

Making the most of your heritage assets

The future of local historic environment services



Foreword

Local Government Association

Local government is at the forefront of protecting, improving and managing the historic environment. For the last year, the LGA's Culture and Environment Boards have focussed on the links between heritage, planning, tourism and the economy. This publication is the culmination of that focus, and I am delighted that we have so many examples of councils putting heritage centre-stage in their drive to create great places to live, work and visit.

The case studies vividly show that heritage has the ability to help councils achieve a range of local priorities – from boosting economic growth through tourism, jobs and attracting businesses, to improving the attractiveness of places and engaging communities. They also show that in the context of severe budget pressures, councils are finding new ways of working that brings together specialist conservation, planning and archaeological advice in a coordinated, place-based approach to heritage and planning.

As local government responds to budget pressures and wider public sector reform, we also need a national policy framework that recognises councils' local leadership role in the economy, infrastructure and planning. There have been some important steps in the right direction, with the National Planning Policy Framework setting out a framework for locally-led decision-making, new tools to support councils to involve communities in services, and a bigger role for councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships in promoting growth and skills – all providing new opportunities for heritage. We now need certainty and stability to embed the positive reform that has taken place and to enable councils to get on with making the most of their local historic environment.



Councillor Flick Rea, MBE
Chair
LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Foreword

English Heritage

England has a rich and diverse heritage which can play a vitally important part in helping to encourage growth and stimulate national and local economies. Local authorities through their planning function are at the forefront of ensuring due consideration is given to this rich legacy by enabling the successful management of change. Having access to appropriate expertise can ensure that decisions affecting our historic buildings, archaeological sites and landscapes are based on sound and well informed information thereby creating successful places in which people will choose to live, work and visit.

Budgetary pressures mean that local government has to provide vital local services with less and less. At the same time there are growing opportunities for local communities to play an increased role in how their local area develops which can present a real challenge when resources are tight. I am delighted to see that in some of the case studies within this publication, in particular those from Wiltshire, Bristol and Worcestershire, local authorities have chosen to maximise the visibility of the service during these difficult times. We know that local communities value their heritage and, given the opportunity, they can do great things to promote and preserve it which can help to support the work of local authorities.

The challenge for English Heritage is to support both local government and communities during these difficult times. Whilst we are also making do with less, we have also restructured our local offices in a way that enables us to provide national expertise at a local level through service led teams that are ready to work in partnership with local authorities. This reflects the approach of the National Heritage Protection Plan (www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/national-heritage-protection-plan/) which shows how we will continue to work with local authority partners to ensure that scarce resources are targeted in the most effective way possible, whilst promoting England's historic environment as one of the key engines for growth and prosperity.



Baroness Kay Andrews, OBE
Chair
English Heritage

Executive summary

In early 2013, English Heritage and the Local Government Association set about collecting case studies on how local authorities' historic environment services are responding to the pressure of having to work with reduced budgets. This publication is the result of that search. In it we see how authorities continue to ensure their historic environment delivers wider benefits for their communities, through innovative working.

The case studies collated here show the variety of different approaches being taken in different places. They also show that some common factors have emerged.

We have found that sharing services and working in partnership are at the very heart of how authorities are responding to the challenges they face. Whilst this approach is not without its challenges, it can provide an opportunity for services to be provided at a level which allows the retention of the required spread of expertise to ensure effective and sustainable management of the historic environment.

We have found that steps are being taken to improve the way in which local communities engage with services. It might be anticipated that when resources are cut, services pull back to focus just on their core role. Instead, encouragingly, we are seeing some authorities go the other way, working smarter, increasing the local profile of their service and widening the contribution it makes to their local areas and therefore to the lives of local people.

We are seeing some authorities identify local heritage assets as resources they can use to boost local economic activity. The local historic environment has a key role in making a place distinct, making it somewhere in which people wish to live, work and spend time. In some of the case studies we see authorities identifying how this distinctiveness can be harnessed to provide a boost to local economic activity.

We also found that improved economic activity is not the only local priority to which the local historic environment can make a positive contribution. We see case studies where projects, developed in partnership, have focussed on other local objectives, such as tackling crime, or improving local skills.

right: Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland © VisitBritain

Heritage matters

Heritage consists of palaces and piers, statues and shipwrecks, archaeology and archives, moats and mills, stately homes and shopping centres, maisonettes and megaliths. England is also rich in clubs, trusts and societies devoted to its history, heritage and the built environment.

Local heritage is at the heart of the identity of places and local councils are at the forefront of supporting its management, conservation and promotion for residents and visitors to enjoy and learn from. Be it through the planning system, or through supporting community involvement in heritage assets, councils care for and enhance local areas, stimulating interest and encouraging awareness of local heritage.

The historic environment also makes a significant contribution to the economy. The historic environment is the context within which new development happens and successful development recognises the need for the new to respond to the old. A vibrant local historic environment attracts visitors and businesses to places, provides jobs and opportunities to acquire skills, and can

be a driver for inner city renewal and rural development by helping to improve the value of places.

But local government is changing and this is having an impact upon how historic environment services are configured, delivered and the partnerships that are forged. The scale of budget pressures in some places requires a radical and ambitious rethink of traditional service delivery models. There is a need for us to help services faced with significant cuts to work in different ways to sustain the levels of protection currently afforded to local heritage.

The ability of councils to positively shape the quality of the historic environment rests upon the valuable knowledge and expertise of conservation officers, planners and archaeologists who know the individual buildings and places; the styles, techniques and materials that are characteristic of a place. The case studies in this paper show how councils are seeking to make the most of their local heritage through a place-based approach to heritage and planning that ensures continued access to the right advice and support to provide the necessary protection.



Case study

Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service

Wiltshire Council has been a Unitary Authority since April 2009 and this has allowed the Archaeology Service to evolve into a modern and innovative service. Central to this is the fact the service provides archaeology planning advice not only internally but to a neighbouring authority, Swindon Borough Council through a service level agreement.

Despite recent budget constraints both Swindon and Wiltshire Councils have invested heavily in a new state of the art Historic Environment Record (HER) which lies at the heart of the service and is income generating. This charge is issued for commercial enquiries, to compensate for staff time in gathering information from the HER.

The Archaeology Service sits separately from the Planning Service, within the Communities directorate. Good communication and links with the planners is maintained by regular contact between officers, joint site visits and training seminars provided by the archaeologists.

Co-located with Arts and Heritage within a purpose built History Centre, the Archaeology Service is public-facing and one of most accessible archaeology services in the country. The Wiltshire Buildings Record is hosted by the Service and helps to provide a holistic approach to historic environment advice and information. Within the History Centre the Service holds two annual open days and regular archaeological walks, tours and talks. It is the only Archaeology Service in the country to have a weekly slot on the local BBC radio station.

The profile of archaeology and heritage is maintained and supported both internally and externally by the appointment of an active Heritage Champion who is currently the Council's portfolio holder for culture.



