

Peer Review of English Heritage

Summary of Findings and Recommendations
June/July 2006



FOREWORD

England's historic environment makes a very real contribution to the nation's vibrancy and prosperity - enhancing urban and rural environments, underpinning the identity of cities, towns and villages and contributing to the national and local economies.

As the Government's statutory advisor and acknowledged expert on heritage matters, English Heritage has a significant role. It not only manages the historic assets in its own care but sets standards, educates, influences, regulates and partners with others to protect and sustain England's heritage as a whole.

To enable it to achieve these ends, the organisation has undergone a wide-ranging modernisation programme over recent years. This Peer Review was commissioned to take stock of that programme, and to look at the balance of English Heritage's roles and its relationships with key stakeholders, customers and Government.

The Review concluded that an impressive amount has already been achieved. English Heritage has become a more efficient, customer-focused organisation. Its new approach to the sustainable development of the historic environment, and to an outreach programme which is developing more inclusive concepts of heritage, have been particularly welcomed. However any major change programme is bound to be an ongoing process, and the Review Team recommends a number of ways in which English Heritage can embed its new approach and achieve further efficiencies.

We also believe that there is significant scope to enhance the contribution the historic environment can make to the sustainable development and sustainable communities agenda, and to the emerging 'place-shaping' agenda for local government. To achieve this in a period of shrinking resources, English Heritage will need strong support across central government departments; and to work in partnership with local government and a wide range of stakeholders across the heritage, cultural and academic sectors. The evidence is that potential partners stand ready.

On behalf of the Review Team, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all of those who gave generously of their time to contribute to the Review, either in writing or in person. Special thanks are due to DCMS and English Heritage, including its Commissioners, who were generous with their time and unfailingly helpful and open.

I should also like to say a personal thank you to my fellow Peers for their humour and incisiveness, and to Sue Charteris and her team at Shared Intelligence who made it happen.

Dame Mavis McDonald

Chair, Review Team
English Heritage Peer Review

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This is the report of a Peer Review of English Heritage, commissioned jointly by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and English Heritage. The review was the third in a series of Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) peer reviews, following those of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2004, and Arts Council England in 2005.

1.1.2 The Review took place in June and July 2006. As English Heritage had recently completed a major modernisation programme, it was felt to be an excellent opportunity for the organisation to assess its progress, establish what work remained to be done, and identify the key opportunities and issues as it moves forward.

1.1.3 English Heritage (EH) has a complex and wide-ranging remit, and an annual operating budget of £167m (of which approximately £135m is Grant-In-Aid). English Heritage is the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment, and its role is to champion and care for the historic environment by;

- Improving understanding of the past through research and study;
- Providing conservation grants, advisory and education services;
- Identifying and helping to protect buildings and archaeological sites of national importance;
- Maintaining over 400 historic properties and making them accessible to the broadest possible public audience;
- Maintaining the National Monuments Record as the central publicly accessible archive for the historic environment in England.

1.1.4 EH is sponsored by DCMS, which has overall responsibility for heritage policy in England and from whom EH receives around 75% of its funding. However its funding agreement is co-signed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). This reflects the extent of its remit beyond the cultural sphere; most notably its responsibilities in relation to planning and development. Accordingly, DCLG and Defra were also parties to the Peer Review.

1.2 Terms of Reference

1.2.1 Key questions explored by the Peer Review Team were as follows:

1. Could the relationship between **Government** (DCMS/DCLG/Defra) and English Heritage be made more effective/productive – with particular reference to the provision of **policy advice**, and delivery of the **Heritage Protection Review**?
2. Looking at the various **roles** English Heritage plays (or might play), is the **balance** between those roles right (in particular its national, regional and local roles)? What does (or should) the English Heritage **leadership** role mean in practice?
3. What have been the key achievements of English Heritage's **modernisation programme**? Can the overall **efficiency** of the organisation be improved further?
4. Does the full range of **activities** carried out by English Heritage contribute **cost-effectively** to the stated **strategic goals** of the organisation?
5. Has English Heritage the right **balance of resources** between:
 - those activities which aim to deliver current government priorities;
 - those activities which aim to fulfil statutory responsibilities; and
 - other activities?
6. How effective are English Heritage's **relations** with other key organisations in the built environment sector and beyond? How focused is it on its **stakeholders and customers**?
7. Could Government and English Heritage bring more **influence** to bear to raise awareness of the contribution of the historic environment to key **agendas** at national, local and regional level?

1.3 The Peer Review Team

Dame Mavis McDonald (Chair)

Former Permanent Secretary, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Trustee, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Chair of Catalyst Housing Group

Linda Boot

Formerly Director of the Netherlands Department for Conservation (RDMZ), and now Director of Utrechtse Heuvelrug (Dutch municipality)

Rosemary Cramp

Archaeologist and Emeritus Professor, Department of Archaeology, Durham University

Irene Lucas

Chief Executive, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

Gill Taylor

Chief Executive, the Academy for Sustainable Communities

Tom Wright

Chief Executive, VisitBritain

Jonathan Falkingham, Chief Executive of Urban Splash, contributed to the early stages of the review

The Peer Review Team was supported by the consultancy Shared Intelligence.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 In total, the Peer Review Team received the views of 202 individuals and organisations. The investigative element of the Peer Review comprised a combination of approaches. These included:

- **Semi-structured interviews** and focus groups held with English Heritage's Commissioners, Executive Board and regional directors; government officials and a representative selection of key partners and stakeholders. Overall, the Review Team conducted **42** one-to-one interviews, and hosted focus groups attended by a further **74** stakeholders (see Appendix 1).
- Interviews and focus groups were conducted in English Heritage's Head Office in London, and during three **visits to English Heritage offices** in the East and North West, and the National Monuments Record headquarters in Swindon.
- **Four staff workshops** were convened at the Head Office and during the three regional visits. Led by members of the Review Team, the workshops canvassed the views of some **67** English Heritage staff, representing a mix of grades and departments (see Appendix 1).
- **Written submissions** were received from **76** English Heritage stakeholders (see Appendix 2) in advance of the Peers working on-site. The Review also drew on relevant evidence submitted to the ongoing Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Inquiry into 'Protecting and Preserving our Heritage'.
- **Briefings and document review:** the Team received pre-briefings from English Heritage, DCMS, Philip Gould Associates (reporting on reputation research with English Heritage stakeholders) and MORI (reporting on EH visitor survey work). A bibliography of key documents is attached at Appendix 4.

Reporting of findings

1.4.2 The Review's findings and recommendations were reported back to:

- Members of English Heritage's Executive Board and DCMS officials (as the formal sponsoring department); followed by
- The Rt Hon David Lammy MP, Minister for Culture; and English Heritage's Chair, Sir Neil Cossons; and
- English Heritage Commissioners.

1.4.3 This report summarises the Review Team's findings and recommendations. As with the original verbal presentation, it draws on the common themes that emerged.

1.4.4 The following section of this report set out:

- The key messages conveyed to the Team during its discussions with management, staff and stakeholders – i.e. what the Peers 'heard';
- The Team's findings in relation to the Terms of Reference; and
- Recommendations and next steps.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 Key messages – ‘what we heard’

- 2.1.1 This section summarises the key messages arising from consultation with English Heritage’s leadership, staff, stakeholders and partners.

