing in terms of bids made. The Fund received eleven bids from North East Lincolnshire in 2018/19, with nine successful. Only six applicants were successful in 2019/20 out of nine applicants. These were a mixture of mostly smaller grants (circa £10,000) e.g. to Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire and Capacity Buildings Limited. In addition, medium size grants were awarded to North East Lincolnshire Borough Council (of £50,000) for a Strategic Lead for Culture to put in place a new post within North East Lincolnshire Council to co-ordinate the initial implementation of their new culture and heritage framework as well as to Lincs Inspire (of £35,800) for their *Streets and their Stories* project.

The 2020/21 financial year saw a significant increase in value, but a decrease in applications, to just four applications. Large value grants were made, including a large portion to the Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust (GGIFT) who were awarded £647,000 to redevelop a building in the Kasbah area of the Heritage action zone. This Heritage Action Zone is a key feature of the Grimsby Town Deal which maps out future investment in Grimsby's economy and environment. In addition, GGIFT also secured £10,000 from the Digital Confidence Fund June 2020.

A bid was also solicited from the North East Lincolnshire Council for £250,000 to provide support to assist groups with an interest in heritage to access a community grants programme to help them develop their heritage capacity, expertise and experience. These large grants together account for the significant uplift in investment despite fewer applications.

### Background to the project

The Fund's solicited bid from the North East Lincolnshire Council was for a project to be delivered between September 2020 and March 2023. Its overall purpose is to increase the strategic

importance of heritage in council activity, increasing the number of projects and the understanding of the value-added of heritage. The funding will support:

- Staff resource in the council (0.4 FTE) to provide administrative support for the programme;
- Freelance support to work with community organisations to develop their projects;
- A small grants scheme to support projects developed;
- building new network of organisations interested in heritage in North East Lincolnshire;
- organisations in NEL participating in national networks, including with other AoFs; and
- work to build the case for heritage investment highlighting its wider social, economic and community benefits.

The project aims to:

- Maintain momentum and improve the management of Heritage in North East Lincolnshire;
- Develop North East Lincolnshire's reputation for the positive and proactive management of heritage assets;
- Encourage and support local authority investment in the management and maintenance of its heritage assets;
- Raise the profile of North East Lincolnshire's Heritage and realise opportunities for economic and social benefit;
- Strengthen local partnership working; and
- Build local capacity, skills and experience to manage and deliver heritage-led programmes within the Council/ENGIE and local heritage organisations.

#### Experience of Process and Impacts

Whilst the project is still seeking permission to begin delivering, consultation with the project delivery partner and Fund staff provided insight into the solicited bid process and anticipated impacts:

- Stakeholders from both The Fund and the council highlighted that the solicited bid, in building relationships with and resource in the local authority, is a significant and central resource in delivering The Fund's outcomes of providing investment and increasing the prioritisation of heritage in the area:
  - "If we hadn't had investment to provide [delivery partner], it would have been difficult to get money into the area. [delivery partner] is the conduit for us. His is a fundamental task for our area"- representative from the Fund's Engagement Teams;
  - "I think ultimately it's trying to make sure cultural heritage is front and centre in terms of council activity. There are more projects that are heritage focused. In doing those projects there are more conversations taking place"- Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- The delivery partner views the solicited project as one that is very much a collaboration between the council and The Fund:
  - "I see it as a collaborative project. I think probably the opportunity going forward is around how much capacity heritage staff have to participate in conversations with me and others. I welcome that developmental support. If it's a more engaged process"- Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- The solicited bid will provide the strategic overview that the AoF needs, reducing fragmentation among individual groups, and focusing on a more collective and multifaceted approach:

- “[the solicited bid was able to] bring everyone together as everyone acting in isolation. there was a lot of multifaceted learnings...” - representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams;
- As well as enabling grass roots heritage development, the solicited bid gives The Fund a reach into the council, through the delivery partner, to be able to provide influence at a strategic level:
  - “Everything seems to fall to one person around resourcing and networking. Getting that person into right meetings at right time - that’s the value of solicited bid” - representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams.

### Key Findings

A key finding from this case study is the influence and impact of additional capacity within the local council. It was reported that providing investment into the area generally would have been difficult without the provision of this role through the solicited project. Providing this capacity gives a strategic approach to heritage and is a strategic driver within the council. Other groups and projects can be drawn together to provide a more coordinated and collaborative approach.

Providing staff resource to council that is aligned to heritage outcomes means heritage priorities can be pushed more from within the local authority at a strategic level and heritage can have a voice in the room for key conversations, where it otherwise may have been excluded.

### Enfield

This case study has been informed by desk research, consultation with the solicited bid delivery partner in Enfield (Enfield Council) and interviews with three representatives from the Enfield Engagement team.

### Funding context

The 2018/19 baseline year in Enfield saw only £9,800 of awards made to one applicant. Therefore, compared to this low baseline, investment in 2019/20 saw an increase of 1015% to £111,500 and by 2600% in 2020/21 with £270,100 of investment.

There was uplift in the number of successful applicants from the baseline year through each year of the AoF programme. In 2018/19 on one award was made compared to five applicants (20%), compared to 2019/20 were 50% of applicants (six applicants, three awards) were successful. Finally, in 2020/21, 83% of applicants were successful (six applicants, five awards). This may be attributed to the Call for Projects initiative, instigated by the engagement team in collaboration with the local council, opened in October 2019 (and closed in February 2020). This resulted in the engagement team meeting with a wide range of potential projects, advising projects on best next steps on how to progress projects and whether it was worth pursuing heritage funding or if their project could be reshaped to fit with The Fund’s priorities.

In addition, other methods of increasing investment were utilised, including the soliciting of a bid from Enfield council for £200,000 for capacity building, community grants and heritage engagement that contributes to a communities’ sense of place. It is significant that this bid alone is larger than the previous two years investment. Included in this bid is a community grant, with community steering group, to ensure sustainability and enable the council to deliver funding for heritage to the community.

### Background to the project

The solicited bid project from the Enfield is to be delivered from September 2020 to August 2022. The project seeks to build capacity within community groups to define and develop heritage project and make applications for funding. The project will do so by providing staff resource within the local

authority, deliver a training programme to organisations and provide a community grant pot to support community heritage project ideas.

The project will have four main outcomes:

- organisations across Enfield will have greater capacity to design and deliver community heritage projects;
- Enfield Council will have a strong model for supporting heritage activity;
- more people will have taken part in heritage; and
- heritage projects will take place which bring Enfield's heritage to life for a wide range of borough residents.

### Experience of Process and Impacts

Emerging findings on the process and impacts of the solicited bid from consultation with Fund staff and local authority delivery partners are detailed below.

- Engagement team respondents in Enfield found the solicited bid process to be very much aligned with the concept of an AoF:
  - “Soliciting was a tool we said we’d use in our Strategic funding framework and the pandemic gave us opportunity to deliver funding into areas and test the process and test it internally. It was a fantastic way to force us to change and it was a wonderful signal for Enfield that we could say, we’re going to give you money”- representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams;
  - “The solicited bid gave organisations space to do some extended thinking. Filling in our forms is never easy and having the space to craft a project or thing that fits with our criteria and meets the needs and wants of an organisation at that critical moment is quite difficult. So from my team’s perspective, having decided that these areas are a priority, let’s give them some money to do something with as opposed to saying “well you are a priority but you’ve still got to jump through all of the hoops and if you don’t come up with something we’re not going to fund you”- representative from The Fund’s Engagement Teams ;
- The model of the solicited bid is seen by the delivery partners as a way of developing a more effective capacity building project, as it has given the thinking space and resources for the local authority to be more ambitious in their planning:
  - “I would have developed the capacity development element differently – inviting them [The Fund] to speak in workshops, to speak rather than run our own fund – so it’s a better model. It’s allowed us to be more ambitious” - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- It was also viewed by staff from The Fund as a more appropriate and effective way of doing the pre-application / engagement work. In previous experiences, one respondent felt a lot of her team’s effort was in effectively writing a bid, but the solicited bid created capacity for those who would actually be delivering the project to do the early thinking:
  - “[previously] quite a lot of work you did was pre-application work and helping people understanding what you wanted as there wasn’t capacity in the area to do that thinking. What soliciting was giving money to help an area to develop it’s activity... what we’ve given is development time and money – giving them staff to develop the project and giving them consultant time – Enfield getting 5 / 6 days of consultant time to develop their project. It’s fantastic as work we do is engagement, not being a surrogate bid writer” - representative from the Fund’s Engagement Teams;