Stonehenge, Wiltshire © VisitBritain, Stephen Spraggon

English Heritage

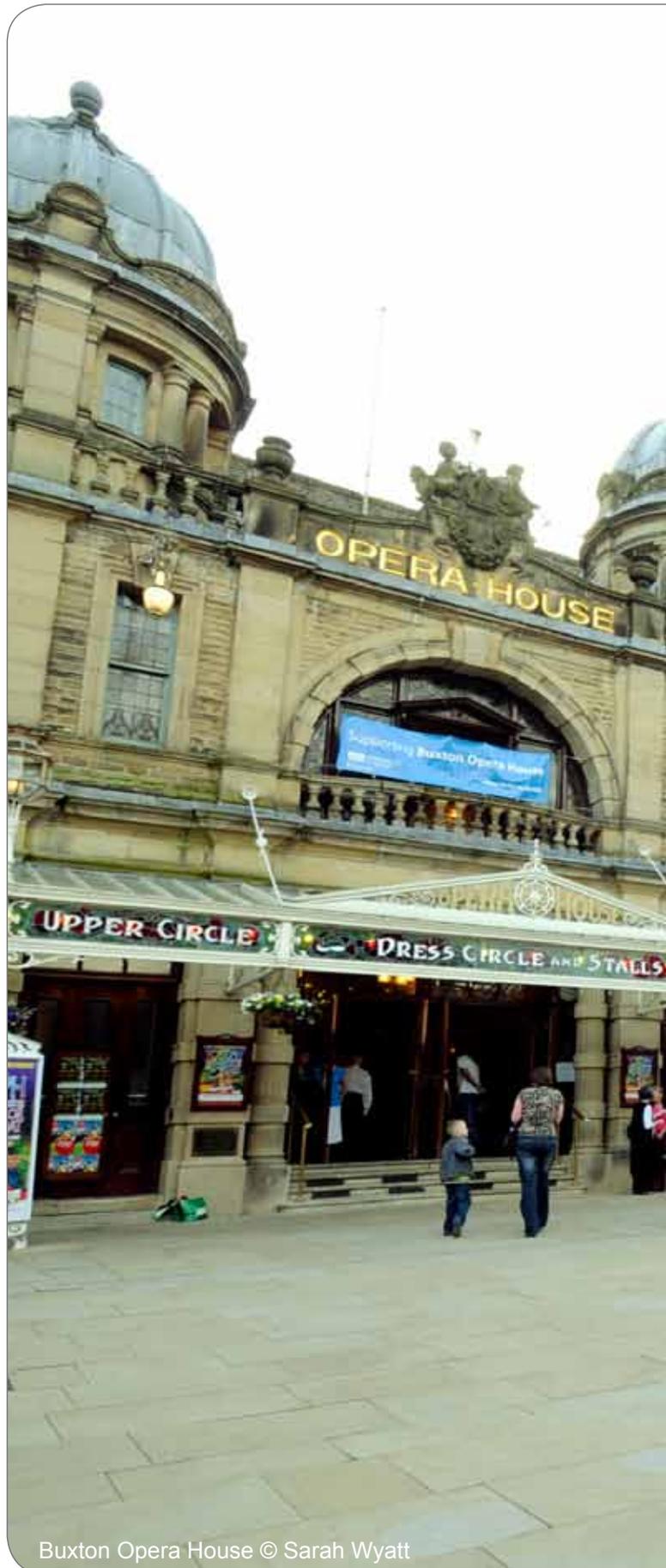
English Heritage is the Government's lead advisory body for the historic environment and has a statutory role in the planning system. Central to their role is the advice they give to local authorities on development proposals affecting listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas. It is not necessary for English Heritage to engage with every planning issue that involves the historic environment and they usually only advise on proposals with the potential for major change or damage to significant, nationally important heritage assets.

The full range of planning issues on which English Heritage is consulted can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/our-planning-role

English Heritage also publishes wide-ranging guidance on the management of the historic environment. These can be found on their website www.english-heritage.org.uk



ENGLISH HERITAGE



Buxton Opera House © Sarah Wyatt

Case study

The London Borough of Havering

The London Borough of Havering have taken a strategic approach to heritage conservation, in the context of a creating a wider vision for heritage and history in the borough. This is reflected through three key measures.

Firstly, the Council has a Lead Member for Culture (including heritage) who is also the borough's Heritage Champion, reporting annually to Full Council. Secondly, the Council has agreed a Heritage and History Strategy. This sets out what the Council and the local stakeholders are going to achieve in the next three years, in terms of conserving, restoring and increasing access to the borough's heritage assets, as well as how the borough is going to celebrate significant anniversaries (local and national). Lastly, the Council has set up a Historic Environment Forum, which meets on a quarterly basis and attracts representatives from up to 30 local organisations with an interest in Heritage and History.

In addition, in 2011 a new local social history Museum, run entirely by volunteers, opened in one of the original Romford Brewery buildings. Furthermore the Local Studies and Family History Centre conserves and makes accessible all of the borough's important historical records, which now increasingly includes making them available in a digital format. This service has supported local historians writing books about the history of their local area.

Havering's strategic approach has borne fruit in recent years with the designation of several new Conservation Areas, as well as the renovation of several sites of historical significance. Several multi million pound projects are underway, including the restoration of Raphael Park in Romford. The Council employs a conservation officer in the planning service, who provides guidance and support on all heritage projects. In addition the Council has ensured that heritage is fully embedded in the current Local Development Framework and it is intended that the future Local Plan will do the same, drawing on the aims and objectives of the agreed Heritage and History Strategy.

right: Cemetery © VisitBritain, Britain on View

Planning

A major positive tool in enabling councils to maximise the growth potential of heritage is the planning system. It is through the planning system that the historic environment is protected, enhanced and improved in a way that balances local economic, social and environmental needs and ambitions. Councils are using planning in a positive way to support the magnets for footfall, including the historic environment, that help to drive growth by developing attractive and distinctive places.

The Government has undertaken a major simplification of planning legislation with the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF clearly encourages the sector to give explicit consideration to protecting the historic environment and to recognising the benefit and opportunities that it can bring. It is expected that local plans include a positive strategy about the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk.

Councils are encouraged to identify all heritage assets and those most at risk, and to promote new development in ways that will make a positive contribution to character and distinctiveness.

The Government is also taking forward a number of measures to enhance effective management of listed buildings through the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. In particular there is provision for owners and local planning authorities to make heritage partnership agreements which can give advance consent for minor, routine or repetitive works in managing a group of listed buildings. This could reduce the need for repetitive applications for consent and reflects a long-standing shared aim of the LGA and English Heritage to provide expert advice where it can make most difference. English Heritage will be providing training and guidance to heritage practitioners on the new legal measures and their operation. These will be made available via HELM online (www.helm.org.uk).



Localism

The Community right-to-buy 'assets of community value' in the Localism Act came into force in September 2012 and allows communities to nominate buildings and land that they consider to be of value to the community, to be included on a local authority maintained list. If any of the assets on the register are put up for sale, the community is given a six week window of opportunity to express an interest in purchasing the asset, and another six month window of opportunity to bid.