Evidence of positive change throughout the organisation

English Heritage has changed for the better

- 2.1.2 English Heritage (EH) is seen by virtually all of its partners and stakeholders to have markedly improved its performance since the Quinquennial Review in 2002, with tributes paid to the strong leadership of the Chief Executive and Chair in championing and driving forward the changes. There was a sense that at a macro level the organisation has ‘moved with the times’, becoming less reactive and more dynamic and pragmatic.

English Heritage has grasped the efficiency agenda

- 2.1.3 Whilst there is more to do, EH is seen to have taken steps successfully toward implementing the Government’s efficiency agenda. Specifically, the organisation has exceeded DCMS’s requirements in generating efficiency savings.

New regional structures – English Heritage is seen as a positive regional partner

- 2.1.4 EH’s regional partners see its re-organisation as having delivered a more outward-facing organisation, with the capacity and willingness to engage more fully with other players and a more enabling and lateral approach. Although the picture remains variable and further scope undoubtedly exists, the Team heard that EH had made constructive contributions to regional economic strategies, cultural consortia and growth area planning, among others. The new regional arrangements have also helped to underpin improvements in service delivery, particularly in speeding up statutory casework turnaround times (from 74% within 28 days in 2002 to 95% within 21 days in 2005/6).

English Heritage’s upstream enabling role on planning and development is welcomed

- 2.1.5 Several contributors spoke highly of the transformation in EH’s corporate approach to working with private sector developers. They were particularly complimentary of its recent commitment to ‘upstream enabling’ on large development projects, avoiding the need for oppositional dialogue at late stages or lengthy inquiries. Implementation of the new ‘enabling’ approach by local staff remains a more mixed

picture, but the organisation is universally respected for its professionalism, expertise and knowledge.

Progress is being made on diversity awareness

2.1.6 Although there is a long way to go, EH is beginning to dispel perceptions of heritage as a 'white, upper-middle class' sector served by a culturally similar organisation. Stakeholders felt that the organisation had made a marked shift toward developing and disseminating more inclusive concepts of heritage. EH is seen by some as setting a positive example to the sector in seeking to extend its reach, and it has made a substantial contribution to the achievement of DCMS's Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for diversifying audiences.

2.1.7 Although many stakeholders are yet to be convinced that work on this agenda is sufficiently proactive and embedded throughout EH, the work being done by the outreach and access teams was singled out for praise, as was the redirection of resources into this work since modernisation.

More commercial, customer-focused management of English Heritage properties – these are an improving 'product'

2.1.8 The property stewardship role – amounting to management of approximately 400 sites – is a highly-respected part of English Heritage's remit. Significant capital investment is seen to have improved the visitor experience markedly at the main sites, and income from admissions has grown by 24.8% between 2000/01 and 2004/5 (although overall admission figures have declined slightly during the same period). EH's new approach to branding, marketing and presenting the properties is regarded as both more modern and more professional, and has made them more accessible to new and existing audiences. There has also been considerable progress on reducing the operating deficit of the property portfolio (down from £11m to £7m), and on exploring new forms of income generation at key sites.

English Heritage's expertise is valued by the heritage sector and beyond

2.1.9 English Heritage's role as a source and sponsor of specialist knowledge, skills and expertise is regarded as vital by stakeholders in the heritage sector, and more widely within academia and the planning/built environment professions. While there are some outstanding concerns, its research output, specialist advice and technical work in the field are all highly regarded. EH is not only brought in for hands-on expertise, but also as an external authority that can challenge or validate decisions.

English Heritage is widely recognised as the sector leader

2.1.10 Most stakeholders in the heritage sector look to EH as a natural and capable leader; whether within the sector, e.g. convening regional Historic Environment Forums; as a champion for the historic environment, such as taking a public stand on controversial listing decisions; or as an advocate for and bridge between the sector and government – for example working

with DCMS on the Heritage Protection Review. Although it is seen to be hampered in all of these roles by a lack of resources – and at times, by sufficient clout within government – most contributors to the review were still satisfied that EH fulfilled the sector leadership role.

Expert, committed staff

- 2.1.11 The enthusiasm, dedication and expertise of EH staff is seen as a huge asset by the organisation's stakeholders and partners, and many cited increasing evidence of a 'can-do' attitude at the front-line.

Scope for further change

The historic environment does not carry sufficient weight as a part of national 'place-related' policy

- 2.1.12 Heritage is seen to have an important contribution to make to the 'place-shaping' policy agenda across government - supporting improved quality of life, identity, civic pride and community cohesion. EH is beginning to promote this view, but the wider benefits of heritage for individual neighbourhoods, communities and society as a whole are not yet understood or accepted universally - either within government or further afield. Some stakeholders noted that this unrealised potential is even more marked when compared to the relative success of equivalent claims made by bodies in the arts and sports.
- 2.1.13 Championing heritage in relation to other government department's agendas is not the sole responsibility of EH; DCMS is also seen to have a role to play. However to do this effectively DCMS must first itself be convinced by a topical, coherent and evidence-based case for the historic environment's contribution.
- 2.1.14 There are also ongoing concerns about duplication of effort between EH and DCMS, especially around policy, elements of statutory procedures and the provision of advice to Government. Yet at the same time DCMS resources are felt to be too scarce to enable them to support EH's broad remit properly, especially regionally.

Scope for closer relationships with DCLG

- 2.1.15 Dialogue between EH and Defra/DCLG takes place primarily at the technical level, and is seen to be weaker at the strategic and policy level. Many contributors to the Review favour a stronger, more explicit relationship with DCLG, given the proportion of EH's work that links to the planning and developmental control framework (approximately 33% of EH's annual spend and 28% of staff time is spent on DCLG-related activities), and the potential for more synergy around policy. It is also widely felt that a more formal relationship with DCLG could improve EH's strategic reach across government, and reduce its reliance on DCMS's budget.

An over-complicated and top heavy structure

- 2.1.16 English Heritage is seen by many as having too complex a structure with 40 senior managers. This increases overheads and appears to slow decision-making and the movement of information from the Executive to the frontline and vice versa. Stakeholders were particularly unclear about the distinction between the territorial and regional remits.

Tension between commercial and policy objectives

- 2.1.17 EH's new commercial and customer-driven approach to its business operations (particularly its property portfolio) has undoubtedly improved their quality and competitiveness in the marketplace and increased their ability to generate revenue.
- 2.1.18 However internally, the commercial focus of some arms of the organisation – e.g. marketing – can be in conflict with others concerned with the more theoretical aspects of heritage – such as the arm responsible for the collections displayed in the properties. Although both have a role to play, the compromises reached are at times unsatisfactory to both sides.

Greater scope for earlier and more effective engagement on policy design

- 2.1.19 The heritage sector values the role EH plays in generating and influencing policy. However many contributors said that they would welcome greater and earlier involvement in EH policy formulation – the products of which they, and the historic environment can be profoundly affected by (for example the Conservation Principles or the Research Strategy). Many also favour more substantive participation in designing new processes and initiatives, to ensure that they will be practicable and effective on the ground; the Heritage Protection Review seminars were welcomed for this reason.