- One stakeholder responded that more than just creating the capacity of one additional heritage staff member, the solicited bid had protected all of the heritage services in the council from further budget cuts, ensuring a wider impact:
  - "in common with every local authority – heritage services would always benefit from more staff. The solicited bid is putting that service in a lifeboat. The council is less inclined to reduce their budget and we've created capacity so they can do that strategic thinking and forward looking, as opposed to just firefighting constantly so I think that's what we're currently seeing"- representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams ;
- The solicited bid has also given staff from The Fund more strategic access and input into heritage at the council, as they can leverage their contribution to council staff capacity:
  - "having someone like [delivery partner] at Enfield, she has a busy job and she probably / possibly wouldn't be making the time if we weren't providing funding and strategic input. If it was just the strategic input, she'd probably give some time, but given that we're giving money, I think we get more time and then can make more impact" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams.

### Key Findings

The solicited approach in Enfield improved the ambition of the council to develop more innovative products to build community capacity, rather than just run funding workshops. The fact that the solicited bid provided money for development time and consultant time has enabled the council to take a more strategic and ambitious approach to the project they will deliver.

It was highlighted that all council services are under threat from budget cuts, and therefore not only did the solicited bid by providing staff funding, increase the resource of the cultural / heritage teams, but provided some protection from future cuts. This solicited grant has created the capacity for the teams to go beyond just "*firefighting*" with the minimum possible staff, allowing them to adopt a strategic approach to heritage in the borough. In turn, this funding support has increased the influence of The Fund in the council, enabling the organisation to reach into the council more easily.

### Walsall

Desk research and consultation with the solicited bid delivery partner in Walsall (Walsall Council) and a representative from the Walsall Engagement team, has informed this case study.

### Funding Context

The baseline 2018/19 investment for Walsall was £31,800, made to one organisation (Lakis Greek Kitchen) for a community heritage project. 2019/20 saw a small increase of 34% to £43,200. 2020/21 saw a significant increase in investment of 809% to £291,400.

The number of applications and awards in the baseline year was only one. In this first year of the AoF programme, there was an increase to seven applications and five awards made. These awards were all in the low range of circa £10,000. Projects included Darlaston Mosaic – Kids in Communication (£9,700), The Mossley Story – One Walsall (£10,000), The Americans are Here – the Big Happiness Experiment CIC (£10,000) and One Ring to Bind them All – Wrestling in Walsall (£10,000).

2020/21 saw a decrease of applications and awards (five applications, four awards) but a large increase in value of awards. A significant portion of this investment was awarded to Walsall Borough Council following their solicited bid of £249,000 to work with the local community to

develop and embed an action plan for heritage in the borough. This reflects the engagement team's focus to address the strategic deficiencies with regard to heritage in the borough.

### Background to the project

The Walsall solicited bid project is a project that seeks to rebuild the heritage capacity within Walsall council and the borough and utilise heritage to tackle wider issues / opportunities i.e. inequality, health and wellbeing, environment and economic development. The project will receive grant funding of £249,900 and deliver from October 2020 to October 2023.

The project will:

- commission a new heritage action plan to guide discussions, set direction and identify needs over the next five years and beyond, with three cross-cutting themes: equality, environment, and digital transformation;
- create 1 FTE heritage officer and contribute 0.25 FTE towards a full-time conservation officer, with responsibilities to represent sector needs, oversee planning, instigate projects, pilot a community grants fund, establish a heritage forum and create new partnerships; and
- ensure that heritage is better managed and integrated into Walsall's overall vision.

### Experience of Process and Impacts

Consultation with delivery partner from the Walsall Borough Council and The Fund's staff revealed the following:

- A key issue identified by both council and The Fund's staff prior to the solicited bid was the lack of capacity, and therefore the absence of heritage being a strategic priority, within Walsall Council. The solicited bid sought to tackle this issue. The delivery partner stated that:
  - *"[without the solicited bid] I think that heritage would have been further and further forgotten"* - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- The delivery partner reported that the discussions around and leading up to the solicited bid were key in increasing the ambition of what could be achieved and the anticipated impact.:
  - "originally, we thought about putting a really small bid, just for funding for consultants to develop a strategy and action plan because we thought that was all they would fund, but discussions showed that they would be willing to fund staff positions and now we can maximise funding much better and really have a long term strategic impact" - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
  - "[Through the solicited bid, the delivery partner has been able to] procure heritage consultants and develop a pipeline of key projects that we will hopefully be able to support and fund - it's helped us sit and think about what's needed and get the strategic and political commitment from above" - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
- The solicited bid project was designed to increase the understanding of awareness of heritage and its impacts among senior level council staff. It has been noted that this change has already been observed and that heritage is now reflected in wider council strategies:
  - "For the council as well – it's for seeing officers recognising heritage's benefit for social, economic and environmental outcomes" - Solicited Project Delivery Partners;
  - "they did this all throughout Covid-19, and the fact that Walsall had this bid prepared was a key thing to bring in solicited bids all across the programme. It helped build heritage into the council's strategies, giving a broad view of heritage" - representative from The Fund's Engagement Teams.

## Key Findings

Prior to the solicited bid process Walsall Council had lost a dedicated heritage team due to budget cuts and did not have a heritage strategy. It was reported that the council lacked strategic focus and capacity to deliver heritage. The solicited bid has not only provided the council with additional capacity to deliver heritage projects, but it has also contributed heritage being pushed-up the council's agenda by increasing awareness among senior council officers of the wider benefits of heritage.

## Rhondda Cynon Taff

Although it was not possible to produce a case study for Rhondda Cynon Taff, the funding context for this AoF is detailed below.

### Funding context

Rhondda Cynon Taff had a strong 2018/19 FY baseline investment figure of £350,800, made up of seven awards. 2019/20 saw a small percentage drop of 37%, although investment remained at a significant level of £221,200 with five successful awards. In 2020/21, there was a significant percentage increase of 413% to an investment level of £1,810,800. A variety of factors combined in order to enable this change.

2020/21 saw an increase in the number of applications of 110% from the baseline year (and an increase of 163% from the previous year) with ten applications in 2018/19 (seven awards), eight in 2019/20 (five awards) and twenty-one in 2020/21 (fourteen awards). Targeted engagement and (e.g. Digital) campaign activity played a significant role in this. The Digital Confidence grant programme provided £10,000 of funding to two local community organisations.

The Fund also solicited an application from the local council for £250,000 to deliver a community engagement project, looking at a sense of place of the area and developing a heritage strategy. The local council in addition in late 2020 were awarded £1,439,300 for their *Heritage for Communities - Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Pontypridd project*, a capital project to restore and enhance Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and connect local people, communities, and visitors with its heritage. These two council projects accounted for a significant portion of the 2020/21 investment made.

## Summary of Key Findings

This section synthesises key findings of the emerging impacts, strategic added value and solicited grant case study sections.

- **Impacts of AoF support** - AoF activities have been helpful in helping organisations define their heritage proposition and in developing projects, but also in identifying synergies and partnerships with stakeholders offering complementary work. It clear that the AoF approach is producing a range of successful outcomes in relation to the quality of bids, funding levels within AoFs, leverage, strategic influence and co-ordination. Whilst AoF activities were overall well received, the value added of the support varies depending on the size of the recipient organisation. Therefore, The Fund should adopt a co-production approach to its engagement work, as opposed of applying a 'one-size fits all' support model.
- **Networking and partnership building** - stakeholders acknowledge the value of The Fund supporting networking activities and its benefit in providing greater visibility of heritage. However, feedback indicates the expectation for The Fund to provide a clear roadmap on how organisations can engage with The Fund and between themselves, having clear sight of the higher-level strategic ambitions for heritage. Engagement Leads also noted that building

partnership is difficult to achieve, in areas where there has been no prior relationship building between the Fund, VCSE, public and private organisations.