This could be a valuable tool, alongside others, which can contribute to a more strategic approach to managing assets in order to deliver social, economic and environmental objectives. The provision is principally aimed at securing the on-going community benefit of local shops, pubs, libraries and the like, but these buildings will frequently also be heritage assets that are valued by local communities.

The Localism Act also introduced neighbourhood planning. It sets out how communities can get more involved in planning for their areas – specifically around creating plans and policies to guide new development. Of course this is not a new concept and will build on and work alongside tried and tested routes to engage communities in planning. Neighbourhood planning provides an important opportunity for local communities to identify and use their historic environment when setting out a positive strategy for the future of their area. It can lead residents to identify particular land or buildings that they wish to zone for continuing or future use for specified community purposes, which could include

access to and the enjoyment of local heritage spaces or assets. English Heritage has provided advice on neighbourhood planning which can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/get-involved/improving-your-neighbourhood

Local communities, in partnership with their local authority, are also able to develop lists of locally important heritage assets. These 'Local Lists' provide communities with the opportunity to recognise those local landmarks that hold particular importance to them and to see them afforded a level of protection that reflects their position within the community. More information on setting up a Local List and how it can make a difference to an area can be found on the English Heritage website (www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/local/local-designations/local-list/).

Achieving local outcomes through heritage

As well as statutory responsibilities in the planning system to protect and conserve heritage, councillors have a key leadership role to play, embedding heritage as part of a place's strategic approach to growth and planning. Councils are also often the conduit through which people, civic organisations and schools are engaged in heritage.

Heritage can help councils to achieve many local priorities and this section considers four areas where local government's investment, leadership and support are vital: boosting tourism, creating jobs and attracting businesses, improving the attractiveness of places and engaging communities.

1. Boosting tourism

Heritage is a major motivation behind the tourism expenditure of both overseas and domestic visitors. The visitor economy is this country's fifth biggest industry and one of the few sectors experiencing growth – it grew at over five times the rate of the UK economy as a whole in 2011 and UK heritage contributed £20.6 billion to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Heritage attractions boost footfall in city and town centres, encourage wider spend in the destination through a higher-value offer, and persuade visitors to convert day visits into overnight visits. The LGA's analysis of the visitor economy has shown improving productivity is especially important for rural destinations, which can struggle to keep visitors in destinations overnight.

High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council share a focus on heritage-led tourism and regeneration of town centres by capitalising on their stunning Peak District setting. This strategic match was the impetus behind sharing staff resources and working in a much more flexible way to ensure that each council continues to access the right heritage expertise.

2. Creating jobs and attracting businesses

The sensitive development of historic buildings and places can invigorate an area, stimulating investment, entrepreneurship and employment. The heritage tourism sector, including historic buildings, museums, parks and the countryside, directly supports an estimated 195,000 full-time equivalent jobs, and indirectly supports many others through encouraging spend in the wider area.

Historic buildings also attract thriving businesses to places. From new hotels in London and Ipswich, to retail and office developments in Bristol and Yorkshire and converted industrial buildings in Derbyshire and Stoke-on-Trent, across the country there are businesses flourishing in historic buildings which have been repaired or adapted to enable them to have a more successful financial future.¹

The LGA has successfully campaigned for councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships to have a stronger commissioning role in skills provision to ensure that the skills of the local workforce match employers' needs. This is particularly important for the heritage sector, which in some places relies upon specialist craft skills and traditional methods of working and construction.

To redress a shortage of conservation skills in the local workforce, Great Yarmouth Borough Council worked with the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust and other partners to train 20 unemployed and disengaged young people in surveying, conservation and repairs.

3. Improving the attractiveness of places

From housing to churches, civic buildings and industrial architecture, the built historic environment is fundamental to a place's character and distinctive identity. Their individual qualities, including their details, materials, scale and the way buildings relate to each other all help to create attractive

¹ Link to Constructive Conservation www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/conservation-principles/constructive-conservation/constructive-conservation-sustainable-growth/ and Heritage Works www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/news/heritage-works/

places with a distinctive layout of street patterns, views, open spaces, trees and other landscape features.

Sensitively managed development can help to enhance the historic character of a place, but to achieve that, there needs to be a clear understanding of how it was formed and what is already there. That understanding of the significance of heritage assets and the wider historic environment, which relies on access to expert advice, allows for necessary change to be successful because it was informed by the existing character and scale of a place.

Cheshire West and Chester Council has worked with the Fire and Rescue Service and other partners to improve the local approach to tackling heritage crime by pooling skill-sets, knowledge and intelligence. By working smarter, sharing services and involving volunteers the partners have improved the attractiveness of the place without increasing costs or diverting existing resources.

Area appraisals and neighbourhood plans, and by supporting schools and civic groups who want to play an active role in supporting heritage assets.

Changes introduced over the last few years have opened up even more opportunities for communities to get involved in shaping their local places. Opportunities like neighbourhood planning and assets of community value have been covered above, but both represent elements of a whole suite of changes designed to give local people more say in how their local area is managed. We know from research the value local communities place on their heritage and so these measures represent an opportunity to further tap a valuable resource.

Bristol City Council has developed a free web resource that brings together local historic information in one place and enables people to nominate heritage assets for the Local List.

4. Engaging communities

The heritage sector has a strong tradition of involving people. Every year 450,000 people get involved in their local historic environment through volunteering; around five million are members of heritage organisations, and one in six adults has donated to heritage causes. Councils help to encourage and support this engagement, including by identifying volunteering opportunities, by involving communities in developing local heritage lists, Conservation

Innovative practice

What do we learn from the case studies?

The case studies show the wide variety of different approaches being taken, relating to both specific project-based working, and to how services are set up to ensure expert advice is available during this time of budget pressures. This variety is a reflection of the fact that every place is different and that what might work in one place, might not in another.

However, the case studies do show that there are some areas of potential best practice, or approaches that have been successfully employed in a number of different places. Some of these approaches reflect ways of working that have been in operation for a number of years, whilst others are newer developments and all are the result of fully understanding the value and efficiency of existing services. This section seeks to tease out that common ground in the hope that it helps other authorities as they consider how best to approach the protection and promotion of their own historic environment.

Investing in heritage

Case studies including Barnsley and Wakefield have identified local heritage assets as the drivers of economic growth. Both areas are looking to maximise the

visitor economy through investing in key local heritage sites. Wakefield alone has identified that local tourism is bringing £323 million into the local economy and providing 9,000 full time equivalent jobs. These numbers alone provide a strong argument for significant returns on the investment, but there are also other powerful arguments which support this type of investment:

- it presents opportunities for leveraging in other sources of income, from both Lottery funding and from the private sector, who would also directly benefit from this type of investment; and
- improving a place to attract visitors also improves it for those who live and work there, making it more attractive for new businesses.