Anxiety about the scale of resources within English Heritage and local government to implement the current statutory protection agenda – exacerbated by the Heritage Protection Review

- 2.1.20 Although the sector is widely supportive of the intentions of the Heritage Protection Review (HPR), there are significant concerns about the resource implications. There are existing capacity and skills issues related to the historic environment within local government, with many councils not having their own conservation advisors/historic environment caseworkers or easy access to such advice. There are also too few people nationally who are trained to work in this area, which has caused significant skills shortages. In the past, EH has tended to help fund councils lacking the appropriate resources. Yet EH's ability to do this is increasingly restricted due to the need to manage its limited resources.
- 2.1.21 There was widespread concern across a range of stakeholders - including its own staff - that EH's credibility could be undermined by any further erosion of practical support on the ground. Many emphasised the

reduction in both detail and frequency of EH's technical advice since modernisation. However, the proposals in the Heritage Protection Review require local authorities to take on an even larger role. Whilst the new system is widely welcomed in principle, its introduction will exacerbate this already difficult situation.

- 2.1.22 EH have undertaken capacity building programmes in local government - including the HELM scheme and Heritage Champions - which are widely valued. However progress is slow and it is felt that the gap is continuing to widen. EH gave a few examples of more creative mechanisms for capacity building, but the sector is looking to EH to initiate a proper strategy urgently; a network of sub-regional teams was suggested as one potential solution to be explored.
- 2.1.23 It is unclear whether EH feels it has to resource its capacity building work more significantly, and where the necessary funds might be redirected from. Most significantly, there is no clear common vision between EH, DCMS and DCLG of the scale of the problem now, of the resources needed to tackle it, the impact that the HPR will have, or the ownership of the problem going forward. It is also the case that local government collectively has not given much consideration to this issue.

Buy-in to change has not fully permeated the organisation

- 2.1.24 The cultural change central to the roll-out of the modernisation programme is not yet felt to have become consistently embedded throughout the organisation. EH is now seen to be very 'customer-focused' at the top levels, and this has been very well received by stakeholders in local government and the built environment sector. At a local level, some individual officers were perceived not yet to have fully embraced the new approach, while others were seen to be showing local government the way ahead.

2.2 Response to the Terms of Reference

- 2.2.1 Many of the issues described above relate directly to the questions posed by the Terms of Reference, and will not be reiterated here. In this section, the Review Team summarise their findings on the four central issues contained in the Terms of Reference: modernisation; strategy and balance of roles; influence and relationships with government.

Modernisation

Scope for further efficiency

- 2.2.2 It is the Review Team's view that, despite very good progress to date, there is scope for further efficiency within EH. There are six main ways in which this might be achieved:

- rationalise structures and improve communications;
- work to sustain staff expertise and motivation;
- embed work on diversity;
- build in greater internal challenge;
- rationalise roles and tighten strategic focus.

The two latter areas are covered separately under 'Strategy and balance of roles'.

Need for rationalisation of structures and more lateral communications

- 2.2.3 It is clear that the regional re-organisation has done much to improve the efficiency of EH at the local level. However, some of the changes appear to have been made to reflect internal needs rather than to align with and support the organisation's (or the region's) strategic priorities. Although the individuals are often highly valued, partners find EH's regional/territorial/national structure confusing, and it is noticeably different to that of many other devolved NDPBs and agencies.
- 2.2.4 The current distribution of functions means that regional directors are not responsible for all of the staff who operate from their offices, many of whom are managed remotely. As well as centralising control and thus hampering flexible regional decision-making, the regional reporting arrangements can impede information flow and cross-fertilisation of ideas, support hierarchical rather than lateral communication, and reduce efficiency.
- 2.2.5 There may also be a case to be made for further rationalisation within the five group structures, both at national and regional level. In particular, the Team were unconvinced by the logic for locating education and outreach within the properties portfolio, and for splitting up the key property-related functions; visitor operations, estates management, marketing, presentation and curation. Some of these reporting arrangements were introduced to expedite the transition towards modernisation; partly driven by a need for more consistent standards across the organisation. However the Team feels it is important for EH to revisit whether these are the right arrangements for the next stage of reform.

Need to sustain staff expertise, motivation and morale

- 2.2.6 The Review Team met with a wide range of EH staff, and members were impressed by their enthusiasm; the depth of their commitment to the organisation, its leadership and its strategic direction; and by their obvious pride in their own work. However, there were also some genuine concerns about the impact of the changes on the services EH was able to offer, for example the sustainability of achieving such high turnaround times (particularly in the area of technical and expert advice). Staff shared the concerns of EH's other partners and stakeholders around the

implementation of the HPR, and wanted to feel more a part of the decision-making process.

2.2.7 Some staff had taken on additional responsibilities following the restructure, and although achieving well against high pressure targets, were concerned about the sustainability of their workload in the long-term. Some felt that they lacked competency in 'new' key skills such as partnership working, or that there was little provision for updating their specialist expertise. The Team noted the absence of a formal performance-related pay and rewards scheme and a Continuing Professional Development programme. This is of particular relevance given the need to be competitive in terms of pay and benefits within the sector, and to maintain morale in the face of workload pressures.

2.2.8 Staff perceived a need for a more interactive dialogue with EH's management. While staff forums were welcomed, they were frequently seen as mechanisms for dissemination of corporate policy and strategy rather than for discussion and problem-solving. There are also insufficient links between the policy-making function and front-line practitioners.

Lack of internal strategic challenge on priorities; need for development of more rigour and a culture of evaluation

2.2.9 Although the collegiality of the Executive Board is generally to be applauded, there is no mechanism for EH's strategy and priorities – whether around policy, balance of activities, its relationship with government, or resource allocation – to be robustly challenged on an ongoing basis.

2.2.10 This is a role that the Commissioners could fulfil, but it would require their earlier involvement in the development of strategy and the assessment of priorities, and agreement on a limited number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which would enable them to track progress.

2.2.11 The complex internal structure of EH, combined with a lack of management information that clearly attributes costs means that there is no easy means to benchmark performance or variations in levels of activity (this is discussed further below). There is also little evidence of an evaluation methodology for investment made, so it is difficult to compare activities and pursue those which EH can or should deliver most effectively.

Need to embed English Heritage's diversity and outreach work across the organisation

2.2.12 Recent work on diversity and outreach is admirable; in particular EH properties have been successful in reaching wider audiences. However, an awareness of the importance of ensuring that the heritage offer is relevant to diverse communities has yet to permeate the organisation sufficiently. This needs to be addressed more systematically in the next phase of the culture change, for example through the 'diversity-proofing' of new initiatives.