- **Attitudinal factors** - feedback suggests that there is scope for The Fund to further adapt its approach by considering the factors that can inhibit the ambitions of smaller organisations;
- **Communications** - AoF activities have led to improvements in the quality and ambition of funding submissions, however, consultations highlighted that without the ongoing communication with the Fund, applicants would have not appreciated the scale of funding available for their organisation;
- **Local knowledge** - evidence across local councils demonstrates the value added in appointing heritage specific personnel whose responsibilities include the collation of information on local heritage needs and opportunities. Gathering area specific intelligence can also help to identify the most effective approach to capacity building.
- **Digital engagement** - the possibility to attend online events with underrepresented organisations, such as grassroot organisations, has been positively received. Feedback highlights that smaller organisations are the ones facing the lowest confidence to approach big funders. This relates to the belief that they are too small to be of interest, but it also relates to the lack of resources to cover travel costs and confidence to attend events where the attendees may not know anyone else. Evidence also indicates how incorporating area specific knowledge into digital engagement activities is key to motivate organisations to further engage on heritage projects.
- **Perceptions of Heritage** – there are mixed opinions on the stakeholders’ perceptions and experiences of heritage and not all stakeholders agree on the use of term ‘heritage’ as posited by The Fund. Feedback has also highlighted a degree of scepticism how inclusive heritage (and the Fund) is, with it being viewed as not being inclusive of predominantly working class grassroot groups. It is hoped that learning from the AoF can influence improvements in how heritage is expressed and conveyed.
- **The Solicited Grant Process** - the case studies highlight that the solicited grant process speeds up the process of applications and increases the confidence of applicants to be more ambitious with projects that they develop, leading to more impactful projects. Solicitation enables applicants to understand what the Fund will invest in, enabling them to match their applications accordingly (e.g. staff capacity in Walsall). It has enabled grantee organisations to increase their capacity, significant in the context that both Council and Third Sector recipients report struggles with budgets and funding for staff capacity, and it increases the ability to influence strategically, both in terms of council staff influencing internally to push heritage up the list of priorities, as well as giving The Fund the opportunity to influence within the council.

## Chapter 7 Data Review

### Introduction

This section summarises the findings from the review of data collection processes and monitoring systems. The findings are based on consultations with The Fund's core team responsible for data collection and management and member of regional engagement teams. It is important to note that The Fund is currently reviewing internal monitoring and data management processes to address many of the data limitations outlined below. Therefore, the availability/format of data held by The Fund is anticipated to change over the duration of the evaluation and the evaluation team will need to work closely with The Fund to adapt to this.

The findings highlight that whilst there is robust data relating to The Fund's investments, there is less data available to quantify the scope and scale of engagement activity which generates the pipeline of grant applications and delivers additional strategic value within target communities. To understand the impact of targeting investment and engagement activity in AoF, the evaluation must put processes in place to record this activity.

### National Data Processes

The Grant Events and Management (GEMS) system is currently used to record details of The Fund's investments. For evaluation purposes GEMS can provide:

- quantitative data regarding the number and scale of investments made within Areas of Focus. This can be compared with other areas, over time to consider activity before and after intervention and at an individual investment level to understand the level of investment requested and awarded;
- conversion rates i.e. proportion of Project Enquiry Forms / Expressions of Interest (EOIs) which lead to application; proportion of applications which are successful etc;
- details of where development grants have been awarded which can be tracked to understand whether these lead to full grant applications; and
- insight into who is accessing Fund investment at an organisational level and the extent to which The Fund's reach is being extended.

Further activity is also underway to map investments against standard datasets such as IMD, the RSA Heritage Index, Census data and Active Lives.

### Data limitations and implications for the evaluation

There are several known limitations with GEMS data. These are listed below alongside with implications and initiatives underway aimed at consolidating data required for the evaluation:

- GEMS primarily records details of The Fund's investments. It does not reflect the activities of the engagement teams prior to an EOI being submitted and therefore this will need to be captured through the collection of output data within AoF and qualitative analysis of beneficiary journeys and pre-investment support;
- the data is largely unstructured and is retrospectively tagged which can lead to inconsistencies in categorisation. Where projects categorise their activities (e.g. on the application form), there are inconsistencies in how this is interpreted (e.g. where an organisation is based compared to where it's activity will take place). This makes it particularly difficult to determine at a strategic level how investments are aligned to strategic objectives, who projects are supporting/targeting, and how investments are supporting The Funds inclusion and diversity objectives;

- projects receiving funding are required to produce a business plan/monitoring plan, but this is not produced in a consistent format agreed by The Fund;
- it is not possible to run reports which quantify what has been procured by The Fund in a consistent format i.e. specific outputs and level of investment within a defined geography. Progress monitoring is primarily undertaken qualitatively via the Register of Support Services (ROSS) Consultant/Investment Officer reports attached to each file. It is not possible to give a clear indication of 'success' or what was 'good'/'bad' based on GEMs data without reviewing each project file;
- longer term outcomes and impacts are not recorded centrally. An annual survey to track investments over time had been conducted for several years, although this was put on hold two years ago as part of The Fund's on-going review of monitoring systems;
- projects receiving investment are awarded funding to undertake evaluation, however, the evaluation activity does not capture quantitative data in a consistent format that can be collated centrally. It was commented by the engagement teams that evaluation findings provide a considerable amount of information but because it is not accessible, it does not consistently inform future activity; and
- some data is missing. When reports are run outlining investments in an area, regional teams are aware of other investments that are not reflected within the reports.

Based on the above, the GEMs system can be used to provide high-level data regarding the scope and scale of The Funds' investments in AoF. However, pre-engagement activity and the subsequent success/impact of investments will need to be captured at the local level. Other considerations (not all of which are within the scope/remit of this evaluation) include:

- the need for a consistent approach to tagging/categorising qualitative information recorded within GEMs, so that its content is more accessible and useful. It was noted that an agreed list of tags would be a useful starting point to drill down into investments made;
- the evaluation should aim to understand the full journey of applicants within AoF, particularly engagement and capacity building activity prior to an EOI being submitted and where organisations have accessed smaller grants / development funding. However, it was noted that the evaluation should not assume that success is progression along a linear 'ladder' of support, and organisations may only require guidance or a modest grant to take their ideas forwards; and
- there is scope to make better use of the evaluation evidence which The Fund currently procures as part of grant agreements.

## Chapter 8 Conclusions and Implications

### Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings from this second stage of the evaluation. It draws on the material in this report to draw conclusions on what works, as well as identifying key learnings that needs consideration for further improvements. The chapter concludes with a series of implications for the evaluation study.

### Covid-19

Progress in AoF activities has been significantly impacted by Covid-19. The full range of activities, as prescribed in the ToC, did not materialise to the same extent across the thirteen AoF. The procurement model also varied with the introduction of solicited bid as a mean to mitigate the devastating impact on culture, people and heritage assets that Covid-19 has had. As such, indication of outcomes and impacts is so far limited. Instead, the evaluation has sought to extract key findings aiming to support The Fund understanding what works, but also focus on areas that would work better and implement key learnings for the next stage of delivery.

### What works

Findings to date suggest that AoF activities are contributing toward the short- and medium-term outcomes. Organisations have grown awareness in capacity and capability gaps to define heritage projects, but also apply for funding and identify synergies in outcomes sought with potential cross-sectoral partners. **Key enablers** supporting the development of heritage projects in AoFs were identified as being a desire from within the community and strong community identify; a supportive sectoral / local authority environment; and, an understanding of wider impacts of heritage.