Joint working

Sharing services

In the majority of the case studies we can see a move towards the sharing of local services (though some, e.g. Tyne and Wear, have been doing this for some time). This move towards the greater sharing of services is a trend that is evident across local government. Many authorities have identified that the most effective way to provide sufficient expert capacity is to take advantage of economies of scale. This can involve buying in that service from another authority, or by nurturing that expertise within



Panoramic view of the White Horse and Lansdowne monument at Cherhill, Wiltshire © VisitBritain, Stephen Spraggon

the authority and then, often through Service Level Agreements, providing that service to others. This can create particular service ‘hubs’ where the service is provided to a wide area and generates additional income. This is the approach that Essex have taken. By generating income, particular authorities are able to maintain access to a level of expertise that a single authority might struggle to justify.

The case studies have identified some learning points to be aware of when sharing services:

- It isn’t always as easy as it looks. Case studies developed by the Historic Environment: Local Authority Capacity (www.helm.org.uk/managing-and-protecting/delivering-heritage-advice/helac/) initiative identified the importance of understanding the limits of joint working;
- It is important to ensure bought in services are accessed wherever they are required. In-house advice is not only applied directly to casework, but can also help shape the strategic direction and plans of the authority. It is important that the advice

purchased contributes to these as well.

- In-house services benefit from a greater connection with their place and the simple geography of being in closer contact with those colleagues they work with, such as planners or property managers. If the service is being purchased from elsewhere, arrangements need to be put in place to ensure that the quality of the service is maintained in order to mitigate the potential disadvantages of “remote working”.

Even with these challenges it is clear that the sharing of services can provide an effective way of delivering services for some authorities. With the increased coverage comes the benefit of economies of scale. The income raised allows for selling authorities to maintain a wider array of expertise and working with other authorities allows for the sharing of good practice to the benefit of all involved.

The High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands case study highlights the importance of not restricting thinking to within traditional boundaries. The partners identified that, whilst not being in the same county, or



region as each other, there are enough commonalities to make the sharing of services work. In this case it was those common features that outweighed more traditional administrative links. Using the same logic, and following the route taken by other local services, the option of sharing services with authorities who don't share a border might even be considered, when there are other factors in favour of such an approach.

Working with other partners

The case studies show that other local authorities are not the only options available for the development of partnership working.

Cheshire West and Chester provide an example of this alternative type of joint working, one that was built around a single objective – tackling heritage crime. Bringing together those organisations that have the powers and expertise to directly affect levels of crime affecting heritage assets within the authority has also improved the levels of mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each.

Worcestershire developed a partnership with the University of Worcester. In doing so they were able to take advantage of the student population as potential additional users of the local archaeology service, as well as taking advantage of the co-location of services provided by each organisation.

In Great Yarmouth a partnership with the local Preservation Trust has enabled the local authority not only to help rescue a local cemetery from decay, but also provide training opportunities for the local long term unemployed, thereby contributing to a key local economic and social priority.

Opportunities for working in partnership with other local organisations will vary depending on the availability of like-minded organisations locally, and the existence of cross cutting priorities. However, when properly employed, and as the case studies highlight, the differing skills available in different organisations, and the opportunity to learn from the approaches of others, can produce a result that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Engaging the community

One of the most interesting developments is that despite budget pressures, there is evidence of councils actively seeking to develop new areas of work, and in particular those relating to community engagement. Community groups, in some places, can work in partnership with the local authority to achieve objectives not otherwise possible. The development of local lists and Conservation Area appraisals are two possible examples of this.

Research undertaken by English Heritage for the Heritage Counts publication clearly shows the value placed by local people on their historic environment. These case studies, in particular those from Wiltshire, Worcestershire and Bristol, show how these authorities, through developing the level at which the service engages with communities, sought to raise the profile of the service, widening the contribution it can make to the lives of local people and positioning it as central to shaping local people's perception of their local area.

Wiltshire Council has its purpose built History Centre, through which local people can gain access to 'one of the most accessible archaeology services in the country'. The service even has its own slot on the local BBC radio station. The Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service provides a number of packages designed to give the public access to the information it holds. They have taken steps to ensure that, despite there being two Historic Environment Records covering the county, users can view them as one.

Bristol City Council has used their award winning Know Your Place to widen access to the council's historic environment data. By placing this information online, in a user friendly format, they have greatly increased its potential usage with schools and members of the public using it to engage with their local history.

Income generation

Like many other services, those relating to the protection of the historic environment have the potential to be a source of income for the authority. The case studies show a number of ways through which this can be done:

- providing services for other authorities (see Sharing Services above); and
- selling the local expertise to other parties

Of the case studies, perhaps the most significant in terms of income generation is Essex who are moving towards a model of full cost recovery. To do this they are making the most of the expertise they have developed, both providing it to authorities within Essex and beyond – “the decision has been made to develop this service as an arms-length, not-for profit specialist environmental planning and management enterprise.” Clearly not all authorities can be developed in this way (for it to work some authorities need to be purchasing the service), but it has the potential to improve the long term viability of traditionally strong local services.

Strategic influence

To have the maximum positive impact the historic environment has to be embedded within local priorities. This requires its meaningful inclusion within the key local strategic planning documents. To achieve this both of the following are required:

- The clear identification and articulation of the link between the historic environment and achieving the local authority's key priorities; supported by,
- Senior Member and officer buy in to the contribution that local heritage can make.

Two of the case studies provide examples of the inclusion of the historic environment in key local documents. In Havering heritage is embedded within the Local Development Framework, whilst in Barnsley heritage has a key role to play in the local economic strategy.

The positioning of heritage within such strategies enables the authority to take a whole-place approach and to also join-up heritage with other services and activities, such as cultural and sporting assets, which make a similarly significant contribution to attracting visitors and creating quality places to live. Whilst case work, and its need for expert input, remains vital, it is also important that councillors understand the wider value of heritage and here active Heritage Champions can play a valuable role. It is no coincidence that two of the case studies (Havering and Wiltshire) make reference to the importance of their local Heritage Champions. More information on the role of the Heritage Champion can be found at www.helm.org.uk/heritage-champions

What we will do

The LGA and English Heritage are committed to working together, with other Government agencies, and with councils, to maximise the contribution of heritage to local priorities.

We will:

Support councils to use their wider leadership role to maximise the contribution of heritage to local priorities by:

- Promoting and supporting the role of strong political leadership in embedding heritage across councils and in strategic planning, for example through leadership seminars.
- Continuing the dialogue between the LGA and English Heritage to maintain a mutual awareness about the key issues facing councils and the heritage sector, to develop shared messages and actions to support improvement.
- Raising awareness of, and support councils' role in, forthcoming national commemorative events with a strong local dimension.

Support councils to use the NPPF to embed a whole-place approach to heritage by:

- Joining-up with Arts Council England and Sport England to support and promote the positive potential of the NPPF to drive growth through conserving heritage assets.
- Continuing to identify and share the latest ways of working with the sector. The next stage will be to share good practice on the joining-up of heritage, culture, tourism, sport and planning.