Strategy and balance of roles

Challenge from the width of English Heritage's remit

- 2.2.13 EH's remit and strategic goals are so broad as to give scope for it to pursue a very wide range of activities, not all of them complementary. Clearly there is a case to be made for retaining a broad remit: for example property management and casework in the field provide credibility, research underpins expertise and standards, and policy and partnership work helps to secure influence and resources.
- 2.2.14 However, there is a danger that EH tries to be all things to all people. The particular combination of roles held by EH owes more to historical precedent than to design, and the organisation – whether or not it retains all of its current functions – must have a clear logic and a robust mechanism for the prioritisation of its scarce resources. For example, EH needs to be sure that the relationships between its own grant-giving arrangements and those of the Heritage Lottery Fund are not duplicative, and take full advantage of the potential for working more closely together.
- 2.2.15 EH must be convinced that direct delivery of all of its functions will achieve the most efficient and effective outcomes going forward. It is clear that vigour is applied to looking strategically at some areas, e.g. premises costs and IT. As EH prepares its longer term business case, it will be important to build in a discipline of exploring the risks and benefits of utilising alternative delivery mechanisms.

Difficulty in discerning the balance and cost-effectiveness of activities and outcomes

- 2.2.16 English Heritage's funding agreement does have a delivery plan, but a considerable amount of the organisation's work and investment falls outside of the agreement's quantifiable targets. Nor are the expectations of the three co-signatories (DCMS, DCLG and Defra) made explicit elsewhere. Further, EH's various strategies are not sufficiently hard-edged, with specific deliverables against which all activity can be measured.
- 2.2.17 To make a convincing case for resources in the future, EH needs to be able to demonstrate to Government how the outcomes it achieves relate to key objectives, and benchmark relative performance and efficiency across the organisation. It should also be able to clearly separate legitimate functional activities from its overheads, which the Team was not convinced is the case at present. Management then need a small number of clear performance criteria relevant to the overall organisation, rather than the large number of current targets (approximately 200) which focus on the activities of individual directorates within the organisation.

Influence

Scope for working more closely in partnership with other organisations

- 2.2.18 EH does not yet appear to have realised the full potential for working in partnership with others to deliver shared objectives. With available resources already widely seen as compromising its ability to deliver everything expected of it, early indications are that CSR07 will see another lean settlement for EH, along with other bodies. Making the case for heritage's contribution to wider agendas will be vital to increasing available resources, but partnership working will become essential to gain the most value from existing budgets.
- 2.2.19 In particular, there is both opportunity and scope for increasing the capacity of EH to influence the regional and local agenda, through closer and more substantive relationships with other regional bodies and local government. Key areas are likely to be heritage's contribution to sustainable communities and the wider 'place shaping' agenda (which is a key feature of the recent report of the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, *"National Prosperity, local choice and civic engagement"* (May 2006)).
- 2.2.20 There is also scope for wider partnership working with:
- local authorities and local government umbrella bodies (e.g. the LGA) to address the operational voids appearing in relation to planning and heritage protection;
 - other members of the heritage sector on area-based marketing of a wider range of heritage sites and properties – e.g. the National Trust and the Historic Houses Association;
 - other organisations with mutual interests - for example, the online resource maintained by the NMR could potentially form the basis for partnership work with the Archives sector;
 - the Heritage Lottery Fund for grants to community projects;
 - national, regional and heritage sector players to recognise and expand EH's education and outreach activity - particularly in support of the national curriculum and community cohesion, respectively; and
 - the academic community and public, private and charitable funders to broker more funds for research – e.g. tapping into DFES's substantial research budget.
- 2.2.21 There is definitely scope for more effective partnership working around research. The EH directorate identified as Research and Standards consumes £34.3m of EH's total resource and employs 448 staff. While highly respected for its output, and clearly filling a gap in the sector nationally for heritage research, there does not seem to be clear

justification for the scale of research undertaken in the context of other operational priorities. A clear elucidation of the activities that fall under this heading is required. In particular, it would enable EH to identify those areas where it was uniquely placed to undertake the work and those where partnerships with other interested parties could allow it to move more toward a commissioning role.

- 2.2.22 There are also potentially significant opportunities to work more collaboratively internally and with external partners on education and outreach work. EH is in danger of over-concentrating its education and outreach work on its own sites, rather than building a strategic approach that capitalises on shared objectives. Under the current structure - where education and outreach staff are not directly managed within the regional office - there is a risk of staff isolation and missed opportunities to link both with other colleagues and with partners' existing education and outreach initiatives.

Government relationships

Scope for more effective and clearer relationships with DCMS and other government departments

- 2.2.23 The relationship between EH and DCMS is a critical one, and there is definitely scope for developing a more integrated vision for the historic environment. However there is also both a logical case and clear support for a closer, more formal relationship with EH's other government partners, particularly DCLG but also Defra.
- 2.2.24 This could involve a joint sponsorship arrangement, a more explicit funding agreement or a management contract that focuses in on the key priorities and outcomes for each department and specifies deliverables. For example, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) is also formally sponsored by DCMS, yet significant aspects of its work fall under DCLG's remit. These specific aspects are covered by a second funding agreement (directly with DCLG), and CABE and the two departments have agreed a formal Relationship Management Protocol.
- 2.2.25 A more formal joint arrangement would provide better recognition for the contribution EH makes beyond the DCMS remit, improve EH's access to the policy and legislative processes within DCLG/Defra, and clarify the expectations of all three departments. This is particularly timely given the significant opportunities for EH arising from the emergent 'place shaping' agenda, as well as the major role the historic environment can play in urban regeneration – enhancing quality of life and contributing to community cohesion and economic prosperity.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Continuing the reform programme

High level

- 3.1.1 Complete the culture change throughout English Heritage, to ensure more consistent behaviour and approach by staff.
- 3.1.2 Undertake a de-layering/de-cluttering exercise – a flatter, more networked organisational structure would improve efficiency and simplify complex reporting lines.

Practical steps

- 3.1.3 Introduce a Continuous Professional Development programme to sustain current levels of expertise and embed new skills.
- 3.1.4 Explore the introduction of a performance-related pay and rewards policy to improve recruitment, retention, morale and performance.
- 3.1.5 Develop mechanisms for capturing more 'bottom-up' input, so that frontline staff can feed into policy and strategy at an early stage.

3.2 Strategy and balance of roles

High level

- 3.2.1 If English Heritage is to present a convincing case to central government, it must complete its planned system of cost attribution as soon as possible.
- 3.2.2 Develop an investment and evaluation-based strategy, with a clearly differentiated and outcome-based budget.
- 3.2.3 Agree with government stakeholders a small number of key performance indicators which clearly relate to the effectiveness of English Heritage's core strategy.

Practical steps

- 3.2.4 Engage Commissioners more fully in the development and monitoring of English Heritage strategy and priorities.

Properties

High level

- 3.2.5 Streamline and group all aspects of property management and promotion, to make the best use of these key assets.
- 3.2.6 Create a strategic framework for the property portfolio as a whole, to aid decision-making and resource prioritisation.

Practical steps

- 3.2.7 Agree a long-term capital investment programme for the property portfolio – i.e. beyond 2007/08.
- 3.2.8 Produce and disseminate clear guidelines for the use of volunteers – they could provide a valuable additional resource, particularly at lower-profile sites.

