

# The English Heritage Compact with the Voluntary Sector

## The English Heritage approach to working with the Voluntary Sector.

### Foreword

English Heritage (EH) is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It works with the voluntary sector both by awarding grants and by working alongside voluntary organisations, to achieve mutual aims and objectives.

English Heritage is committed to ensuring that it works effectively with all partners, including the voluntary sector. In this document, we lay out the principles which we follow and ask the voluntary sector to follow with us.

We want everyone across society to have a better understanding of the historic environment, to value and care for it and to help us ensure it has a sustainable future.

This document demonstrates our commitment to working with the voluntary sector, in a fair and mutually beneficial way. Relationships and requirements evolve, so this will be an evolving document. We look forward to developing these relationships, to ensure continual improvement that reflects best practice in the ways in which we co-operate.

### Using this Compact

This Compact applies to all of English Heritage's activities and relationships with the voluntary sector, regardless of their origin or nature. It is intended to ensure clarity of roles and expectations for the voluntary sector when working with English Heritage. It cannot cover every circumstance that might arise, so the relationships between individuals will remain essential to the relationship between EH and other bodies.

English Heritage has a statutory remit with government and local authorities through its role in the planning system and responsibilities regarding the statutory designation of historic places. The Compact is indented as an equivalent for the voluntary sector. It addresses both strategic and contract level relationships and follows the model of the *National Compact*.

### Our Vision

Our vision is to have an informed and effective voluntary sector working from within, and more generally with, the historic environment sector. The level of expertise and interest in the historic environment from people throughout England is inspiring and a great strength to English Heritage in seeking to deliver its corporate aims and objectives.

We recognise the value and importance of having a historic environment sector with a wide base of organisations and people who can bring additional skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to ensuring a sustainable future for the historic environment.

We are the government's lead body for the historic environment, but we recognise that we can't do everything and that it is of great value to us and the sector that more people be involved.

We recognise the complementary but distinct roles within the historic environment that English Heritage and the voluntary sector have and the different ways they can contribute.

Thriving voluntary bodies working within the historic environment sector are valuable to the promotion of the value and importance of the historic environment. We also recognise and understand, however, that disparity in organisational resources can be a barrier to working together.

We have great knowledge of, and expertise in historic environment matters and want to share this with others. We also recognise that many others are experts from whom we can learn.

The historic environment is not independent of the wider environment, so we and others in the historic environment sector must engage with a broad constituency of interests. We are committed to tackling exclusion and promoting equality in all aspects of our work. We will therefore consult widely, in particular in developing our key policies.

### **When working with the voluntary sector**

English Heritage will:

- Behave with integrity;
- Promote inclusion and equality in all activities;
- Promote mutual understanding;
- Ensure transparency and accountability in all activities; and
- Address differences and difficulties in a friendly and respectful way.

### **We will specifically agree to:**

- Take into account the interests and knowledge of the voluntary sector when developing our policies;
- Improve our knowledge of voluntary sector bodies working in related areas and communicate widely on relevant issues and initiatives;
- Recognise, respect and encourage the independence and breadth of knowledge and experience of the voluntary sector to manage its own development and direction;
- Recognise and respect the right and role of the voluntary sector to challenge, comment on and, if necessary, disagree with English Heritage regardless of any funding relationship; and
- Take into account all costs when discussing and assessing applications for funding.

## **In return, we ask the voluntary sector to:**

- Respect the role of English Heritage, of public funding and of public transparency and accountability and deadlines in all funded and associated activities;
- Work with English Heritage to address any disagreements in a constructive way;
- Recognise that English Heritage has to demonstrate that our partnerships with voluntary sector organisations represent value for money in achieving agreed aims;
- Work to appropriate standards and quality, both in activities and governance;
- Explicitly distinguish when they are representing their sector and when representing their own organisational views;
- Recognise the constraints placed on English Heritage as a public body working to government objectives and work constructively with us; and
- Recognise the responsibilities of English Heritage Commissioners and staff in decision making and the allocation of its resources; that these resources are limited and have to be prioritised according to English Heritage corporate objectives.

## **Code of Practice on Resources**

English Heritage recognises the benefits of providing resources to the voluntary sector to help it remain active, vibrant and mutually beneficial. Where English Heritage is providing resources to a voluntary organisation, a funding agreement will codify the mutual benefits.

### Aims

- To ensure mutually effective relationships in all aspects relating to resource allocations between English Heritage and voluntary organisations receiving English Heritage resources.