Case studies

Innovative practice in the delivery of local historic environment services



Essex County Council 'Place Services': developing a centre of excellence

Following a scrutiny review of delivery, specialist planning and advice services within Essex County Council were combined in 2012 to form a multi-disciplinary 'Place Services' Team. This includes environmental planners, archaeologists, ecologists, landscape architects, urban designers, listed building specialists and arboriculturists. Over the following year, the Team worked in partnership with 11 local authorities in Essex, providing, through Service Level Agreements (SLAs), advice and information aimed at safeguarding and maximising the environmental, social and economic benefits the historic environment brings.

During this time the new Team tested more commercially focussed and integrated approaches to its operations, including a move towards full cost recovery from SLA's with local authority partners and internal commissioning of work by Essex County Council. This increased commercial aptitude, and the application of multi-disciplinary principles, has also resulted in more active involvement in tendering for consultancy work. This has included national framework agreements, such as the Planning Advisory Service planning framework, large Heritage Lottery Funded projects, and the provision of specialist services to the independent sector. In addition, the team has been trialing combined responses to planning applications, with the objective of resolving conflicting advice early in the process, helping to save time and money in the long run.

Through internal training and mentoring, the team's historic environment specialists have adopted more flexible working practices, including multi-skilling, to help build resilience to future challenges. Each of the specialists is now able to provide all historic environment functions in relation to the provision of information and advice, including for the purposes of development management and Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship scheme; management and maintenance of the Historic Environment Record; and project delivery.

After reviewing the first year of operations, it was decided that the service will continue to develop as an arms-length, not-for-profit specialist environmental planning and management enterprise.

Newcastle City Council Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team

The Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team (hosted by Newcastle City Council) is the archaeology, industrial archaeology and historic buildings service for each of the local authorities in the Tyne and Wear area. It helps and advises Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils to carry out their statutory duties to care for the precious historic environment of Tyneside and Wearside.

The service is based on a joint arrangement between these five Tyne and Wear authorities and has been in operation since 1986. It provides a high level of service at a low cost due to the efficiencies achieved by joint working across local authority boundaries.

The Team provides shared, specialist advice on archaeology, listed buildings and conservation areas and places the historic environment at the heart of local planning. The service also manages the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record, a database of archaeological and historic sites across the five Tyne and Wear districts. The Historic Environment Record is used as a management tool as well as resource for education and community engagement.

Perhaps most remarkable, however, is the added-value provided by the service in addition to its statutory duties. From attracting Heritage Lottery Fund funding for local projects, to research, or programmes of community engagement for local residents such as Heritage Open Days, the Tyne and Wear service has established itself as a valuable and respected resource.



High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Developing a 'Strategic Alliance' to maintain historic environment services

A Strategic Alliance has been in operation now between High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council since 2008. On face value, this would appear an unlikely grouping given that it stretches across two county boundaries. However, looking beyond these administrative differences, the Alliance makes considerable sense given that the populations, socio-economic profiles and physical make up of both areas are remarkably similar.

Whereas, the Alliance has involved a sharing of staff resources across most services, politically, both councils remain completely separate. Critically, they both share very similar corporate priorities which focus on the heritage- and tourism-led regeneration of town centres by capitalising on their stunning Peak District setting. It is this strategic match which has made the Alliance work well insofar as the management of the historic environment is concerned.

An internal restructure resulted in staff reductions across all services in both councils. This left the Conservation and Design Team with 2.6 FTE staff (plus technical support) across the Alliance – a reduction of one post. Despite this, the Alliance has allowed a more flexible use of resources and a pooling of skills. The balance of responsibilities also works well. Whilst one of the authorities undertakes a number of heritage-led regeneration projects, the other authority focuses on the control of development within its historic centres.

This response to the present climate of resource contraction would not necessarily work in all circumstances. However, the common issues facing the two councils and the 'skills fit' with the project-based heritage regeneration matching the development control and enforcement experience meant that, for High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands, the management of the historic environment remains a high priority.

Worcestershire County Council Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, The Hive Worcester

Created in January 2012 Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service is based at The Hive, a Worcestershire County Council and University of Worcester partnership building also containing a shared public and university library and customer hub.

The high profile of this unique combination of services presents both opportunities and challenges. One example of this is the Historic Environment Record (HER). The Hive is open 100 hours a week and is a perfect venue to raise the profile of the historic environment. But how has this been achieved at a time of reducing budgets?

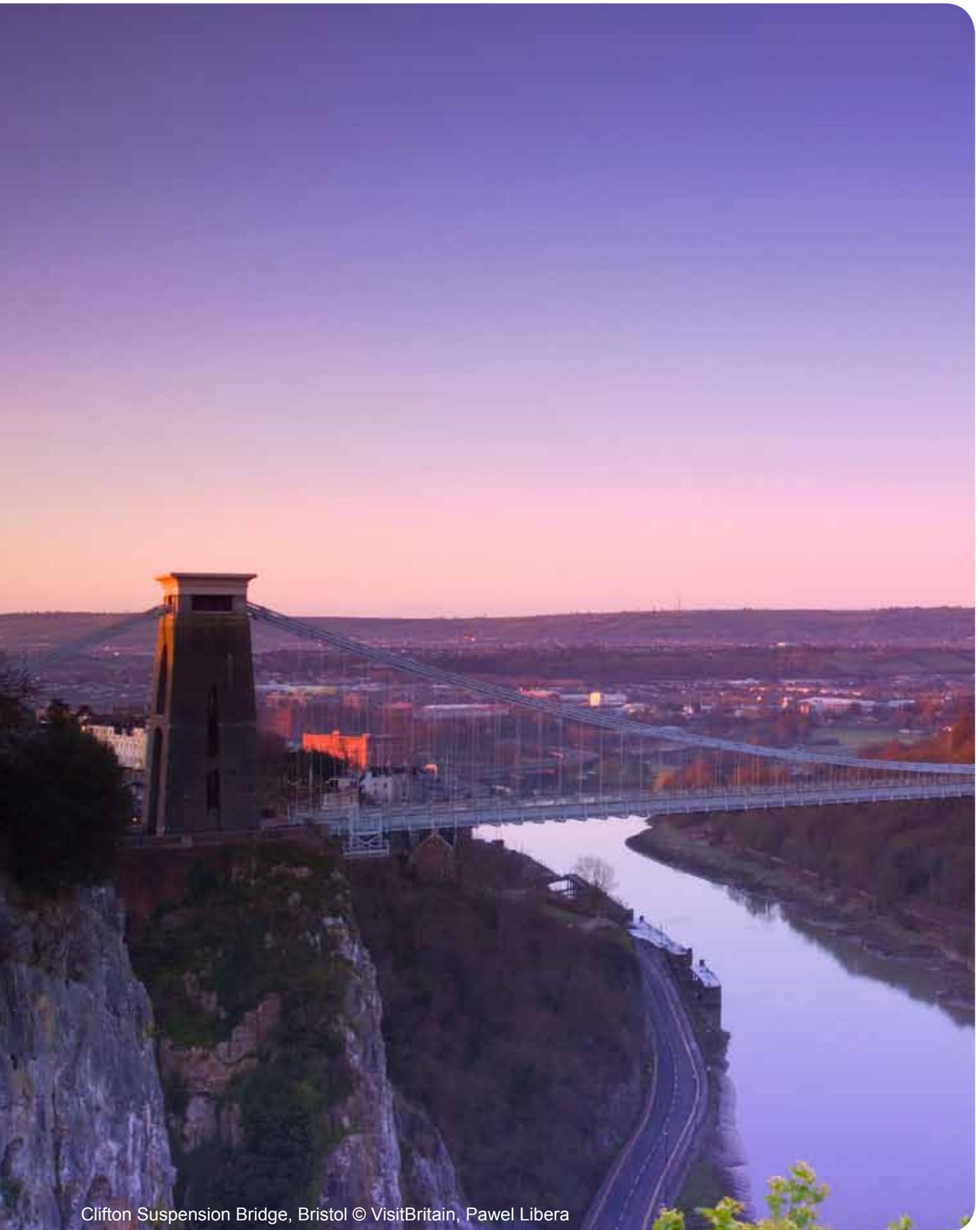
Mainly by rethinking the interaction with the public, Worcester wanted to encourage people to chat to them directly about archaeology. So for 35 hours spread across six days the HER is open without appointment. Additional flexibility has been provided by externally funded project staff and the Worcester City HER Officer who spends some time at the Hive.