Research

High level

- 3.2.9 Develop a shared understanding between government, English Heritage and the wider sector around the overall volume and balance of research – and how it relates to English Heritage objectives.
- 3.2.10 Develop research projects in partnership with other interested parties, and explore new sources of funding (e.g. DFES, DCLG).

Practical steps

- 3.2.11 In order to articulate and resource it more strategically, English Heritage's research should be broken down into that which is:
 - standard-setting;
 - exemplary; and
 - casework.

Education and outreach

High level

- 3.2.12 English Heritage should change its policy of focusing its education and outreach work on its properties.

- 3.2.13 There is considerable scope for partnership working to extend the range of education and outreach opportunities.
- 3.2.14 EH has the capacity to educate as well as to entertain, and should ensure it continues to produce resources and publications that cater to its varied audiences – from general interest to academic.

3.3 Influence

Local government

High level

- 3.3.1 Central Government, with English Heritage, should develop a more strategic relationship with the LGA to raise the profile of the historic environment within local government.
- 3.3.2 Build a closer partnership with local government and professional bodies as part of the expansion of the existing skills and capacity building programme.

Practical steps

- 3.3.3 DCMS should consider having a 'heavy-weight' local authority player on the Commission.

National and regional partners

High level

- 3.3.4 Provide the regional directors with more support in their leadership role, by de-layering and streamlining internally and devoting more resource to partnership working.
- 3.3.5 Do more to get the historic environment on other people's agendas, particularly by capitalising on existing synergies.
- 3.3.6 Develop a readiness to look outside English Heritage's own budgets to meet its objectives – both through commercial and revenue streams, and through more joining up with others who fund similar programmes, research etc.

Practical steps

- 3.3.7 Develop a 'stakeholder strategy' at the national level that facilitates the regular and consistent involvement of partners in the heritage sector (and wider cultural sector) at an early stage in the development of policy and programmes.

- 3.3.8 Commissioners should be more involved in promoting partnership and the English Heritage agenda in the regions, for example by working with local and regional politicians and non-Executive members of other bodies.

3.4 Relationships with Government

High level

- 3.4.1 Establish strategic goals which all three departments want to achieve, and gain agreement on how English Heritage can contribute to them.
- 3.4.2 Improve joint-ownership of English Heritage by DCMS/DCLG/DEFRA – this could be through joint-sponsorship or a tighter Service Level Agreement, building on the Funding Agreement.
- 3.4.3 The successful roll-out of the HPR requires a nationally agreed action plan to tackle the capability gap, through a joint initiative led by DCMS as sponsors of the proposed legislation, involving DCLG, English Heritage and local government.

Practical steps

- 3.4.4 At the most senior level, English Heritage and DCMS need more regular and constructive engagement on strategic policy issues, to achieve a shared sense of direction.

3.5 Next steps

- 3.5.1 The Review Team recommends that a joint action plan is agreed between English Heritage and the three key departments - DCMS, DCLG and DEFRA, with six-monthly monitoring thereafter.

APPENDIX ONE

List of participants (interviews, focus groups and briefings)

Government stakeholders

Dame Sue Street	Permanent Secretary, Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
Andrew Ramsay	Director General, DCMS
Nicholas Holgate	Chief Operating Officer, DCMS
Harry Reeves	Head of Architecture and Historic Environment Division, DCMS
Richard McCarthy	Director of Sustainable Communities, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
Andrew Wells	Director of New Homes and Sustainable Development, DCLG
Canda Smith	Head of Sustainable Urban Design, DCLG
John Stamboullian	Head of Planning & Development Control, DCLG
John Mills	Rural Policy Director, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Helen Williams	Director of Primary Education, Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other national organisations

James Hervey-Bathurst	Director, Historic Houses Association
Mike Brown	Chair of Editorial Board, Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Stewart Bryant	Chairman, Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO)
Tony Burton	Director of Policy and Strategy, the National Trust
Dave Chetwyn	Vice-Chair, Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Michael Day	Director, Historic Royal Palaces
Profesor Eric Fernie	President, Society of Antiquaries
David Fursdon	President, Country Land and Business Association
John Graham	Director, Historic Scotland
Mike Heyworth	Director, Council for British Archaeology

Peter Hinton	Director, Institute of Field Archaeologists
David Hughes	Project Director, Hospital Sites Programme, English Partnerships
Ged Lawrenson	Chair of Design and Delivery Committee, Planning Officer's Society
Amanda Matthews	National Heritage Adviser, Countryside Agency
Cllr Peter Metcalfe	Planning Executive, Local Government Association
Taryn Nixon	Managing Director, Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS)
Richard Saxon	Vice President, Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Richard Simmons	Chief Executive, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)
Carole Souter	Director, Heritage Lottery Fund
Paul Spooner	Head of Western Territory, English Partnerships
Dr. Peter Wakelin	President, Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historic Monuments of Wales
Nick Way	Director-General, Historic Houses Association

Regional agencies and organisations

Graham Boxer	Head of Heritage Development, Liverpool Culture Company
Mark Forbes	Planning Casework Manager, Government Office for the North West (GONW)
Jim Gill	Chief Executive, Liverpool Vision
Libby Grundy	Executive Director, Culture Southwest
John Hodgson	Senior Archaeologist, Lake District National Park Authority
Barrie Kelly	Director of Operations, Cheshire and Warrington Tourist Board
Ian Knight	Head of Operations for the West of England, Southwest Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
Janet Matthewman	DCMS representative, GONW
Libby Raper	Executive Director, Culture Northwest
Phil Reddy	Tourism Projects Manager, North West Development Agency (NWDA)
Gordon Reid	Head of Development, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council South West
David Riley	Programme Director, Elevate East Lancashire (Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder)
Peter Styche	Director, Spatial Planning and Housing, GONW

Local authorities

Mark Barnard	Historic Buildings Officer, Suffolk County Council
Brian Cookson	Executive Director, Regeneration, Pendle Borough Council
Anne Doherty	Assistant Director of Planning, London Borough of Camden
Steve Earl	Conservation Officer, Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Pat Hansell	Assistant Director, Culture and Community Learning, Blackpool Borough Council
Roger Hopcraft	Planning Policy Manager, Eden District Council
Graham King	Head of Planning, Westminster City Council
Alan Lake	Team Leader, Regeneration and Conservation, Sefton Council
Nigel Lee	Planning Manager, Liverpool City Council
Richard Llewellyn	Planning Manager, Liverpool City Council
Cllr Georgette Polley	Councillor, Thurrock Council
Colin Potts	Tourism Manager, Chester City Council
John Preston	Historic Environment Manager, Cambridge City Council
Liz Smith	Conservation Officer, Swindon Borough Council
Martin Trehwella Council	Development Manager, Swindon Borough
Alex Walker	Head of Arts and Heritage, Preston City Council

Diversity and equalities

Dame Jocelyn Barrow	Chair, Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage
Katja Condy	Heritage Open Days Manager, Civic Trust
David Jones	Keeper of Human History, Museums and Galleries, Ipswich Borough Council
Harbinder Singh Rana	Director, Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail
Anthea Row	Project Director, Journeys Project
Bob Sharp	Chief Executive, Staffordshire Blind
Margaret Thomas	Vice Chairman, Staffordshire Blind
Patrick Roe	Outpatient Eye Clinic Information Coordinator, Staffordshire Blind
Judy Ling Wong	Director, Black Environment Network
Baroness Lola Young	Director, Cultural Brokers

