



Subject:	DOE Consultation Paper Historic Environment Fund
Date:	Tuesday, 19 th April, 2016
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams, ext 2300
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Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	A consultation paper has been issued by the DOE containing proposals on how funding of the historic environment through heritage projects will be administered. The purpose of the paper is to obtain the agreement of the Planning Committee on the response of Planning Service as contained in this report. The closing date for responding to the consultation is the 6 June 2016.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<i>Committee is requested</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>To consider the information provided</i><i>To agree to with the proposed Planning Service consultation response.</i>
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Key points from Consultation Paper</u> The paper acknowledges an environment of funding cuts for heritage projects.

3.2	The objective of the consultation is to seek views on the funding of access, enjoyment and protection of the historic environment.
3.3	The paper notes that the historic environment in NI produces lower levels of output, employment and GVA per capita than neighbouring jurisdictions.
3.4	The consultation states that the historic environment can be used to the benefit of local communities with very significant economic, social and environmental benefits; public funding often provides a lever for wider investment
3.5	<p>The paper proposes 4 strands of funding with % allocations of the fund to each –</p> <p>Heritage Research (10 – 20%) – research and publications</p> <p>Heritage Regeneration (10 – 30%) – community led projects (e.g. Trusts), council led projects at scheduled monuments, heritage at risk projects – e.g. acquisition by Building Preservation Trusts, including listed buildings on the HAR owned by Councils. Listed buildings not at risk in council ownership will not be eligible.</p> <p>Heritage Repair (40 – 60%) - scheduled monuments, listed buildings (up to 20% of project costs), historic windows repair (up to 35% of costs), thatched buildings, small places of worship fund</p> <p>Heritage Revival (10 – 20%) – annual heritage rewards, historic environment support fund, skills development training, school trips</p>
3.6	<p>Funding proposals will be set out against defined criteria –</p> <p>Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment</p> <p>Economic Impact – contribution to tourism and to supporting communities</p> <p>Economic Impact – supporting construction and associated industries</p> <p>Social benefits – creating broader and deeper understanding of our heritage</p> <p>Social benefits – enhancing public engagement with the historic environment</p>

	<p>These are consistent with the principles of sustainable management of the historic environment.</p>
3.7	<p>Proposals will also assessed against universal conservation principles of – minimum intervention, maximum retention of historic fabric, clarity, reversibility and sustainability</p>
3.8	<p>Funding will be capped at £50,000 though batching of applications for high value projects will be possible</p>
3.9	<p>In the event of restricted funding priority will be given to structures on the HAR, thatched buildings and buildings owned by applicants in receipt of enhanced rates of grant.</p>
	<p>Proposed Planning Service Response to Consultation Paper</p>
3.10	<p>In broad terms Council endorses the overall approach of the Historic Environment Fund – however it should be stated that all impacts are of equal weight as long term sustainable heritage protection will only come about through the process of education and increasing understanding of and value placed in our historic environment.</p>
3.11	<p>Although Council would have nothing in principle against funding heritage research the efficacy of this may be questioned in an era of financial constraint when alternate sources of funding are available – e.g. for universities funding. Post-excavation funding could be met through realistic developer-funded agreements.</p>
3.12	<p>Under the Heritage Regeneration strand there is n major emphasis on Heritage at Risk projects. In an era of austerity targeting and prioritisation may be inevitable and it may be reasonable to target scare resources at heritage most in danger. However there may be a danger that valuable projects that could be unlocked bringing substantial community / social / economic benefits may be lost by such a focus.</p>

3.13	A bigger issue related to access is that to scheduled monuments not in state care, the restricted resource available for European Heritage Open Days (which could be expanded to at least a heritage week) and access to other sorts of heritage, as well as improved interpretation, on and off site.
3.14	It appears somewhat incongruous given that the Consultation paper acknowledges a diminished and uncertain level of funding, that funding historic environment projects through loans or use of a revolving fund (on sale of assets) was not considered. It is conceded that these funding options would require substantial resources to administer.
3.15	Similarly there is nothing on the possible greater use of enabling funding or use of Planning Agreements under Article 76 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.
3.16	The Heritage Repair funding stream relates to listed buildings, window repair and thatched buildings. It is not clear if grant is available for window repair outside of listed buildings – i.e. whether buildings in Conservation Areas or Areas of Townscape Character will be able to apply for such funding.
3.17	Council would raise a generalised concern here that the funding streams under the Heritage Repair strand appear somewhat narrow and other important building elements such as roof (non thatch), walls, rainwater goods etc. – essential to building survival are excluded.
3.18	The paper also does not make clear how additionality will be assessed. It should be explicit that an assessment of private resources available to fund these repairs will be carried out to ensure that scarce public monies are only bringing about projects that could not have occurred anyway.
3.19	It is noted that funding will be capped at £50,000, though batching of applications will be possible. It is not clear how many batches will be possible. A cap of £50,000 appears somewhat arbitrary and may well result in worthwhile projects not being brought to fruition.

3.20	Page 32 of the Consultation paper refers to an intention to ensure ‘dispersal’ of funding across the region. If this is the intention it may be preferable if explicit criteria were provided to ensure an equitable distribution of funding occurs.
3.21	<p>It is noted that there is no explicit reference to industrial heritage.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<i>Appendix 1: DOE, (March 2016) Consultation on Proposals for a Historic Environment Fund</i>