**Museums Association Response to HLF Consultation Survey on Strategy 2019-24**

**March 2018**

**About this document**

The responses below were supplied to the HLF’s online consultation form in March 2018. Italics denote HLF questions, while normal font denotes the MA’s response.

**About HLF’s role**

*Do you agree or disagree that HLF’s role in future should be to inspire, lead and resource the UK’s heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities?*

Strongly Agree

*Why?*

The Museums Association believes that it is important that HLF’s funding strategy recognises first and foremost the ability of heritage institutions, including museums, to use their collections, expertise and services to deliver meaningful impact for people and communities. The Museums Association has demonstrated through its Museums Change Lives campaign how museums are increasingly using their assets and staff to improve people’s lives. We have focused on three specific areas where museums can use heritage to make an impact: Health and Wellbeing; Place-making; and Inspiring Debate and Reflection.

*Thinking about the different aspects of HLF’s role, other than grant-giving, please select and rank up to 5 that you think are most important for HLF to do*

Attracting other public or private financial support for heritage

Helping people and communities to meet their aspirations

Supporting organisations within and beyond the heritage world to come together, collaborate and network

Advocating for the value of heritage

Supporting the capacity and resilience of the heritage sector as a whole

*Why?*

The Museums Taskforce – a group convened by the Museums Association – recently published a report which sets out the key issues for the museums sector: Maintaining the relevance of museums in modern society; Ensuring that collections are put to good use; and ensuring that funding is available to support this work. We believe that HLF can play a key role in supporting museums to create new partnerships that bring them closer to the communities they serve; can help bring collections to life through investing in the infrastructure and knowledge that keeps them alive; and can help museums – particularly those reliant on local authority funding – to retain their role as important public institutions.

**PART 2: Strategic priorities for heritage and people, + measuring our impact Supporting the full breadth of heritage**

*What do you think are the most important heritage needs or opportunities that investment from the National Lottery should address in the UK?*

Museums face a number of important challenges which HLF funding can help to address:

* **Old-fashioned and inaccessible galleries and content**: While many museums have benefitted from renovation or from construction of new galleries in recent years, this job is by no means complete. Many museums need substantial investment to make their core offer attractive to a wide audience. HLF support is key in getting renovation projects and large scale re-display projects off the ground. However, we believe that HLF capital investment should be invested in existing estate – in line with the findings of the Museums Review – rather than in brand new museums and heritage sites.
* **Collections:** The Museums Association is running its Collections 2030 project over the course of this year to identify key issues for the future of collections. This work will look at the culture of collections (ethics, disposal, decolonisation and critical approaches) and the infrastructure required to make the most of our collections (funds for collecting, new approaches to storage and display, digital infrastructure.) We believe that HLF should consider future initiatives that build on this work and promote outcome-based collections work that delivers social impact.
* **Outreach and engagement**: Museums must be relevant to diverse audiences and communities. HLF has an opportunity to support more programming which explicitly sets out to engage with underserved audience groups, and to encourage audiences to engage with contemporary debates. HLF funding should support partnership working with local groups and charities to ensure a local needs-led approach.
* **Digital Heritage:** We are at a key moment for digitally accessible heritage. There is an increasing expectation that museum collections and information will be easily accessible online, and many museums have made great strides in digitising collections and improving their digital communications. However, there is an increasing gap opening up between large national and regional institutions and other types of museums. The MA’s research shows that approximately 10% of museums don’t control their own website, and the same proportion don’t use social media to engage audiences. Targeted HLF investment could help to bring ‘laggard’ museums up to speed.
* **Skills development**: There is a wide range of skills and behaviours required for a modern, dynamic museums sector. To date, HLF has supported entrants to the sector through the valuable Skills for the Future scheme, and we would support efforts to build on and learn from this scheme, particularly with a view to increasing the diversity of the museums workforce.
* **Institutions at risk**: Over the next five years, we expect a further substantial decrease in government funding – particularly for local authority funded museums. We believe there is a potentially important role for HLF in helping to encourage local authorities to invest in local museums, rather than to reduce funding to a level at which the service is no longer fit for purpose or at risk of closure. We develop this further in our response below.

*And what do you think are the most important heritage needs or opportunities that investment from the National Lottery should address in your region or country?*

*Should HLF give priority to heritage considered to be ‘at risk’?*

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Don’t know

*And how would you define heritage that is ‘at risk’? Please give as much detail as possible in your answer.*

The Museums Association has been working closely with Arts Council England, HLF and the Museums Development Network to put in place a support system for ‘museums at risk. At present, this group works on the basis that museums or their collections can be considered at risk in a number of ways, and it is important to distinguish between the principal types of risk: the risk of loss of access, control or ownership of a collection for the long-term public benefit, and physical risk to the collection or museum buildings.