Property developers and architects

Alan Baxter	Director, Alan Baxter and Associates
Georgina Crabtree	Assistant Development Planner, Peel Holdings
Roger Madelin	Chief Executive, Argent King's Cross
Rob Mason	Development Director, Neptune Developments Ltd.
Adrian Pearson	Architect, Lloyd Evans Prichard Ltd.
Tony Pidgley	Chief Executive, Barclay Homes
Roger Stephenson OBE	Architect, Stephenson Bell

ENGLISH HERITAGE PARTICIPANTS

Commissioners

Maria Adebowale
Joyce Bridges
Manish Chande
Sir Neil Cossons (Chair)
Lord Douro
Dr Jane Grenville
Les Sparks
Elizabeth Williamson
Baroness Lola Young

Executive Board

Simon Thurley	Chief Executive
Steven Bee	Director of Planning and Development
Michael Crich	Director of Resources
Edward Impey	Director of Research and Standards
Deborah Lamb	Director of Policy and Communications
Mark Pemberton	Director of Properties and Outreach

Advisory panels

Martin Jones	Chair, English Heritage Research Advisory Panel
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Regional management

Sarah Aston	Director of Human Resources
Bob Bewley	Regional Director of Planning and Development, West
John Cattell	Chief Buildings Historian
Nigel Clubb	Director, National Monuments Record (NMR)
Karl Creaser	Regional Policy Officer
Anna Eavis	Head of NMR Services
Peter de Figueiredo	Team Leader and Historic Buildings Inspector
Colum Giles	Head of Urban Research
Gill Grayson	Head of Heritage Data Management
Rebecca Kane	Visitor Operations Director, London
Debra Longley	Business Manager
Greg Luton	Regional Director of Planning and Development, East of England
Chris Mould	Head of ICT Programme and Development
Judith Nelson	Land Use Planner
Adrian Olivier	Director of Strategy
Henry Owen John	Regional Director of Planning and Development, Northwest
Robert Richardson	Head of Publishing
Chris Scull	Director of Research
Chris Smith	Territory Director, West region
Roslyn Stuart	Territory Director, East region
Humphrey Welfare	Territory Director, North region
Dan Wolfe	Director of Marketing

Staff focus groups

Head Office, London

Swindon office and National Monuments Record, Swindon

East of England regional office, Cambridge

North West regional office, Manchester

(Each attended by c.15-20 staff)

APPENDIX TWO

Written submissions received from stakeholders

Government departments

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

Planning System Improvement Division

Department for Transport (DfT)

Dr Stephen Ladyman MP, Minister of State for Transport

Ben Still, Head of Traffic Management Division

English Heritage Commissioners

English Heritage Commissioner (1)

English Heritage Commissioner (2)

Heritage sector

The Architectural History Practice

James Anderson, Director

Association of Local Government Archaeologists (ALGAO)

Stewart Bryant, Chair

British Property Federation

Matthew Smith, Policy Officer

Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England

Neil Sinden, Head of Policy

Churches Conservation Trust

Crispin Truman, Chief Executive

Heritage Link

Kate Pugh, Secretary

Ironbridge Institute

David de Haan, Programme Director

Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies

Dr. Ian Dungavelle, Secretary

Maintain Our Heritage

George Allen, Chair

The National Trust

Sir William Proby, Chair

Tony Burton, Director of Policy and Strategy

Rescue – The British Archaeological Trust

Chris Cumberpatch, Secretary

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

Diana Murray, Secretary

SAVE

Adam Wilkinson, Secretary

20th Century Society

Gavin Stamp, Chairman

Developers and planners

British Land

John Ritblatt

English Partnerships

Jerome Frost, Head of National Consultancy Unit

The Planning Inspectorate

Katrine Sporle, Chief Executive,

Leonora Rozee, Director of Policy and Profession

Planning Officers Society

Ged Lawrenson, Chair, Design and Delivery Committee

Grant recipients

Church of St. Mary, Helmingham, Suffolk

Doris Haas, Honorary Secretary

G. Forge Ltd.

Graham Forge, Director

Kenningstock Mill

Inette Austin-Smith, Fundraiser

Parish of Churchdown

Dr Chris Wakeman, Project Manager

Sheepy Group of Churches, Leicestershire

Annette Reed, Vicar

Regional agencies and organisations

Advantage West Midlands (AWM)

Nick Paul, Chairman

Central London Partnership

Patricia Brown, Chief Executive

Culture North West

Loyd Grossman, Chair

Culture South East

Kalwant Ajimal, Chair

Greater London Assembly (GLA)

David Lunts, Executive Director Policy and Partnerships

Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM)

Jane Todd, Regional Director

Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM)

Sheila Healy, Acting Regional Director

Government Office for the South West (GOWM)

Bronwyn Hill, Regional Director

London Development Agency (LDA)

Mary Reilly, Chairman

New Heartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder

Rachel Brisley, Policy and Strategy Manager

One NorthEast (ONE)

Margaret Fay, Chair

West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMDA)

Stephen Hind, Senior Director

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

David Butterworth, Chief Executive
Yorkshire Forward

Terry Hodginkson, Chairman

Local authorities

Birmingham City Council

Clive Dutton, Director of Planning and Regeneration

Cheshire County Council

Cllr Peter Byrne

Coventry City Council

John McGuigan, Director of City Development

Derbyshire County Council

Cllr Geoff Carlile, Deputy Chief Executive

Isle of Wight Council

Astrid Davies, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services

Leeds City Council

Richard Taylor, Conservation Team Leader

Lincoln City Council

Cllr Neil Murray, Champion of the Historic Environment

Local Government Association (LGA)

Lee Searles, Programme Manager

London Borough of Havering

Cllr Andrew Curtin

Manchester City Council

Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive

Newcastle City Council

Harvey Emms, Head of Planning and Transportation

North Cornwall District Council

Bruce Tyzzer, Head of Strategy and Regeneration

Northumberland County Council

Alan Wann, Head of Regeneration

Nottingham City Council

Barry Horne, Corporate Director
Plymouth City Council

Barry Keel, Chief Executive
Portsmouth City Council

Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Leader
Torbay Council

Sue Cheriton, Assistant Director

Other

Arts and Humanities Research Council

Professor Philip Esler, Chief Executive
Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA)

Robin Broke, Director
Creative and Cultural Skills Sector Council

Victoria Pirie, Industry Skills Director
CITB Construction Skills

Peter Lobban, Chief Executive
Defence Estates

Richard Mckinney, Director, Estates Strategy
Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford

Dr. G P Thomas, Director
Office of Science and Technology

Sir David King, Head of Office and Chief Scientific Adviser to HM Government
Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Chris Edwards, Manager
The Royal Parks

Mark Camley, Chief Executive

APPENDIX THREE

Summary of written submissions received

In May 2006, approximately 180 of English Heritage's stakeholders were invited to make written submissions to a Peer Review of the organisation. They were asked to respond within the framework of key issues identified in the review's terms of reference.