### Key Principles

English Heritage resources are limited and resources made available to the voluntary sector will be subject to the following general principles:

- Promoting a sustainable future for the historic environment;
- Encouraging activities that assist government and English Heritage for the historic environment; and
- Recognising that English Heritage is not a funder of last resort for voluntary organisations. Voluntary bodies must not assume that EH resources made available to them will continue indefinitely.

### Joint undertakings:

English Heritage and the resourced body must work to:

- A clear and concise funding agreement;
- Objective evaluation of work undertaken across all funded activities, demonstrating value for money;
- Acknowledge the financial constraints imposed on both sides and the possible implications for long-term core funding for both organisations;
- Ensure application and monitoring processes are appropriate to the resources involved and their use; and
- Support training and secondment opportunities where possible.

### English Heritage undertakings

English Heritage will keep processes simple by:

- Providing clear and consistent aims, purposes and criteria for funding programmes, and transparency and accountability in decision making;
- Providing clear guidance on expected standards;
- Providing a primary point of contact for engagement with resourced bodies;
- Ensuring application deadlines for open funding schemes are a minimum of four weeks from point of advertisement, and funding made available for up to three years, with three months notice of the start, termination or significant change in resources;
- ,Paying funding quarterly in advance, normally on a full cost recovery basis, including the provision for staff training, unless stated in guidance or otherwise agreed;
- Advertising schemes widely to encourage bids;
- Providing feedback on request on unsuccessful applications; and
- Respecting the independence of bodies receiving funding from English Heritage.

### Voluntary sector undertakings

In return, we expect voluntary sector bodies to:

- Ensure that applications are made in the English Heritage format with clear responses to the aims, objectives and criteria of the grant programme;
- Provide clear and measurable outcomes and outputs against which the success of the resource allocations can be measured, and identify the risks and how they will be managed and mitigated, at the start of the project;
- Provide a full and realistic assessment of costs for achieving the agreed outcomes;

- Meet reporting obligations on time and in the agreed format with honest and transparent updates identifying any changes or risks to achieve the agreed outcomes;
- Ensuring that any risks of project failure are identified in advance with management and mitigation in place;
- Recognise and acknowledge the constraints within which English Heritage operates (for example, public procurement regulations), particularly in relation to transparency and accountability and to work within these;
- Ensure accountability through high standards of delivery, governance and resource management; and
- Plan in good time for the termination of resources at the end of the period of the agreement.

## **Partnership**

English Heritage cannot achieve all of its aims and objectives on its own. We recognise the importance of engaging with those with an interest in and often great skill, knowledge, and enthusiasm for the historic environment.

### Aim

- To establish mutually effective partnerships between English Heritage and voluntary organisations.

### Key Principles

Working together can be immensely powerful or very difficult. English Heritage wants to ensure the former and recognises the need for:

- The clear communication, consultation and accountability that is behind all effective partnerships; and
- The identification of mutually beneficial aims, objectives and outcomes, towards which all parties are committed.

### Joint undertakings

When working together, it is important to:

- Ensure active and productive two-way communication;
- Identify joint objectives and methods of working while maintaining independence of activity and thought; and
- Ensure equality of opportunity and inclusion in all shared activities.

### English Heritage undertakings

English Heritage will:

- Apprise the voluntary sector of key policy initiatives from English Heritage;
- Help the voluntary sector understand how English Heritage works and the different roles and responsibilities of committees and staff;
- Listen to and respect the contribution of voluntary sector bodies when developing its policies and initiatives;
- Recognise the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience of the voluntary sector; and
- Improve its understanding of the needs of the wider community.

### Voluntary sector undertakings

In return, we expect voluntary bodies to:

- Work constructively and respectfully with English Heritage;
- Actively and positively contribute to the development of the sector;
- Recognise that while English Heritage has a role in providing information and support to other organisations, the cost must be proportionate to the importance of the issue;
- Recognise that while English Heritage will listen to and respect the contribution of the voluntary sector, it is obliged to take its own view and will not always agree with all submissions made, and that at times it may be constrained from publicising an emerging EH or government position;
- Engage with English Heritage to challenge and address social exclusion issues to ensure the voluntary sector promotes equality of opportunity; and
- Recognise that English Heritage has a great breadth and depth of experience and knowledge to call on and is deemed by government to be its expert adviser.

### **Code of practice on Communication**

English Heritage recognises the fundamental importance of communication with and between bodies operating in the sector and with organisations outside the sector that have a current or future interest or engagement with the work we do.