**Loss of control or ownership for the long-term public benefit** canput a collection or object at risk of being no longer accessible to the public through:

* Permanent or long-term closure of the museum
* Through sale of the collection
* Through liquidation of museum assets following bankruptcy
* Through the deaccessioning and removal of an item or a collection

A collection or object can be put at risk in a number of ways:

* Through neglect
* Through accident
* Through mis-treatment, for example bad conservation practice
* Through intended or criminal harm

We believe that HLF must take into account both types of risk in its new strategy.

*How should HLF take account of different priorities for heritage in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales within a UK-wide framework?*

Following the Museums Review last year, there is a concern amongst devolved nations that HLF museum policy for the whole UK might be determined by policy set by Arts Council England. This should not be the case. The MA recommends that HLF pursues the use of nation-specific funding pots following success of the ring-fenced monies made available for themed years, such as the Year of History, Heritage and Architecture in 2017 in Scotland. This approach would help to enable the building of long-term relationships with devolved funders and museums.

The MA’s own Nations Policy could act as a potential model for strategic working across all four nations for an organisation with UK-wide reach. This approach, led by the MA’s Nations Committee, ensures a high degree of representation for museums in the devolved nations across all the MA’s work.

**Addressing under-representation in HLF’s funding and making heritage more inclusive**

*Do you agree or disagree that HLF should address under-representation in our funding of geographical areas that have received least funding in the past?*

Strongly Agree

*Why do you say that?*

Historically, HLF’s funding has been disproportionately been spent in London and in wealthier areas of the UK – in sharp contrast to areas with the highest representation of lottery players. We are concerned about the possibility of an accountability deficit in terms of HLF funding – this could be remedied by ensuring that funding is linked to greater consultation with lottery players. Any such consultation process should also take account of the geographical spread of players.

*The social groups in the list below are ones that we focus on, in line with our policy directions and the public sector Equality Duty. Are there groups you think we ought to prioritise in our Strategic Funding Framework? Please select all that apply.*

*☐ Children (under 11) ☐ Young people (aged 11-25) ☐ Older people (over 65) ☐ Disabled people ☐ People from Black, Asian or minority ethnic communities ☐ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender people ☐ People on low incomes/benefits ☐ Other:*

All of the above.

*How could HLF most effectively support all organisations to reach a wider range of beneficiaries?*

Museums have had some success in engaging with under-represented groups in recent years, but the gap between white, middle class museum users and others persists. We believe that HLF must support programmes which, whether capital or project-based, involve a high degree of community consultation and co-production. Co-production techniques have been widely shown to develop stronger relationships with a wide variety of community partners. Furthermore, HLF must ensure that it supports organisations with a diverse staff and with the skills needed to successfully communicate with different groups. Finally, HLF should include post-project evaluation in all of its projects that reflects on diversity goals – the MA’s recent social impact toolkit may be a useful resource for this.

*How could HLF most effectively support organisations to collect better data on who is benefiting from heritage projects?*

We support a joined up approach to data collection in order that museums are not required to fill in multiple different surveys. HLF should therefore work with other funding agencies to secure agreements to share data effectively.

We believe that the principle of ‘measure what matters’ should apply to measuring the impact of heritage projects, and museums should be supported to develop non-intrusive and effective methods of capturing impact. HLF should be satisfied with non-quantitative data for some projects.

**Achieving quality and measuring our impact**

*Below is the list of outcomes we propose to cover in our new Strategic Funding Framework – these will be used to prioritise funding and measure impact.*

*1. Heritage will be in better condition*

*2. Heritage will be identified and better explained*

*3. People will have developed skills*

*4. People will have learnt about heritage*

*5. People will have greater well-being*

*6. A wider range of people will be involved in heritage*

*7. The funded organisation will be more resilient*

*8. The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit*

*9. The local economy will be boosted*

*Do you agree or disagree that HLF should focus on these nine outcomes? ☐ Strongly agree* ***☐ Tend to agree*** *☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Don’t know*

*Why do you say that?*

We broadly agree with the above outcomes. However, we believe that in addition to the above, HLF funding should be used to ensure greater depth of engagement with heritage. In Museums Change Lives, we discuss the idea of using museums to ‘inspire debate and reflection’. This concept recognises that museums are not neutral spaces, but can be safe spaces in which to engage with some of the most challenging contemporary ideas that society faces. Museums should be encouraged through HLF funding to use their collections to engage audiences with contemporary challenges, as well as encouraging audiences to learn in general about heritage.