In all, 65 replies were received from individuals and organisations, of which eight declined to make a submission to the review. A full list of those that replied accompanies this paper.

This paper summarises the 57 substantive responses.

The following table gives a breakdown of responses, categorised into stakeholder groupings:

Stakeholder 'type'	No. contacted	No. of substantive responses
Developers and planners	15	4
EH Commissioners and advisory panel chairs	13	2
Government departments	10	2
Grant recipients	15	5
Heritage sector	37	18
Local authorities	50	12
Other NDPBs	10	3
Regional agencies	29	11

There was considerable diversity in respondents' views. There were, however, some key messages, which are summarised over the page. The subsequent sections are organised according to the questions contained in the review's terms of reference, and analysis has been broken down into the stakeholder groupings (listed above) where possible.

KEY ISSUES

In brief, the key issues arising from the submissions are as follows:

Among respondents:

- 1) English Heritage (EH) is **well respected** by its stakeholders, and its staff are felt to offer considerable knowledge and expertise on heritage issues.
- 2) Many feel that **EH's remit** is too wide, and that there is a case for separating its **property management** and its **statutory functions**.
- 3) Some feel that EH's focus has moved from its **core statutory responsibilities**, such as inspections and casework, towards giving policy advice, and that it could strengthen its presence 'on the ground' and work in building skills in the heritage sector.
- 4) There is felt to be some scope for EH to strengthen its **influence and relationships** across government, including some support for transferring English Heritage from **DCMS to DCLG** to reflect its input into planning and regeneration.
- 5) EH is broadly felt to recognise and promote the role of heritage in **regeneration, economic development** and other key agendas, and to be increasing its interaction with other agencies.
- 6) There is general satisfaction with EH's new **regional arrangements** and partnerships; these were seen as the chief achievements of the modernisation programme, which was broadly welcomed.
- 7) EH's real term **funding cuts** are widely felt to indicate a lack of **government commitment** to heritage, particularly when compared to funding increases for sports and the arts.

1. Could the relationship between Government (DCMS/ODPM/Defra) and English Heritage be made more effective/productive – with particular reference to the provision of policy advice, and delivery of the Heritage Protection Review?

Government departments

Both of the Government departments which submitted evidence responded to this question. One noted EH's helpfulness, "providing constructive responses while also being receptive to policy arguments which at times conflict with their own internal policies".

The other Government department responded at greater length on this point, painting a **broadly positive picture of EH's interaction with central Government**. It observed that "EH respond positively when asked to input into policy development and ensure that publications are consistent with and support Government policy", citing Conservation Area Management as a particularly fruitful area of partnership. It also notes the "excellent service" rendered by EH in providing advice for Ministers on debates, Ministerial correspondence and Parliamentary Questions and the good senior level engagement between it and EH.

The significant caveat it added, however, is that while finding EH's work "well organised and well run", it **fails to sufficiently evaluate its publications and programmes**. This would, it said, "help to improve EH's knowledge base, and help to ensure a less reactive and more proactive approach to planning its future activities".

Other NDPBs

Both of the NDPBs which responded to this question suggested that EH already enjoys profitable relations with other Government departments, such as on the Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) initiative and with MOD Estates, to whom EH was felt to have provided "useful guidance on a number of policy and strategic initiatives" around estate management and the historic environment.

Developers and planners

The sole responder to this question from the development and planning grouping suggested that links between EH and planning and regeneration bodies should be further examined, and that EH would better fit within the Government department responsible for planning (DCLG). One heritage sector stakeholder also made this point, noting that while EH reports to DCMS, the local planning authorities who implement its advice come under DCLG.

Local authorities

Few local authorities and regional agencies chose to comment in any great depth on this question, with several noting that they had relatively little insight into EH's existing influence in Government. One claimed, however, that "more aligned work between EH and Government departments would add value to the agenda for the historic environment and the perception of the value of social heritage in regeneration". It also questioned whether more strategic working could take place between EH and other NDPBs. Another suggested that EH's position under DCMS rather than DCLG was "a drawback", and limited its influence in Government.

Heritage sector

As with other questions, respondents from the heritage sector proffered the most strident views on EH's relationship with Government. EH's relations with departments other than DCMS were widely felt to be opaque

(a view shared by one local authority); stakeholders variously suggested that **stronger links** be built **with DCLG, Defra and DfES**. Several stakeholders from the heritage sector and in other categories suggested that the charging of the **full VAT rate on building repairs**, despite widespread complaints from the heritage sector, indicated EH's lack of influence with, or access to the **Treasury**. The anomaly of VAT being added to refurbishment and repairs, but not to new build, was noted repeatedly in stakeholder submissions. Opposition to this anomaly was also expounded at length in Select Committee evidence.

Concerns about the sector's **funding settlement from Government** were also widely articulated, most loudly by heritage sector organisations, but also by local councils and regional agencies. Heritage was widely felt to be a low priority for the Government, a fact reflected by EH's standstill funding settlement, equivalent to real term cuts in its budget. Contemporaneous funding increases for the arts and sports sectors appear to have compounded the sense that heritage 'gets a raw deal' from the Government, with one respondent asserting that EH's real term funding cuts are "undermining its work in many areas, including its critical role in providing grants for conservation work".

However, no heritage organisations made a direct link between the standstill funding settlements and EH's influence with central Government – there was a general sense that it, and heritage as a whole, is a victim of Government disinterest and alternative priorities. As such, and on the basis of their submissions, most heritage organisations seem to feel a considerable **sense of solidarity with EH**, and believe that the organisation is trying its best in challenging circumstances.

Three heritage sector responders, however, complained that **specific advice provided to Government by EH is not heeded sufficiently**. One called for greater 'heritage-proofing' as a matter of course in Government policies, particularly from DCLG; another, replying on behalf of a consortium of heritage groups, opined that "there is some perception in the sector that EH has not been particularly influential in the formation of Government policy ... rather than fire-fighting to reverse policy". An example of this was presented by two stakeholders who felt that EH's stance on demolitions in the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (HMRPs) was essentially reactive, rather than proactive, in nature. However, EH's robust stance and willingness to challenge Government on this issue was welcomed by several heritage organisations, as was its objection to the de-listing of the Commonwealth Institute.

2. Looking at the various roles English heritage plays (or might play), is the balance between these roles right (in particular its national, regional and local roles)? What does (or should) the English Heritage leadership role mean in practice?

Local authorities

Six local authority responses addressed this question, three of which suggested divesting English Heritage of its property management role (discussed in greater depth under the 'balance of resources' heading). EH's interaction with, and **provision of expert advice** to, local authorities was generally lauded, with one notable caveat from one city council, which felt that "while there are strong relations and regular contact on day to day casework and activities, there appears to be little strategic interaction between EH and local authorities". This view was echoed by another local authority respondent, which suggested that new **structures for engagement** between EH and local government should be set up. It complained that "the current structures of the EH/LGA liaison meetings and the single LGA representative on HERAC do not provide the high-level policy engagement between EH and local government that is required". The twice-yearly policy forums held between the LGA and the Environment Agency were suggested as a possible model for this engagement.