Aspects of the AoF approach that are viewed as working well include:

- **Support:** Organisations have overall benefited from the Engagement Leads' support provision. Stakeholders stated that without the one-to-one support in bid writing, they wouldn't have seriously considered heritage funding, or The Fund as potential funder nor gain the confidence to undertake the bid writing process. Findings does however indicate that support provision must be adjusted considering the size and expertise of organisations, with larger organisations benefited from specific heritage-based approach, heritage being an area where they have developed less expertise.
- **Endorsement:** Heritage activities endorsed by The Fund allows Engagement Leads and/or VCSE organisations to command attention with senior people in local governments leading to an increased prioritisation of heritage projects. There was evidence of meetings and local government initiatives occurring because they were funded, and therefore endorsed, by The Fund. This implies that The Fund has a clear established authority in terms of providing a focus on heritage and clear examples on how the name should be used on further initiatives should be offered to further showcase the value added of The Fund heritage work.
- **Communication:** Findings to date suggests The Fund communication efforts – including the Digital Confidence Fund – is effective in provide the focus, and engaging, with VCSE organisations. Engagement Leads have reported on added visibility of The Fund with organisations who wouldn't have previously considered applying for funding, and the Strategic Framework providing an authoritative reference point for communication activities. More work is needed to understand the specific added value of campaign work into general AoF activities (see implications below).

- **Local area evidence led work:** Some organisations reported a level of mistrust to larger nationwide organisation like The Fund. The collation of area-based intelligence is key in ensuring the adequate positioning and level of engagement activities so that the wealth of knowledge accumulate by local VCSE organisations is accounted for. Evidence suggests that a co-production approach to identify local heritage needs and opportunities is key in ensuring local engagement. The place framework clearly marks The Fund's intention to utilise as far as possible existing local knowledge and learnings from its pilot stage in Midlands and East of England will need to be incorporated in future area-based activities.
- **Strategic framework:** Evidence suggests that the provision of nationwide heritage based strategic roadmap contributes to increasing the understanding of heritage, and how heritage activities can mesh with wider activities relating to well-being, health or confidence building. The Fund ought to maintain this authority. Key enablers to do so is the extraction and embedment of continuous learning – local and nationwide – as well as co-production of strategic tools.
- **Cooperation and coordinated working:** Government stakeholders have well received AoF activities with key benefits in appointing heritage specific staff whose role is to develop a local understanding of the needs and opportunities for heritage work, as well as identifying key public/private/third sector partnerships. The Strategic Framework provides a heritage agenda key for local initiatives to get traction and attract area funding.

#### Solicited case studies specific findings

- **Magnitude of applications:** Analysis of financial trends in the five case study areas has highlighted a pattern of increased scale of investment from the baseline year to 2020/21. The Fund was able to invest in larger projects of the £200,000 or more, compared with multiple smaller £10,000 projects in preceding years. This is found to be a direct result of solicitation.
- **Capacity building:** The process whereby funding for staff resource was included as part of the bid has increased capacity of recipients to deliver more impactful projects and has provided a strategic approach to heritage in Local Authority Areas in cases where it had been absent.
- **Strategic influencing:** Feedback suggests that the solicited grant (and specifically resource for staff) has enabled strategic influencing within local authorities, both externally by The Fund's engagement teams, and internally, through new heritage officers. This has contributed to an increased prioritisation of heritage and an understanding of the influence of heritage on other priority areas.
- **Application Quality:** Projects solicited are more ambitious and more sustainable, due to increased dialogue and collaboration, development time and provision of support at the application / inception stage and an increased confidence from the grantee following the solicitation request.

#### What needs improvement

**Key barriers** to the development of heritage were identified as being a lack of capacity within the local authority and community; a negative perception or lack of understanding of heritage; and, a mistrust / lack of relationships with local communities. The following were identified as issues requiring improvement.

- **Definition of Heritage:** Whilst communication material is generally well received, not all stakeholders agree that the current way in which heritage is expressed is most inclusive. Evidence highlights a so called 'while middle-class' stigma with older white volunteers perceived as most likely to engage with heritage projects, therefore minimising the outreach to

underrepresented groups. More work is needed to convey the inclusive nature of The Fund's work and benefits from heritage projects at a wider community level.

- **AoF selection criteria:** Findings indicate that using the IMD as a criterion to identify priority areas may not be the most appropriate tool – with further local based knowledge required to ensure areas selected overall represent heritage opportunities. This is due to lower super output areas showing internal socio-economic variations which are not solely detected by IMD data, potentially leading to inefficient resources allocation i.e. funding has not allocated to areas most in need of heritage projects. More communication work is also needed to ensure VCSE organisations understand that selection is based on a combination of IMD and funding historical data.
- **Clarity around AoF target outcomes:** despite good work in engagement activities, stakeholders are concerned at a lack of target outcomes for what The Fund hopes to achieve beyond investment. The AoF ToC and the associated target outcomes should be communicated to all internal and external stakeholders.
- **Continuity of support:** Organisations reported that staff continuity is key to ensuring ongoing trust levels and communication with The Fund. Change in staff is highly disruptive to confidence building activities with local VCSE organisations which can affect their motivation to join heritage networking activities and reduce cooperation levels between VCSE organisations and public sector. The Fund could mitigate the negative effect of staff departure by introducing an internal communication log which – at a higher level – will record Engagement Lead communication and support activities with organisations, thereby leaving an account of the work to date and minimising disruption to momentum of ongoing work.
- **Attitudinal factors:** Whilst capacity building activities are well received, some organisations reported that it was not enough to overcome the risk averse attitude that beneficiaries may have. This is particularly the case with smaller VCSE organisations reluctant to invest in new activities, instead preferring to utilise resources to cover operational costs and/or familiar activities. More work is needed in trying to understand the internal causes of this attitude with potential implications of extending the type of support offered, beyond bid writing skills.
- **Application forms and award processes:** Evidence highlights the perceived complexity around The Fund's award process, including its application forms. A key aspect is the disproportionality of application forms with respect to size of projects and funding sought. Some stakeholders suggested that The Fund should consider taking more risks with reducing the number of funding criteria and outcomes demonstration required, in order to attract more organisations that, so far, may have ruled out applying for funding due to the perceived inability to meet funding criteria. It should be noted that the recent Solicited Bid funding process has utilised a tailored approach to individual bids which has reduced the level of information required from applicants.