*Do you have any comments on how people might gain greater well-being through heritage projects?*

As noted above, the MA’s Museums Change Lives campaign highlights some of the best museum health and well-being projects. We have also been an active partner of the Museums Health and Wellbeing Alliance (which has just joined forces with the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance). This is a valuable source of information about the most up-to-date research and projects in this area, and would be a useful partner in assessing HLF’s criteria for well-being outcomes.

**PART 3: Strategic interventions and partnerships**

**Place-making**

*Do you agree or disagree that HLF should focus on putting heritage at the heart of placemaking across the UK?*

***☐ Strongly agree*** *☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Don’t know*

*Why do you say that?*

Museums are at the heart of the place-making agenda. As one of the main institutions in a city, town or village, museums can help people to value where they live, work or visit, and help people to understand where they are from. Museums are taking increasingly active steps to build a sense of pride in place, including beyond the four walls of the museum, by engaging with communities and encouraging public participation in decision making about culture. Given this role, museums are ideal partners for third sector groups that want to make the most of their town and their public spaces, and HLF support can be key in supporting museums to engage in this kind of work, as well as in ensuring that museums are welcoming and pleasant spaces that inspire pride and interest.

**Heritage and enterprise**

*Should HLF fund more commercially focused approaches to support projects with a focus on enterprise and skills?*

*☐ Yes ☐ No* ***☐ Don’t know***

*Why do you say that?*

Museums do need to think more creatively about how they can generate income to support their activities, and HLF support can be helpful in this respect. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that museums are public institutions with a public service role at their heart. There are some areas of museum activity in which commercial approaches are neither appropriate nor lucrative. HLF should consider how commercial approaches might impact on public access to heritage, and should be honest about the limits of applying a commercial lens to many of our most treasured and important museums.

**Resilience and capacity building**

*How can HLF best support heritage organisations across the UK to become more enterprising and financially sustainable? Please select and rank the top three ways in which you think HLF could do this, placing the numbers 1-3 in the corresponding box.*

1. Provide funding to individual organisations to achieve strategic organisational change

Provide early-stage funding to support new organisations and enterprises in setting their direction

1. Provide small-scale funding to help organisations build their fundraising capacity and skills
2. Provide funding for testing new ideas, such as the viability of new commercial activity

*Fund business support training and capacity building programmes, including in investment readiness*

*Other, please specify*

*or HLF should not support heritage organisations to become more enterprising and financially sustainable*

**Non-grant finance**

*Should HLF provide match funding for organisations who use crowd-funding to win support for their heritage projects?*

**☐ Yes** *☐ No ☐ Don’t know*

*Why do you say that?*

Museums have successfully experimented in recent years with crowd-funding and matched funding for relatively small projects may be a good way of leveraging HLF funds to support projects with popular appeal.

**Digital**

We are at a key moment for digitally accessible heritage. There is an increasing expectation that museum collections and information will be easily accessible online, and many museums have made great strides in digitising collections and improving their digital communications. However, there is an increasing gap opening up between large national and regional institutions and other types of museums. The MA’s research shows that approximately 10% of museums don’t control their own website, and the same proportion don’t use social media to engage audiences. Targeted HLF investment could help to bring ‘laggard’ museums up to speed.

**International**

*How could HLF support the heritage sector to engage internationally and deliver benefits for the UK? Please select all that apply.*

*☐ Support for UK heritage organisations to promote themselves internationally* ***☐ Support for knowledge exchange with organisations overseas ☐ Work strategically with partners to develop heritage-led inbound tourism*** *☐ Other, please specify*

*Why do you say that?*

The museums sector faces a difficult period over the next five years in terms of maintaining the quality and strength of cultural exchange with European partners at a time when joint funding and ease of travel is likely to be impacted by Brexit. There may therefore be a role for HLF funding in supporting knowledge exchange with organisations in the EU (as well as elsewhere in the world). Clearly each project would need to be judged on its merits, but there may be a particular role for projects which demonstrate the shared heritage of the UK with other countries at a time when Britain risks becoming more insular.

HLF can also work to support inbound tourism, but should do so in close concert with tourism bodies in order to avoid duplication.

