

English Heritage Response to the Peer Review

English Heritage welcomes the Peer Review report especially the endorsement it gives EH's modernisation programme and the positive impact it has had on our relations with the people and organisations we work with.

The report has provided a valuable analysis of what we have achieved and what more we need to do and we agree with the majority of the 31 recommendations which rightly state that in places there is more to be done to embed change. We have developed a comprehensive action plan to address the recommendations and, as part of this, we continue to reinforce the main messages of modernisation within English Heritage and with our partners and stakeholders.

Some of the Peer Review recommendations related to how we organise our working structures. In particular, it was proposed that we simplify our Planning and Development Group which, for management purposes, is divided into a territory and regional structure (3.1.3) and that we bring together the departments that deal with property management and promotion (3.2.5).

When the review was undertaken, these structures had been in place for about 18 months and, in response to the report, we welcomed the opportunity to consider the effectiveness of those arrangements. On balance, we concluded that it was better to allow these structures to settle in and that effort should be concentrated on building a stronger sense of stability and consistency among our staff and with our customers and stakeholders, rather than introducing more changes. We nevertheless decided it would be appropriate to refine the roles of Territory Directors and communicate those roles and responsibilities clearly to our key stakeholders. We also agreed that there should be closer working between the departments dealing with property management and that interpretation and presentation should support commercial development at properties.

The Review also made a recommendation that English Heritage should “change its policy of focusing its education and outreach work on its properties” (3.2.12). English Heritage provides education programmes for formal and informal learners, for children, teachers, adults and family groups. Some programmes are site based; some provide for learning in schools, colleges or at home. Programmes are geared towards learner centered participation and have been designed in response to audience demand, to reflect contemporary teaching and learning methods, and to reflect government initiatives including the *Learning Outside the Classroom* manifesto, *Every Child Matters* and *Extended Schools*. Programmes are delivered across a range of subjects including history, literacy, science, drama and citizenship. English Heritage also works strategically with other organisations nationally and regionally to promote best practice, build audiences, extend reach and deliver on Government initiatives.

English Heritage's Outreach work is developed with community groups around the country. The Outreach team works with around 55,000 people every year from groups that have traditionally not had easy access to heritage – people from ethnic minorities,

people with disabilities, people on lower incomes and young people. On a national level, the Outreach team is committed to supporting the sector; regionally, each Outreach Officer is also involved in regional capacity building.

Since the Peer Review reported we have continued to look for ways we can work more efficiently and, in February 2007, restructured our top level management team which has meant shedding one board level post and reallocating responsibilities across the organisation. This has generated savings of £0.5m that are being redirected towards priority areas of work. It is not a long term solution however. The Peer Review report notes the sea change that the Heritage Protection Review will usher in. We are very conscious of the pressures it will create for staff and on the sector as new systems and practices are introduced. Dialogue continues with DCMS in the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review about the cost of implementing the Heritage Protection Review.

We are also discussing strategic priorities with DCMS, CLG and Defra in preparation for the next Funding Agreement which will be signed after the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review is known. This will include a set of key performance indicators which accurately reflect agreed priorities.

There is still much work to be done to ensure the historic environment is recognised for the valuable contribution it makes to the quality of the environment and to the prosperity of the nation, and to ensure English Heritage continues to adapt to the needs of the 21st century and the legislative changes to come. This will require the right level and the right deployment of resources.

We are grateful to the Peer Review team for their hard work in focusing in on the challenges we face. We will work positively with government and with other key stakeholders to address the issues raised.