## Implications

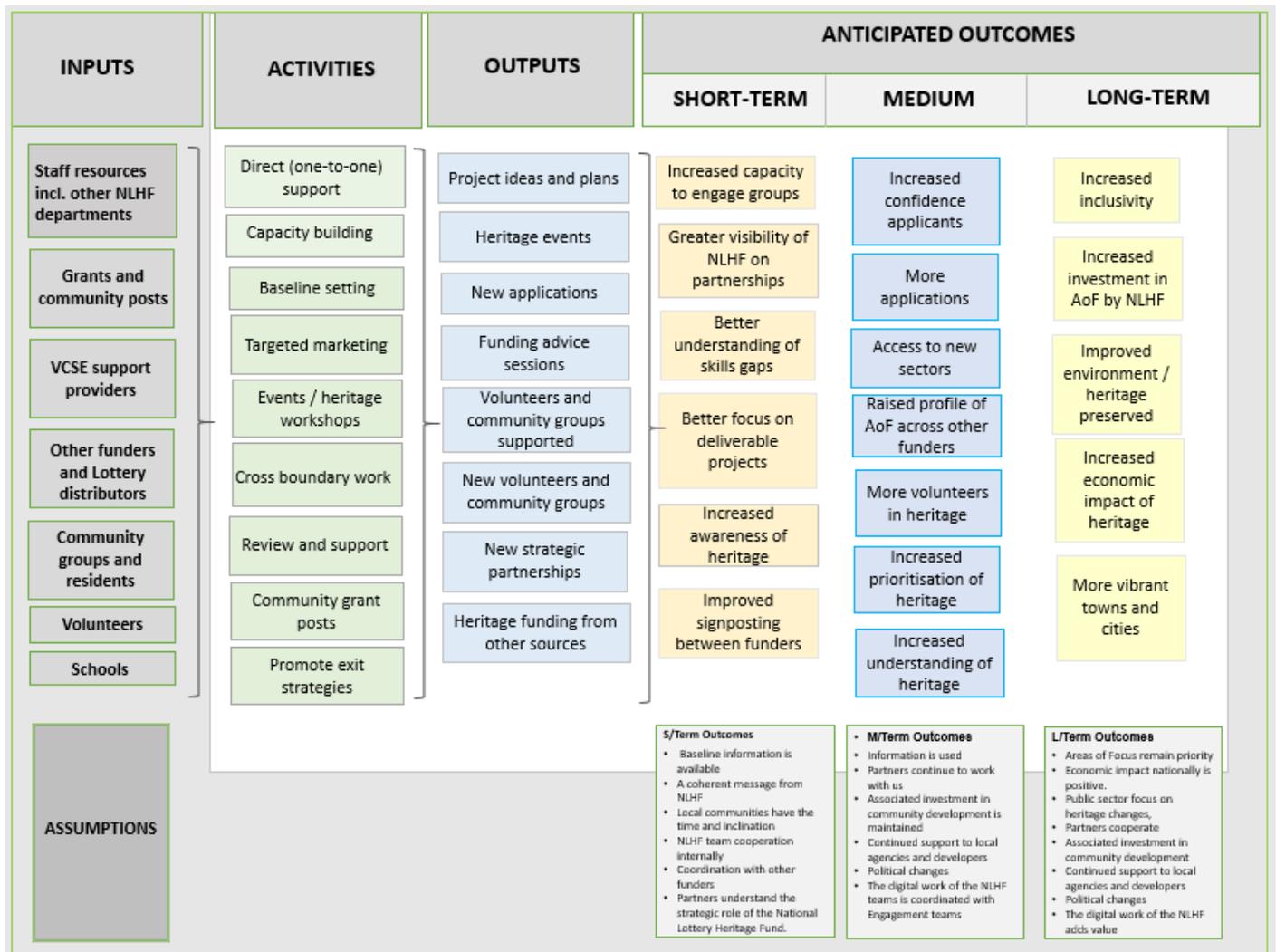
Whilst findings from the evaluation are so far broadly positive -albeit restricted somehow due to Covid-19 – there are a number of potential hazards that could constrain the realisation of short-medium term outcomes, as well as the capability of the evaluation team to capture evidence around these.

- **Timescales:** It is unclear how far eligible applicants are in their bid writing and/or project work, with many projects potentially being halted, or greatly impeded, by Covid-19. Inevitably, the degree of completion of project activities will affect the evidence base the evaluation will be able to draw findings from.
- **Data:** This report includes a discussion of the limitations of current data collection and monitoring processes at The Fund, supplemented by a series of suggested data fields that

would be needed for the evaluation to assess impact. We will discuss the coverage of the data fields and revise the depth to which the evaluation can infer findings as the study progresses. The evaluation will also remain flexible to changes in service context and delivery and it will include the assessment of the impact of new funding products that are applied to AoF (e.g. grant in aid), where applicable.

- **Context and ‘place framework’:** Identification of area specific context will be needed to understand the varying level of success of the AoF programme. The study team will need to liaise on an ongoing basis with The Fund’s core team, but also the Engagement and AoF leads to compile context specific information that will help to discern programme intervention from competing factors. This will be key to inform the extent to which non AoF programme activities may have contributed to the area achieving the outcomes and add knowledge to the evidence base on ‘what works’ in heritage. We understand that the ‘place framework’ could support this evidence gathering exercise and we will work with The Fund to understand the level at which this has been piloted and introduced in AoF.
- **Campaign work:** Campaign activities are complementary to wider AoF activities. Our evaluation design, and in specific consultations with funded organisations, will need to ascertain the extent to which activities and outcomes have resulted from campaign funding i.e. would outcomes detected have occurred anyway, regardless of the Digital Confidence Fund? The evaluation will also seek to understand how the Digital Confidence funding supported the develop of networking activities and engagement whilst accounting for the disruptive COVID-19 factor.
- **Intensity of engagement activities:** Consultations show it is a combination of engagement activities that lead to outcomes sought. This led the study team to recommend the capture of key metric around the type and count of engagement activities across AoF. Going forward, and combined with qualitative data, the evaluation aims to capture a nuanced understanding as to which type of activities, and combination of activities, lead to outcomes – and if so, what level of activities is required before outcomes start to emerge i.e. how many events should organisations engage with, and what type, before we can start to see outputs and outcomes emerging?

## Appendix 1: Initial Theory of Change



**Appendix 1 description:** The figure shows the theory of change as it was initially developed, prior to RSM revisions. It follows the same structure as the revised theory of change but is less detailed. The figure shows the inputs, activities, outputs and anticipated outcomes (short, medium and long term) of the fund.

## Appendix 2: Secondary data

### Data collection tools (secondary)

In addition to the primary data collection, the evaluation also draws on

#### 1. Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

- **Objective:** to provide area-based context and validate the rationale for including the area into one of the 13 areas of focus.
- **Approach:** Analysis of socio-economic indicators for each of the 13 areas of focus which is incorporated into our case studies research

#### 2. RSA Heritage index

- **Objective:** to provide area-based context and validate the rationale for including the area into one of the 13 areas of focus. In particular, this dataset will provide information on the specific type of heritage projects that are thriving and/or lacking in each areas.
- **Approach:** Analysis of heritage index across key measures including Historic Built Environment, Parks and Open Spaces and Landscape and Natural Environment incorporated into our case studies research

#### 3. Census data

- **Objective:** to provide socio-economic context information nationally and across the 13 AoF
- **Approach:** in-depth review of key indicators supporting the rationale for AoF intervention and incorporated in the baseline study.

#### 4. Area of Focus programme level investments information

- **Objective:** to provide indicative baseline data across the 13 areas of focus enabling timely comparisons as the evaluation evolves and assessment of impact is triangulated with funding granted.
- **Approach:** analysis of funding information granted in each areas of focus over the period 2019-2021 (up to March 2021). Note that this information will be supplemented by more detailed information which will be extractable from the new CMS system (to be implemented in April 2021). More details pertaining to the limitations of the current data are given below.

### Appendix 3: Proposed Indicators for Integration into PMS

The focus is to capture the scope of interactions with each organisation pre submission of a formal EOI through to the point at which an application is submitted (and management hands over to Investment Teams and data is captured in GEMS).

Points for consideration:

- Are there already established approaches to capturing data fields below which we need to align to e.g. how staff time is recorded/allocated against types of activity?
- The approach below records staff time against different activities (e.g. one to one capacity building, event delivery etc) to capture the scale of engagement activity in a consistent format. Some of the regions record event data separately (e.g. type of event, attendees, engagement resulting etc). We could formalise this in addition to recording staff time, but this would (it is assumed) need to sit outside the PMS and would require regional co-operation to consistently record the data. (see Events Data section below)
- Suggested outcomes are quantitative rather than the benefits of capacity building on organisations. This will be captured qualitatively via case studies/interviews. The focus for the PMS data is information which can be compiled by NLHF staff without significant input from the external partner.