#### Aim

- To ensure clear and open lines of communication are always in place between English Heritage and voluntary bodies.

#### Key Principles

Communicating effectively is key in developing relationships:

- It enables an open and respectful dialogue on matters of common interest; and
- It ensures that voices will be heard and respected, and while not always leading to agreement, opinions and knowledge will be welcomed when offered constructively;

#### Joint undertakings

- It is the responsibility of all partners to ensure effective communication; and
- Any breakdowns in communication will be addressed as quickly as possible to prevent more significant difficulties arising.

#### English Heritage undertakings

English Heritage will:

- Identify appropriate means of communicating with voluntary bodies, especially those normally outside the historic environment sector;
- Engage regularly with key voluntary organisations within the sector (for example, HEREC, JCNAS) to promote and encourage effective communication;
- Provide easy access to the relevant part of English Heritage for those wishing to communicate on specific issues, and contact details for staff responsible for liaising with and supporting the voluntary sector;
- Allow voluntary sector organisations to have and offer constructively their own views regardless of any funding or equivalent relationship; and
- Use Heritage Link as a general means of communicating with the sector.

#### Voluntary sector undertakings

In return, we expect voluntary sector bodies to:

- Actively share knowledge and expertise with each other and English Heritage;
- Make public their own views respecting those of English Heritage and, where significantly disagreeing, respect and consult with English Heritage prior to making those views public; and
- Recognise that English Heritage may, on occasions, be obliged to delay making information available to the sector.

#### **Code of practice on Consultation**

This section relates to English Heritage's consultation with others regarding policies or practices it is considering implementing. The circumstances of English Heritage and voluntary bodies being consulted by the government on statutory and other matters is addressed by the code on communications.

## Aims

- To encourage the voluntary sector to apply their knowledge, expertise and experience to English Heritage policy making;
- To ensure that all those wishing to comment on English Heritage's policies or practices have an opportunity at the appropriate time; and
- To ensure that English Heritage and the voluntary sector take mutual account of the views of each other when making submissions to government on national consultations to maximise the impact of the sector;

## Key Principles

When consulting and responding, it is important that all partners:

- Recognise that to reach a comprehensive range of organisations, consultations should be available in a variety of formats if requested;
- Ensure clarity of information to encourage relevant, balanced and inclusive responses;
- Invite and provide responses early enough in the process to influence the discussion; and
- Encourage the active engagement of a wide variety of people and organisations, particularly where proposals may affect different groups differently.

## Joint undertakings

When consulting and responding, it is important to:

- Develop and build upon current good practice in consultation;
- Ensure clarity, consistency and simplicity of language in requests and responses to limit the risk of misunderstanding; and
- Work to appropriate timetables for the consultation process.

## English Heritage undertakings

English Heritage will:

- Produce clear and concise consultation documents;
- Ensure the costs of responses to consultations commissioned from specific voluntary sector organisations are appropriately reimbursed;
- Acknowledge, respect and take account of feedback received and then be open and transparent over conclusions and the reasons for reaching them;

- Inform consultees of the timetable, ensuring it is appropriate to the type of consultation, and working to the 12 week period for major public consultations, where appropriate.

### Voluntary sector undertakings

In return, we expect voluntary bodies to:

- Recognise and respect the role of English Heritage in the development of government and organisational policy and the constraints placed upon it by virtue of being a public body;
- Make every effort to take part in and respond to relevant consultations, encouraging participation from other organisations if appropriate;
- Consult with their own stakeholders when appropriate, prior to submitting a response;
- Recognise that English Heritage will not always be able to identify all the relevant parties who should be consulted and so take responsibility for circulating consultations to a wider constituency if appropriate;
- Recognise that while English Heritage will consider and respect responses to consultations, it is obliged to take its own view and will not always agree with submissions made;
- Provide co-ordinated responses with other bodies where possible; and
- Define in their response who they represent and upon which aspects of the consultation they wish to comment.

### **Implementation and Review**

English Heritage wants this compact to make a difference to the relationship it has with voluntary sector partners. To this end, it will implement it across all English Heritage relationships with the voluntary sector and update it as and when necessary.

In return, we seek a commitment from the voluntary sector to work constructively and positively with English Heritage, resolving issues and disagreements in a way that recognises mutual respect and is beneficial for the sector.

English Heritage seeks feedback on this compact and ways it can be improved.