However, the service has also created a package of resources to allow the public access to HER data when no staff are available. This includes existing products such as www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/library and www.worcestershireceramics.org alongside new services such as intranet access to digitised HER sources. Furthermore, by putting both the City and County HERs on a new, shared GIS platform, customers can view the county as a whole even though there are two services.

Despite budget cuts the service has improved access to archaeology and archaeologists. The key has been partnership working – with colleagues in the Hive, with the City on HER development and delivery and with other organisations in developing new initiatives. Good personal relationships and a strong, shared commitment to clearly defined outcomes have been essential to the success of this project.

Right: The Hive, Worcestershire, © University of Worcester





Clifton Suspension Bridge, Bristol © VisitBritain, Pawel Libera

Bristol City Council Know Your Place web resource

Know Your Place is an award winning, innovative, free web resource that enables the public to get involved in the creation of the Bristol Local List of Heritage Assets. Providing residents with access to place based historic information about Bristol. Part funded by English Heritage the resource was created by the City Design Group in partnership with Bristol City Council's Geographic Information Systems team and members of community groups.

Since March 2011 Know Your Place has become a valuable online resource for Bristol. The site is in daily use within the planning department as well as being used by members of the public, architects, university researchers and is increasingly used in the classroom.

The resource allows public nominations to Bristol's Local List and additional funding from English Heritage is helping to create a smart phone app that allows members of the public to undertake their own Heritage at Risk surveys and directly send them to the online database.

Through the continued use of the site and the development of an associated community context mapping toolkit called Our Place we aim to help to enable community place making in Bristol.

The presentation of historic archives on a mapping interface like Know Your Place creates a powerful and engaging community tool. The resource enables a rapid understanding of the history of an area and encourages interest into the future plans for a place and its heritage.





Chichester District Council West Sussex shared historic environment service

Chichester District Council worked with other West Sussex Authorities to explore options for a shared historic environment service; through the help of funding from English Heritage and LGA under their HELAC initiative. This was prompted by the County Council withdrawing from providing Historic Building advice to the Districts and Boroughs.

In the report that was prepared, two general issues were highlighted by the West Sussex Authorities. Firstly they recognised the importance to their local authorities of having accessible advice available locally. Secondly the report is mindful of the different issues affecting authorities particularly those on the coast and the others nearer to Gatwick.

The report made a number of short-term recommendations, one of which has been taken forward as a result of which Chichester now provides the services of a Historic Building Officer to an adjoining local authority one day a week. The income received from this agreement has enabled the authority to recruit a part-time junior officer. Furthermore, a charging regime for historic building pre-application advice has been introduced with the income received invested in extending the part-time contract to full-time.

The council has also been working with local groups on the development of a Local List and reviewing conservation area character appraisals.

Bassetlaw District Council contracting out their conservation services

Bassetlaw is a large district with much built heritage. Bassetlaw District Council has, over recent years, recognised the benefits of conservation led regeneration and has grown its Conservation Department to three full-time Conservation Officers. It is now securing grant funding from a range of sources, being proactive with Conservation Area Appraisals and producing a range of innovative guidance documents.

However, being acutely aware of the challenges to local government finance, 18 months ago the Council decided to offer its service to other Nottinghamshire planning authorities to bolster historic environment expertise. This has resulted in two Officers providing, on a rolling contract basis, conservation advice to two other District Councils; an arrangement that is working well.

Work load has had to be carefully managed and, inevitably, Bassetlaw's more proactive initiatives have had to be scaled back. Even so, working within the same county brings benefits as the Officers understand the local heritage and vernacular architecture. Therefore they can deliver a more consistent approach to conservation advice across the county. They can also introduce and share guidance appropriate to the area, such as criteria for identifying local heritage assets in order to develop the local lists or sharing ideas on how to deliver a grant for best effect.

The Council and Bassetlaw gain too as the arrangement generates an income, thus supporting the conservation function, along with other income from charging for pre-application heritage advice. Officers have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and bring back to the Authority different or new ways of working, for example working with different types of heritage assets such as battlefields and different traditional materials such as thatch.

The arrangement has proved so successful that Bassetlaw has had approaches from other authorities for assistance, albeit on a temporary basis, and, longer term, may consider whether to employ a further Officer in the Conservation Department for what appears to be a growing service need.