Category	Options	Rationale
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live</li> <li>• Closed</li> <li>• Hold (not actively being progressed)</li> </ul>	
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct enquiry (they contacted the Fund directly)</li> <li>• Targeted (the Fund approached them directly)</li> </ul>	Understanding the balance between reactive engagement and proactive targeting/solicitation
Engagement route (i.e. mechanism through which they came into contact with the Fund on this occasion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund event</li> <li>• Other/partner event</li> <li>• Fund marketing literature / Internet search</li> <li>• Word of mouth</li> <li>• Referred by another funder</li> <li>• Targeted/approached directly by the Fund</li> <li>• They have an existing contact at the Fund</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	Understanding which routes to market support engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• targeted events</li> <li>• targeted one to one</li> <li>• broad-based marketing</li> <li>• networks / referrals</li> <li>• existing relationship</li> </ul>
Organisation details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public sector</li> <li>• Voluntary/community sector</li> <li>• Private sector</li> </ul>	Understanding who the Fund is engaging and whether some organisations are more 'successful' in accessing funds (providing opportunity to explore the reasons behind any under-representation)

Category	Options	Rationale
	2.. Year Established	As above – any variation in engagement/support needs by maturity of organisation
First time grantee	2. Yes 3. No	Understanding how engagement activity is extending reach
Support provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building/advisory support (one to one pre-EOI activity) (Yes/No)</li> <li>Application support (one to one post-EOI activity) (Yes/No)</li> <li>Events (held/chaired, presented at, participated in – not just attendance) (Yes/No)</li> <li>Targeted stakeholder engagement/relationship building (e.g. meetings, working groups etc) (Yes/No)</li> </ul>	<p>Categorisation required to understand time inputs which are pre-application (i.e. bringing organisations to the point of submitting a formal EOI) and those which are post-EOI</p> <p>Also, to capture the scope and scale of other engagement activities</p>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project/idea progressed/Advisory support provided (Yes/No)</li> <li>EOI submitted (Yes/No)</li> <li>Application submitted (Yes/No)</li> <li>Successful application (Yes/No)</li> <li>Successful application at resubmission (Yes/No)</li> <li>Referred to another funder/provider</li> <li>Project not eligible for support at this stage</li> </ul>	<p>To understand the outcome from engagement activity and conversion rates between engagement, EOI and application.</p> <p>The qualitative impact in terms of capacity building will need to be explored via case studies/interviews</p>

**Appendix 3 Description:** This table highlights the proposed indicators to be included into the PMS system. It has three columns, category, options and rationale. The category designates the type of indicator, the options column designates the potential options per indicator and the rationale explains why this indicator should be included.

## Events Data

As noted above, the following sits outside the PMS but consideration could be given to formalising an approach to regular data recording and analysis. Considerations include:

- Feasibility/interest in establishing additional data recording tools
- Are there any agreed approaches to recording the types of events delivered by The Fund and outcomes from Fund led events?

The following could be captured via registration and post-event follow up processes (although this approach could only be applied to The Fund's controlled events where registration and feedback data could be collected):

- Date
- Area of Focus: yes/no
- Type of event: advice surgery; funding fair; workshop/training; forum/networking; other
- Was the event organised by The Fund – alone, with partners, or were we attendees at someone else's event
- Number of attendees: previously attended Fund event / not previously attended Fund event
- Was the event targeting a priority group: yes/no
- If yes, which one(s): (multiple choice options)
- Did The Fund carry out evaluation after the event? If yes – (then go to the outcomes)
- Outcomes:
  - % attendees increasing their knowledge of heritage
  - % attendees increasing their understanding of Fund support
  - % attendees motivated/inspired to engage in heritage in their community
  - % attendees increasing their connections with others engaged in heritage
  - % attendees more likely to apply for funding to progress a heritage project

## Stakeholder Engagement

Additional targeted stakeholder engagement will be captured by the stakeholder management system.

- Type of stakeholder (local authority, Housing Association, Other public sector, voluntary/community, private sector, individual)
- Who instigated the contact (targeted by The Fund, referred/introduction from third party, direct approach by the stakeholder)?
- Purpose of engagement
  - general enquiry/information request;
  - event attendance;
  - event participation/lead;
  - general networking;
  - Partnership/joint working opportunities;
  - Strategic representation e.g. role on advisory group.

## Appendix 4: Socio-economic baseline

This was initially compiled for the year one Area of Focus report and has not been updated, as agreed with The Fund. Data will be updated for the next reporting period to reflect impacts of Covid-19 as well as any other socio-economic changes in the Areas of Focus.

The social and economic challenges facing each area differ but their inclusion in the bottom 25 per cent of the IMD signify the scale of the challenges facing the Engagement Teams. At this stage of the evaluation it is not possible to understand fully the impact of specific indicators on success. As the evaluation progresses, we will explore how these factors shape or support delivery. Some of the most relevant factors relating to community resilience are set out in this chapter.

### Index of Multiple Deprivation average score

We noted in our report that whilst all the Areas of Focus are in the 25 per cent of most deprived wards in the IMD, there is a significant variation across the Areas. Knowsley faces significantly greater challenges overall, with Newham, North East Lincolnshire and Walsall also facing slightly greater disadvantage than the remaining 9 areas of England within the Areas of Focus. Figure A1 highlights the IMD score for England (separate figures are calculated for Wales and Scotland).

Figure A5: IMD Average Score England Areas of Focus

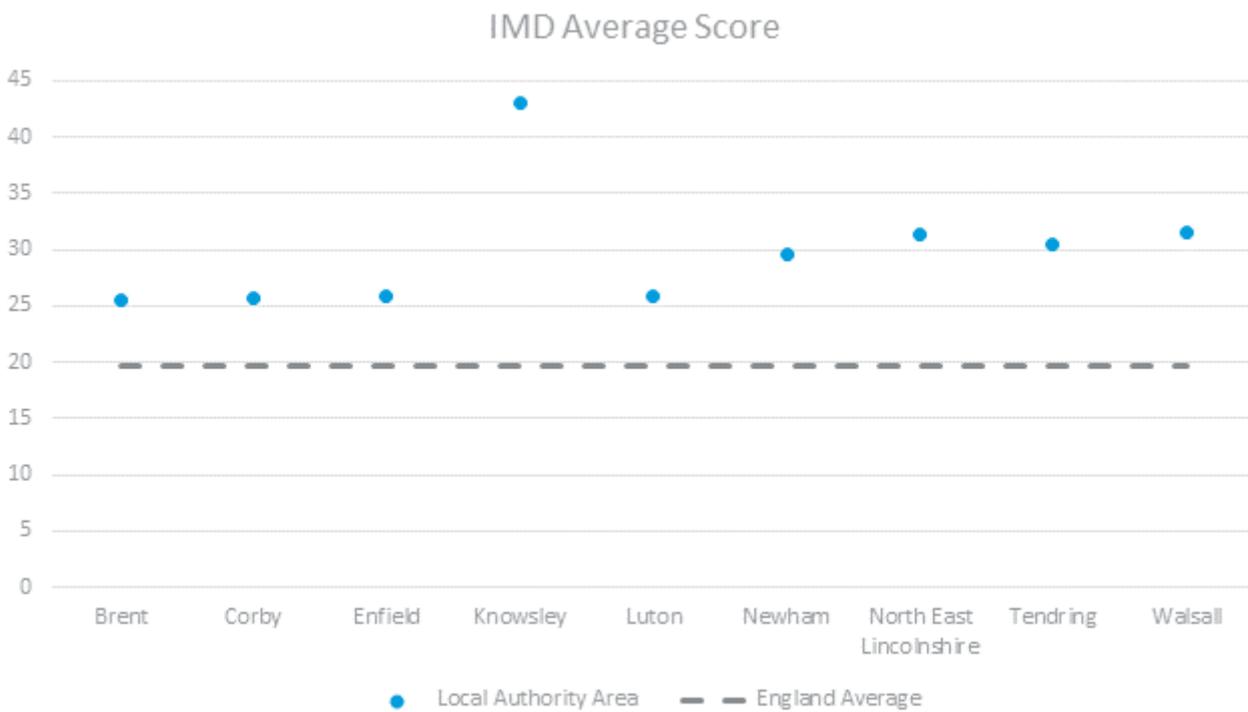


Figure A5 Description: IMD Average Score England Areas of Focus. This figure shows the average IMD score for England and displays the English areas of focus as points, all which score above the average IMD score.

In Scotland, the Inverclyde and North Lanarkshire regions are among the areas most affected by multiple indices of deprivation. North Lanarkshire has 10 per cent of Scottish wards in the 15 per cent most deprived data zones and Inverclyde 6 per cent (Glasgow accounts for 30 per cent). In Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taff has 18 per cent of wards in the top 10 per cent most deprived in Wales, Neath Port Talbot 15 per cent.<sup>9</sup> Average ranks of wards in the local authority areas for the Areas of Focus in Wales and Scotland are present in figures A2 and A3<sup>10</sup>.