**Involving the public in our decision making**

*Should HLF involve the public in decision-making?* ***☐ Yes*** *☐ No ☐ Don’t know*

*Why do you say that?*

As noted above, greater public involvement in decision-making – particularly by lottery players – creates a greater accountability for HLF funding and will help to ensure that the public are active participants in museum and heritage projects, rather than passive audiences.

*What options for involving the public in National Lottery Funding for heritage projects should HLF explore? Please select all that apply.*

☐ Involve communities (geographical or communities of interest) in setting priorities for HLF funding

**☐ Involve local communities in deciding on funding in a specific geographical area through e.g. a people’s panel**

☐ **Partner with community grant-making organisations to deliver grants through them**

☐ Have beneficiary groups represented on decision making panels for targeted funding e.g. for young people

☐ Involve National Lottery players in distributing money in their local area and/or nationally through public voting on projects linked to ticket purchase

**☐ Public voting linked to a TV programme or online content**

☐ Other, please specify

**PART 4: Our Portfolio Our portfolio**

*Do you have any comments on our proposal for an open grant programme for all types of heritage project?*

We are concerned that by creating a single pot for all types of grant, the ability of HLF to direct grants to meet specific policy requirements will be limited. While the simplicity of such a system may be attractive from an administrative point of view, it is likely to result in organisations promoting large-scale capital projects over other projects (which would be seen as internal competitors). The impact of such an approach would therefore be to reduce the number of innovative project-based, digital and skills initiatives – particularly anything that is large scale and ambitious – in favour of traditional ‘bricks and mortar’ funding bids.

We believe that it would be more valuable to maintain a clearer separation between some key policy priorities and the rest of the funding pot. This could include specific funding pots on a skills development programme that has a clear link to delivering public benefit and engagement; and a fund that promotes dynamic collections management projects designed to grow expertise and reinterpret existing collections.

*Do you agree with the proposal that we increase the ceiling for single-round grants from £100,000 to £250,000?*

***☐ Yes*** *☐ No ☐ Don’t know*

*With a lower annual budget, should HLF set an upper limit on awards?*

*☐ Yes* ***☐ No***

*How should HLF strike a balance of offering larger and smaller awards?*

*☐ HLF should prioritize investment in smaller grants (under £250,000)*

***☐ HLF should give equal weight to smaller and larger grants***

*☐ HLF should prioritize investment in larger grants (over £250,000)*

**Strategic campaigns**

*What needs or opportunities should HLF prioritize for strategic campaigns in the early years of the next Strategic Funding Framework?*

We are concerned that the approach of time-limited strategic campaigns will result in long-term policy issues, such as skills, diversity, and digital being compressed into very short-term projects with limited impact. However, there may be a role for this approach when partnering with regional or national initiatives, such as themed years or the City of Culture.

If HLF is going to proceed with the Strategic Campaigns approach, we believe that several of the topics identified above could be valuable areas of investment: skills that improve the public engagement of museums; partnership building with targeted audience groups; supporting innovative collections use; and supporting museum learning projects.

**Partnership funding**

*We currently require partnership funding (in cash or in kind (e.g. through free use of a venue)) to be contributed by grantees at the following minimum rates:*

*• Up to £100K – no minimum contribution (in kind and volunteer contributions encouraged)*

*• Over £100K and up to £1m – 5% cash or in kind*

*• Over £1m – 10% cash or in kind*

*Should we make changes to this approach? ☐ Yes - require more partnership funding ☐ Yes - require less partnership funding* ***☐ No - retain the current approach***

*How should HLF achieve a balance between offering open funding opportunities and strategic interventions through campaigns, partnership programmes or innovation funds?*

*☐ HLF should prioritise investment in the open grant programme*

*☐* ***HLF should give equal weight to investment in open funding and strategic interventions***

*☐ HLF should prioritise investment in strategic interventions*

**Environmental sustainability**

*Do you agree or disagree that all projects should embed environmental sustainability and that this should be part of our standard criteria for the assessment of applications? ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Tend to agree* ***☐ Tend to disagree*** *☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Don’t know*

*Why do you say that?*

While the MA strongly supports efforts to increase environmental sustainability across the museums sector, we question whether embedding environmental reporting and standards across the grant programme may be cumbersome. At present, HLF’s plans on this issue appear to be directed at building projects, where some degree of environmental oversight would be welcome. However, we are concerned that every other project would also be expected to report on the same basis with relatively little payback and that this could waste time and resources.