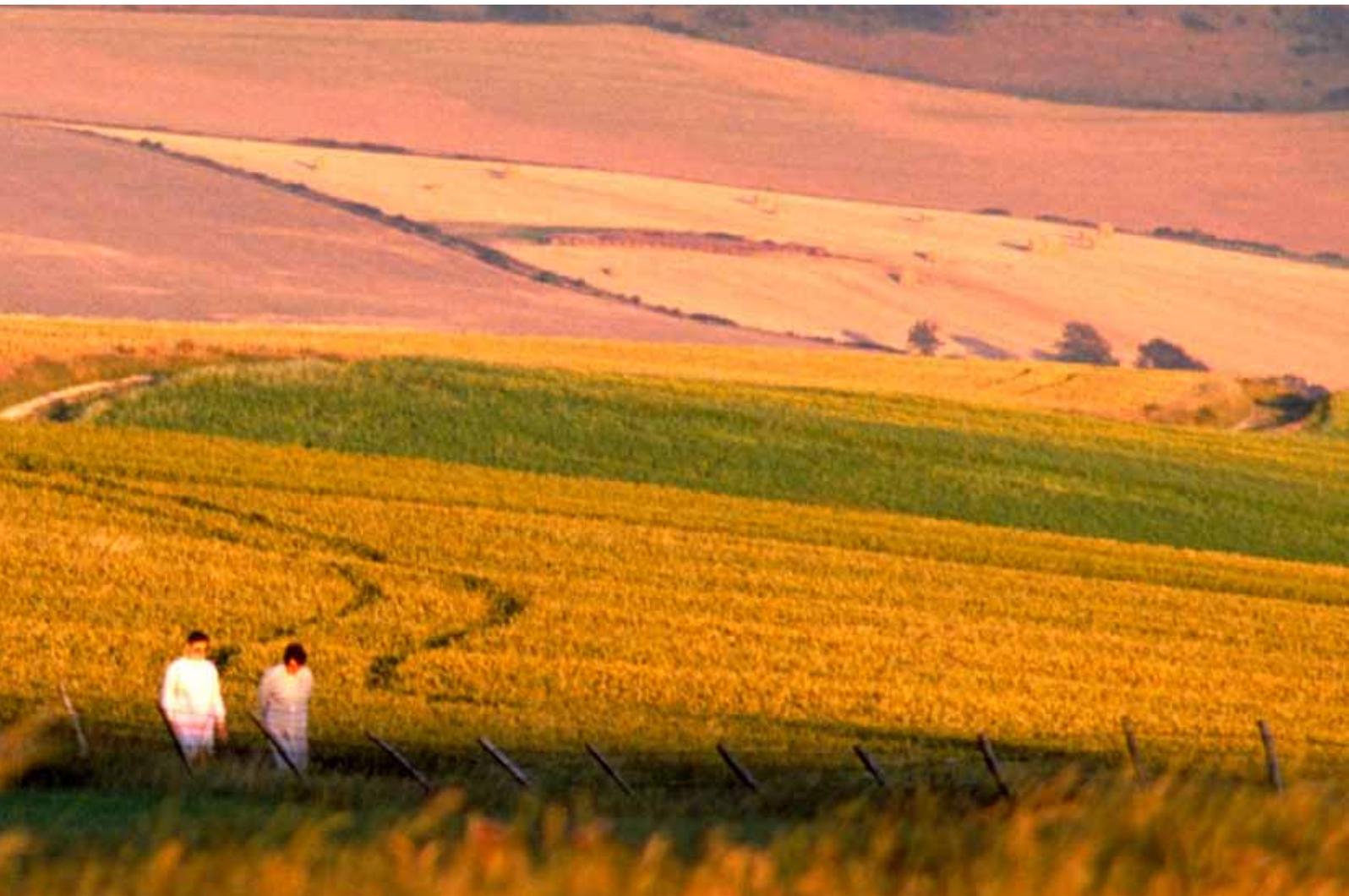


South Downs National Park Authority Streamlining planning applications in the South Downs National Park

South Downs National Park Authority has developed an innovative model for partnership working with 11 of the local authorities in Britain's newest National Park to deliver a single planning service under an agency agreement.

These 11 authorities process the majority of planning applications in the National Park using a single back office system. The system has been in place for a year and is working well.

Each District/Borough authority uses its own expert advice to advise on applications relating to, or affecting, heritage assets and can upload their comments directly into this back office system. Archaeological advice is provided by each of the three



counties within the National Park under separate Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

The five Historic Environment Records (HER) within the National Park have provided a short version of their records to create a Historic Environment layer within the South Downs National Park Authority's Geographic Information System (this is not a full HER). A separate SLA is in development for this and for data exchange arrangements as National Park projects will generate more information.

The National Park Authority benefits from its own heritage staff as there is a Cultural Heritage Strategy Officer leading on management plan policy and partnerships. Project work includes community projects, tackling heritage at risk and discovering more about the heritage of the National Park. There are also two Historic Building Officers who deal with major Listed Building Consents; all listed building issues in the four authorities not part of the agency agreement; and work on Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans throughout the National Park.

Aylesbury Vale District Council Highway protocol for conservation areas

The Highway Protocol for Conservation Areas is a formal agreement between Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC), English Heritage (EH), Colin Davis Associates and Buckinghamshire County Council's Transport for Buckinghamshire that has established a common approach to highways works within conservation areas in Buckinghamshire. It provides those involved with a greater understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, and has brought together local members and officers from both the District and County Council.

The highway protocol was adopted in July 2012 and in January 2013 EH awarded AVDC £80,000 to undertake three projects, listed below, which each demonstrate the key principles established within the Highway Protocol.

Firstly, measures have been put in place to enhance the visual appearance and reduce traffic speed through Turweston Conservation Area – a rural village in north Buckinghamshire under increasing traffic pressure from cross boundary developments.

Secondly, repairs are to be carried out to existing crossovers/resurfacing crossover using Dennerhill setts. Dennerhill stone used to be quarried locally and was used extensively in Aylesbury to provide a very distinctive and unique character within the conservation area. Therefore Dennerhill setts will be reused that have been retained and stored by the district for many years.

The last project involves the removal of unnecessary signage within Aylesbury Conservation Area. As in many town and cities in the UK signage increases year on year, this project provides the opportunity to take a holistic approach to the removal of extraneous signage.

The EH grant will also cover the cost of a training day designed to increase staff, contractors and utilities companies awareness of the importance of the historic environment. Training is being provided by the National Trust and delegates will have the opportunity to lay locally distinctive surfaces materials including Dennerhill setts, riverwashed cobbles and limestone rubble paving.

The grant funded projects and training day bring the combined projects of the District Wide Strategy and Highway Protocol to their natural conclusion by demonstrating on the ground the principles contained within both documents. All three projects have also afforded the opportunity to cement relationships between the District Council and the County Highway Authority.



Market square and the clock tower, Aylesbury © VisitBritain

Case studies

Using heritage to achieve wider outcomes



Barnsley Council

Developing the visitor economy through heritage

Barnsley Council is developing its visitor offer by capitalising on its heritage. On average, Barnsley's museums attract one million visitors a year, contributing in excess of £13 million a year to the local economy. But Barnsley plans to improve these figures by securing funding to maintain and improve its museums.

Cannon Hall Museum, a flagship attraction, has around 500,000 visitors each year. The interpretation of the park and gardens are being transformed following a grant of £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. A further £100,000 of European funding will enable improvements to be made to the Hall itself. Future plans include a major £3.5 million funding application to restore and transform the Park, Gardens and Lakes. Should this be successful, work is hoped to start in 2014/15.

Elsecar Heritage Centre currently attracts 325,000 visitors per year and these visitors support 38 businesses on site employing around 200 people. Visitors are attracted to the industrial workshops of the Earl Fitzwilliam and the wider village that he directed the creation of from the 1790s. Elsecar has been described as being one of the most important industrial heritage sites in the world. So £500,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage has been secured to realise the immense potential of the site. This money will focus in particular on the conservation of the world-famous Newcomen Engine.