Figure A6: WIMD Average Rank Welsh Areas of Focus

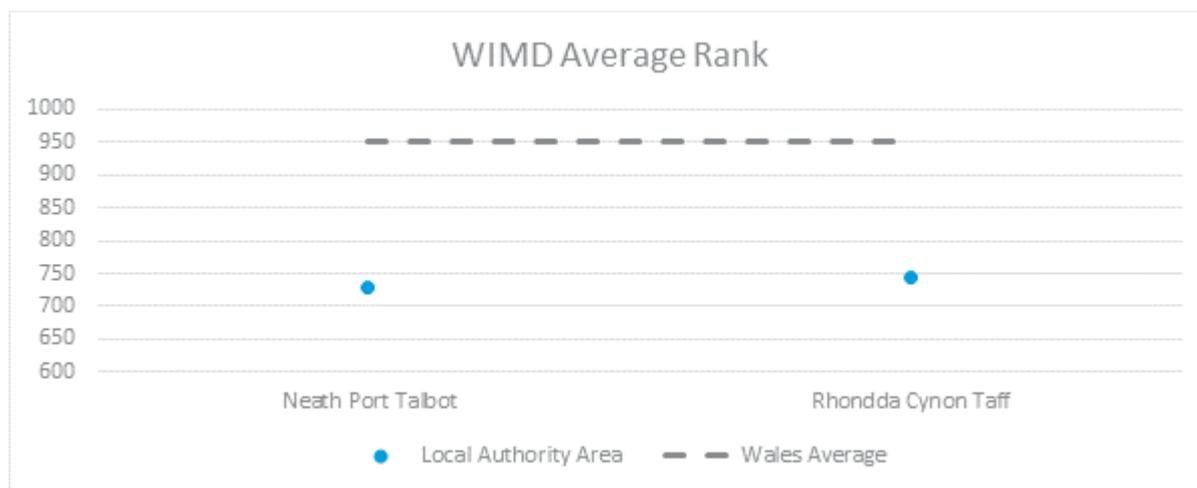


Figure A6 Description: WIMD Average Rank Welsh Areas of Focus. This figure shows the average IMD rank for Wales and displays the Welsh areas of focus as points, all which rank above the average IMD rank. Low rank means high deprivation.

Figure A7: SIMD Average Rank Scottish Areas of Focus

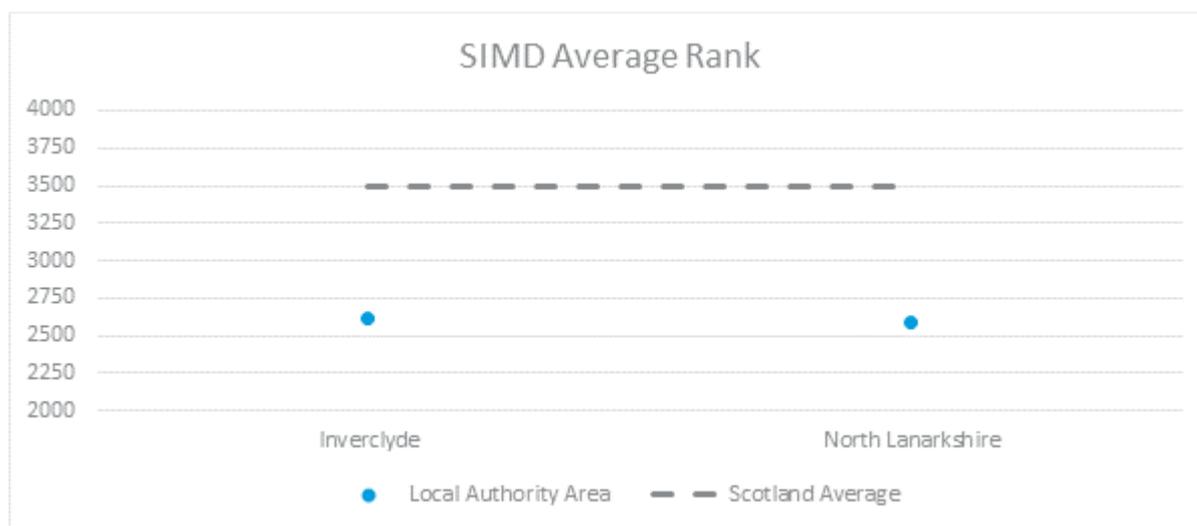


Figure A7 Description: SIMD Average Rank Scottish Areas of Focus. This figure shows the average IMD rank for Scottish and displays the Scottish areas of focus as points, all which rank above the average IMD rank. Low rank means high deprivation

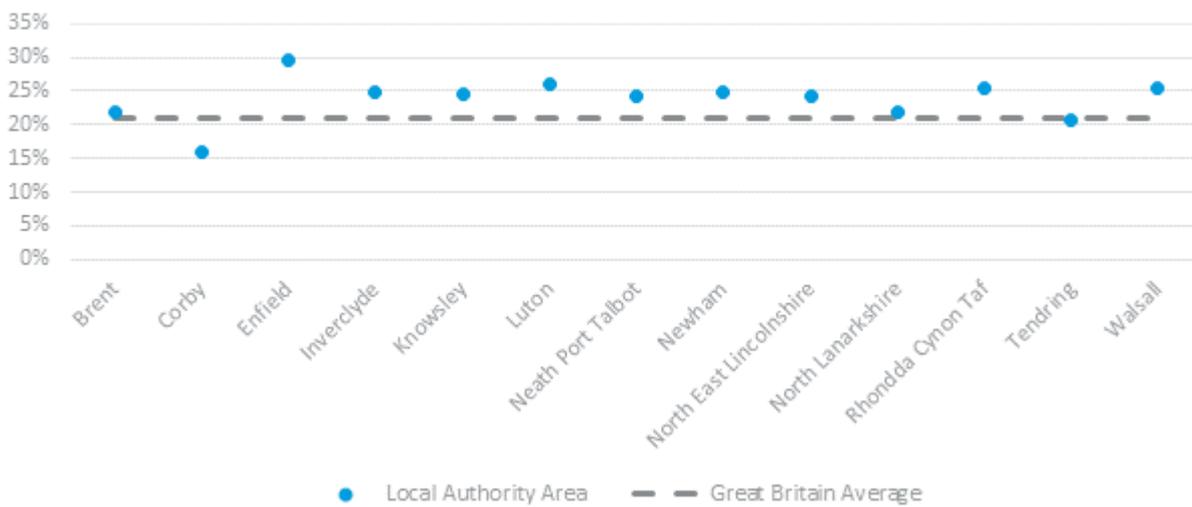
<sup>9</sup> Scotland and Wales approach to measurement by wards, hence not provided by overall Local Authority area.

<sup>10</sup> low rank and high score both designate high deprivation

## Economic inactivity

We discussed in the report how weaknesses in the local economy were driving priorities for investment and influencing the mindset of local communities. Communities struggling with high rates of worklessness for example will be less likely rate investment in heritage as a priority for investment. The statistics for economic inactivity provide an overview of the problems of unemployment, although at this stage of the evaluation we have not reflected how investment in heritage creates jobs and the ensuing impact on local perceptions of investment in the sector. Rates of Economic Inactivity are shown in Figure A4.

Figure A8: Economic inactivity rates in the Areas of Focus

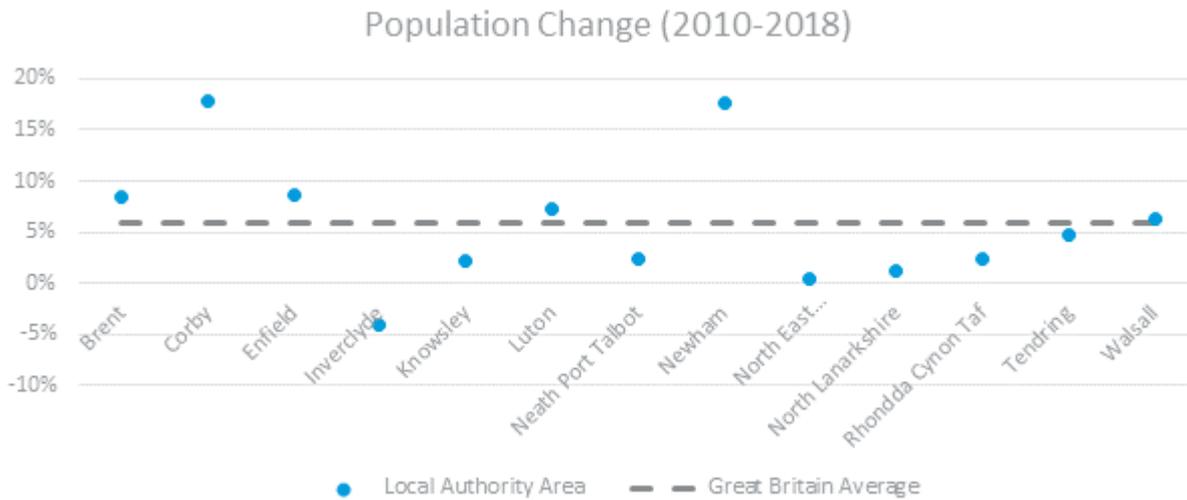


**Figure A8 Description:** Economic Inactivity rates in areas of focus. This figure shows the economic inactivity rates in each of the thirteen areas of focus as points, as well as a line that displays the average economic activity for the UK. The figure shows that for all areas except for Corby, economic inactivity is higher than the UK average.

The Areas of Focus vary little with regard economic activity: with the exception of Corby, all fall above the UK average. Corby's rate is significantly better than the UK average and reflects growth since the new rail connection to the town. It should be noted that the town does have significant problems of low paid and zero-hour contracts from agencies.

## Population change

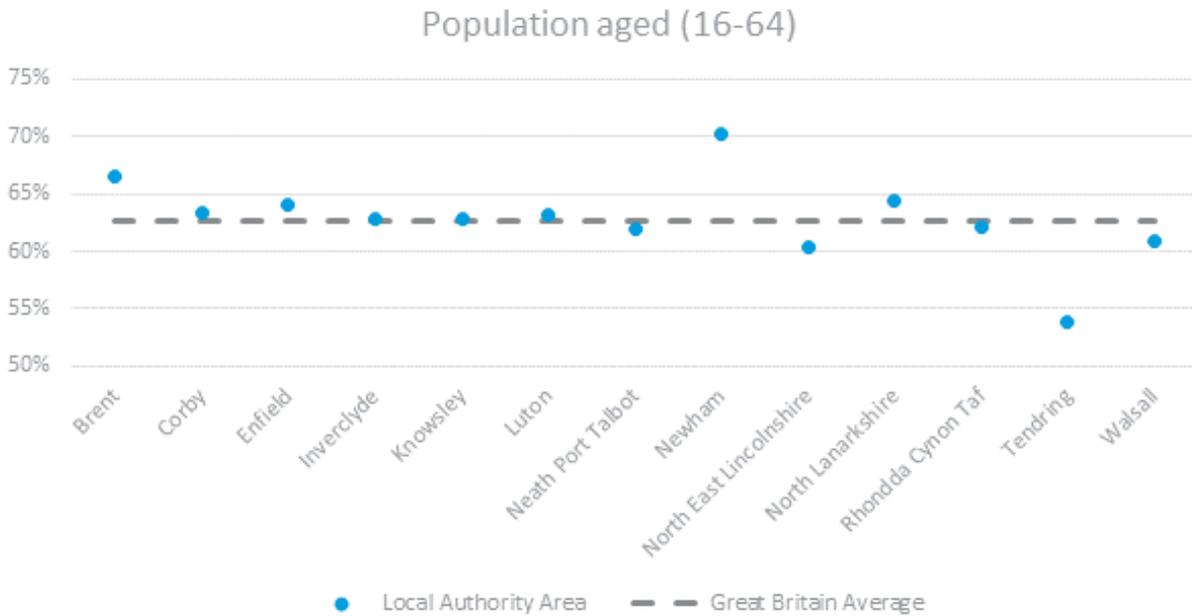
Figure A9: Population change in the Areas of Focus



**Figure A9 Description:** Population change in the Areas of Focus. This figure shows population change in the areas of focus between 2010 and 2018 as a percentage increase or decrease. It shows the average change for the UK and then displays areas of focus as a point. The figure shows no identifiable trend across areas of focus.

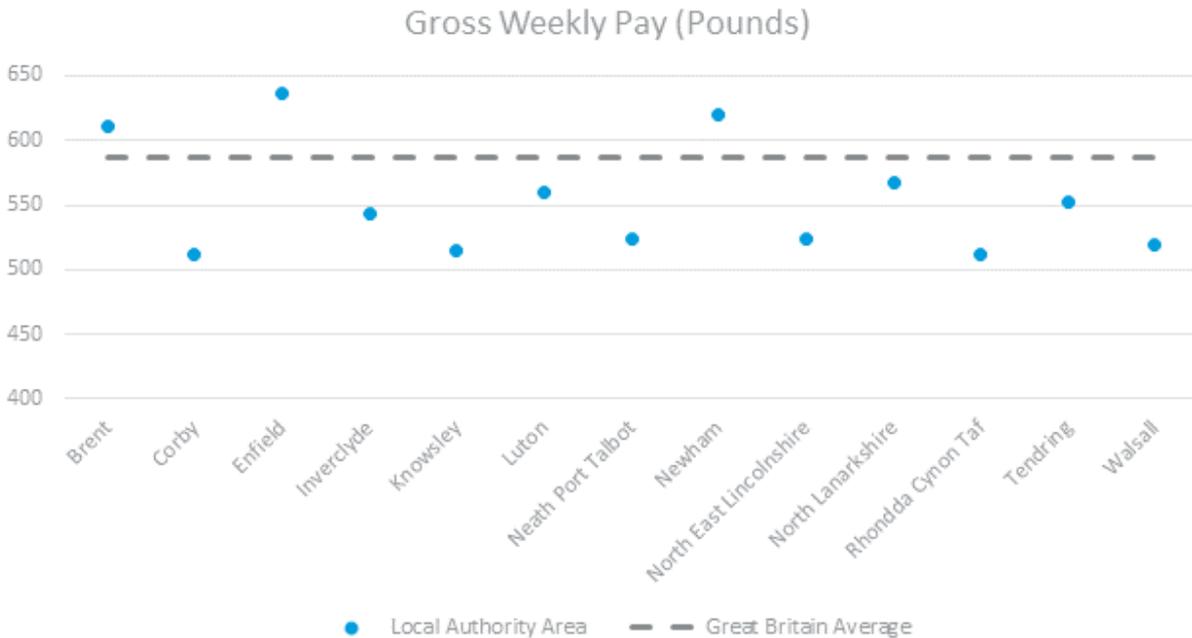
Perhaps the biggest variation across the Areas of Focus is the change in population numbers between 2010 and 2018. While some areas are witnessing significant growth in population, notably Corby and Newham, others are facing continued decline or static populations. This has two significant impacts for volunteering. As populations decline, it is more likely that younger, more talented people are leaving. Remaining residents will likely be an ageing population (more rapid than other areas). An example of this is shown in Figure A6 below where Tendring has a much older population.

Figure A10: Population aged 16-64



**Figure A10 Description:** Population aged 16-64. This figure shows the population aged 16 – 64 as a percentage. It displays an average UK percentage and plots all thirteen areas of focus individual against it. It is demonstrated that Areas of focus tend to sit around the average population age.

Figure A11: Gross weekly pay



**Figure A11 Description:** Gross Weekly pay. This figure shows gross weekly pay in pounds. It displays an average UK gross weekly pay and plots each area of focus relative to it. It is shown



that most areas of focus sit below this gross weekly pay average, with the exception of Brent, Enfield and Newham.

### Gross weekly pay

Finally, access to facilities and the ability to participate in activities will be influenced by take home pay. Most of the areas are significantly below the national average.

### Conclusion

Behind this brief overview of IMD and other statistics, the RSM team has collated health and education statistics. We will work with local teams to refine this data so that the most useful local data is available to teams. The availability, comparability and relevance of data across areas is still under development.