Finally, a new multi-million pound museum, Experience Barnsley, opens in summer 2013. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Development Fund (ERDF), this promises to be a major attraction right in the centre of Barnsley, directing footfall and spend to businesses in the town centre. It will be a signpost for visitors to the town to discover what the rest

High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council

High Peak Borough Council, in partnership with Derbyshire County Council, are developing the distinctive Georgian spa town of Buxton. The scheme will focus on refurbishing Buxton Crescent, and the adjoining Natural Baths and Pump Room, into a luxury five star 79-bedroom hotel and spa with accompanying visitor centre, shops and restaurant. This is an investment in a town's unique selling points, in this case Buxton's rich architectural legacy and its source of thermal natural mineral water.

The £35 million project, which is a public-private partnership, also involves funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage. The project is forecast to increase visitor spend in Buxton by seven per cent per annum and will bring in a new upscale market for spa treatment which is already well developed in continental Europe and elsewhere.

The new visitors, many from overseas, will be able to combine the attractions of the spa with actively enjoying the surrounding Peak District countryside. It is hoped this will encourage overnight visitor stays – something which is a constant challenge for the Peak District. This is because many visitors just make day trips from adjacent urban centres such as Manchester, Birmingham, Derby and Sheffield.

This development is the culmination of a programme of heritage led regeneration in the town totalling over £70 million. The project plans to increase productivity in the area and generate spending not just in the new shops and restaurant but in existing attractions such as the Pavilion Gardens venue which holds over 75 fairs, events and markets a year, the Pavilion Arts Centre and the Buxton Opera House. It is estimated that the wider programme will have created over 650 jobs in Buxton once the Buxton Crescent and Thermal Spa project is completed.



Great Yarmouth Borough Council cemeteries project

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has worked in partnership with the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust to involve 20 young people in conserving a local cemetery.

Great Yarmouth Cemeteries covers a 40 acre site in the centre of the town and contains 3,000 burials from the 16th to early 20th century. It is a rich heritage asset with many monuments of national significance reflecting the social history of this trading, fishing and naval port and seaside town. Unfortunately large sections of the cemetery have been neglected for decades and as a result many monuments have either suffered from decay or vandalism, and the site is associated with anti-social behaviour such as drug abuse.

Therefore, the council entered into a partnership with the Trust to secure £140,000 funding. This came from variety of sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Pilgrim Trust and the Broads Authority amongst others. The funding was spent in order to clear, survey, record and undertake conservation and repair of the monuments. The project has a dual role as a training initiative. The Trust recognises that there are acute skills shortages in the region and that the area has some of the highest unemployment figures in the country. This is set against the backdrop of £40 million of investment in the historic built environment in Great Yarmouth in the last decade, with most of this work undertaken by contractors and craftspeople from outside of the area.

20 trainees made up from long term unemployed and hard to reach groups were recruited for the survey and recording stage. Trainees are taught surveying, recording skills, material identification, decay processes and specifying repairs. Surveying and recording was carried out under the guidance of conservation professionals.

Next, trainees worked closely with a conservator, mason, blacksmith and conservation professional to carry out conservation and repair to monuments. Those monuments selected for repair were identified through the recording and surveying process based on criteria reflecting the English Heritage “Heritage at Risk” model.

Project outcomes have exceeded expectations with 20 monuments fully repaired (to date) 500 monuments surveyed and recorded, acres of cemetery cleared of damaging growth and a thriving “friends of the cemetery” established for the long term management and maintenance. The interest generated by the project has meant that training places are oversubscribed.

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Tackling heritage crime in Cheshire West and Chester

In Cheshire West and Chester, the approach of the Council, English Heritage, Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Crown Prosecution Service has been to integrate heritage crime reduction activities through the existing framework of the Community Safety Partnership. The benefits of this approach have been far-reaching.

Firstly, new working relationships have been forged within and between agencies, creating opportunities to pool skill-sets, knowledge, and intelligence. The roles and responsibilities of those engaged in preventing, investigating, enforcing and prosecuting heritage crime is now much better understood.

Secondly, it has brought together communities to care for their local environment through the country's first Heritage Watch Scheme. By involving people to be "eyes and ears", the partnership is improving understanding of local heritage assets that may be at risk from crime, providing reporting mechanisms and supplying crime prevention advice. The public's concerns are better addressed and there is increased confidence that something is being done.

Thirdly, by working smarter, sharing services and involving volunteers we are managing to achieve positive results without increasing costs for the partners, nor diverting existing resources – essential considerations in the current economic climate. Heritage crimes are being tackled as part of the day job – and agencies and communities have been empowered to fulfil their responsibilities.

With these foundations in place, our work was shaped ready for the new Police and Crime Commissioner in Cheshire who has prioritised heritage crime in his first three year Police and Crime Plan.

right: The National Coal Mining Museum, Wakefield © Wakefield Council





Wakefield Council's heritage investment programme

At Wakefield Council there is recognition of the value of heritage and the impact it can have on tourism and economic growth. Heritage sites and events are a key driver for tourism across the district and this has been supported by an on-going programme of investment across Council managed and privately run heritage sites.

Wakefield Council has invested significantly in developing tourism in the district in recent years, and has become a major visitor destination for Yorkshire as a result of the area's excellent and high quality cultural offer. The area's leading attractions received over 1 million visits in 2011/12, resulting in a positive impact on the local economy.

The programme of investment includes a completed £3 million investment by the National Trust at Nostell Priory, a 17th century Palladian mansion and gardens, and a £2.5 million refurbishment of Wakefield Cathedral to offer flexibility to deliver events. The National Coal Mining Museum has also been completed and opened a £870,000 new section of the Underground Tour and a glass topped mine shaft, to add to its existing industrial heritage offer.

In the city centre, Wakefield Theatre Royal, one of the smallest remaining Frank Matcham Victorian theatres still in use, is planning a £2.5 million refurbishment and has just been successful in applying for £152,000 of Heritage Lottery Money to prepare a bid for the project.

The Council, working alongside partners such as English Heritage and Waste Recycling Environmental Limited (WREN), is undertaking an on-going investment in its castle sites. This includes the award of £114,000 legacy funding for Sandal Castle and Chantry Chapel, and £200,000 conservation works at Pontefract Castle which are contributing to a £3 million application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support the long-term development of the site. This investment, boosted with a series of heritage events, some of which have attracted national attention, resulted in Pontefract Castle increasing visitor numbers to 49,727 in 2011/12 – a 66 per cent increase when compared with the previous year.

Tourism is a key economic driver for the district, worth £323 million to the local economy employing 9,000 FTE jobs. For example, the 500,000 visitors to the Hepworth during its first year contributed an estimated £10 million to the local economy and a recent economic impact assessment of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park estimated its annual contribution to the local economy at £5 million. The district's festival programme is also delivered around the heritage themes of Rhubarb, Liquorice, Victorian Christmas and 1950's Seaside in the City. Three of these festivals have achieved visitor figures of over 130,000 in 2012.



Local Government Association

Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@local.gov.uk

www.local.gov.uk

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For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio,
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