However, two city councils praised EH's input into their **strategic regeneration activities**, and one council noted EH's presence at a recent ALG seminar on Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and culture. Again in London, EH was praised by one respondent for its leadership role in the remodelling of Kings Cross and St. Pancras stations. The NDPB that responded to this point, however, contrasted EH's local support and guidance unfavourably with that provided by English Nature, although it noted how the heritage sector looks to EH for guidance nationally and regionally, with the regionalisation programme improving officer contact at the latter level.

Regional agencies

English Heritage's **regional interaction and leadership** was **widely praised** by the nine regional agencies that responded to this question and, in passing, by several heritage sector stakeholders, who felt that it was at the regional level that EH's leadership and influence were most keenly felt. "We have had a very positive experience of EH's leadership role within our region", wrote one RDA, citing in particular the creation of an 'Investment Strategy for the Historic Environment Sector' in the area. This, and another RDA, also gave EH's role in the regional Historic Environment Forum (HEF) as an example of its effective regional leadership role. Another RDA noted that it and EH "worked effectively together on the skills, rural and urban agendas". External evidence of EH's greater interaction with RDAs is perhaps provided by a heritage sector respondent, who wrote that RDA schemes "seem to have given more weight to heritage based schemes than English Partnerships ever did".

EH's role in **High Growth Area planning** (in the south Midlands and Milton Keynes) was also cited favourably by one regional Government Office, and its role in working with an **HMRP** was described as "extremely positive in turning around a situation of tension to one of partnership" by

another. This was reiterated by a Government department, which commented that “we continue to receive good feedback on their pragmatic and positive relations with pathfinders at a local level and are grateful for their efforts”. A regional agency also noted that EH has actively engaged in the Thames Gateway North Kent Growth Area.

Three regional agencies also made specific reference to EH’s involvement with **Regional Cultural Consortia**, ensuring that heritage is fully reflected in regional cultural policy. Two regional agencies also commented that EH were contributing to **LAAs** in their area, although another felt that EH was less engaged than other cultural NDPBs in this field. Against this generally very positive feedback, two notes of caution were struck, one observing that recent reorganisations had contributed to a lack of stability in the region, affecting EH’s regional role, the other noting that there should be a clearer delineation in London between EH’s advisory role and the Mayor’s role in making planning decisions.

Heritage sector

A **changing sectoral role** was noted by several heritage sector stakeholders who raised concerns about EH’s apparent **retreat from casework**, placing a greater burden on local authority conservation officers. This was felt to pose a long term threat to EH’s expertise and sectoral credibility. Its **commitment to research** was also discussed by three respondents, one of whom wrote that “without an active research culture, the organisation is in danger of losing its way”. These comments were echoed by a respondent in the developers and planners category, which noted that “EH’s role has shifted from being the protectors of built heritage to being the promoters of built heritage” and that it “seems to be more focused on promotional aspects rather than provision of technical advice”.

On EH’s **sectoral leadership**, heritage sector respondents were split between those who felt that its national leadership had increased and those who felt it had diminished. Stakeholders variously praised its strategic partnerships with CABE and DfES over ‘Engaging Places’ but questioned whether greater links could be made with LOCOG to ensure a heritage input into the Olympic Games programme. As above, engagement through regional fora was cited as an area in which EH has strengthened its sectoral leadership.

All five grant recipients which responded also communicated very positive impressions of EH’s leadership, guidance and expertise: “the regional and local role has been essential in securing the future of our church”, wrote one. Another stakeholder extolled the “invaluable work that EH does on behalf of the ecclesiastical built heritage and, more specifically the support it gives to the sector”.

EH commissioners

An EH commissioner maintained “how well EH has managed to articulate and communicate its role as the major knowledge base for the historic

environment", but noted some confusion in the public's mind about what EH does: "is it a benign custodian of the past or a fearsome wielder of the regulatory stick"?

3. What have been the key achievements of English Heritage's modernisation programme? Can the overall efficiency of the organisation be improved further?

Local authorities

The effects of the modernisation programme seem to have been most visible to local authorities, judging by the high proportion of councils that responded to this question, and their high representation among respondents to this question overall. Again, impressions of the programme were broadly positive, although opinion was divided on the effectiveness of the **new system for providing statutory advice** with its 21 day response targets.

Two city councils felt that the modernisation programme had made EH more accessible; both also felt that it had increased EH's **commitment to regeneration** and the role of historic buildings in **urban redevelopment**, a priority in both areas. These views were echoed by the two regional agencies that responded to this question, who felt that, through it, EH had augmented its regional profile and partnership working. One of these noted that "since the restructure was undertaken, the visibility of EH has increased significantly and the level of engagement in the regional economic development agenda has increased". The other observed that "as a result of the EH modernisation programme, the regional office and regional director have capacity to engage in strategic collaborations in the region".

EH's record on statutory advice and on listings brought more mixed responses from councils, however. Three councils felt that reforms to the provision of **statutory advice** were an improvement, one calling it "a key achievement" of the modernisation programme, another praising EH's adherence to time limits on consultations. One asserted, however, that in striving to meet the 21 day response targets, EH's advice is "often bland and not to the level of detail previously enjoyed" and that some, particularly smaller, councils lack the resources or skills to apply more limited guidance.

On **listings**, one council felt that the rationalisation of the listings process, where EH has, since April 2006, decided on new listings, was "a noted improvement". Another reported that "recent attempts at modernisation have resulted in the listing process being even slower, with some requests for clarification waiting a full 12 months for a reply" and another noted that one major public building had been awaiting a decision on listing for over 15 months.

Heritage sector

Seven heritage organisations discussed EH's modernisation programme in their responses, but were generally less laudatory in their comments. Three believed that the reorganisation had led to the **loss of skilled staff**, particularly caseworkers: one opined that "too many reorganisations over the past few years... have resulted in the loss of staff with essential experience". Two added that a **period of stability** was now required within the organisation to accustom staff to their new roles and to deliver results, a comment also made to the Select Committee.

Concern was also voiced about the principles which underlay the modernisation programme, with one heritage organisation describing it as "a chimera, in effect another stick with which to beat the organisation"; this and another stakeholder felt that the reorganisation had taken EH too far away from engagement with the sector and towards being a purely policy advice body. In the words of one respondent, the reforms had made EH "a smaller and more focused organisation, but one which no longer attempts to fulfil its original remit". More specifically, not all of the changes were felt by one stakeholder "to have been to the benefit of archaeology or the public understanding and appreciation of archaeology."

Some positive initiatives were attributed by heritage sector stakeholders to the modernisation programme, however. Amongst these were the formation of EH's local government liaison team, the rural policy team and the Historic Environment Enabling Programme (HEEP), including the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF).

Government departments

The Government department which responded to this question proffered an overwhelmingly positive verdict on EH's modernisation programme, noting that, through it, "EH have demonstrated a better appreciation of Government priorities". It cited the **Transforming Casework Project** as the programme's foremost achievement, "an excellent example of EH responding to Government priorities in a constructive and productive manner", with the **HELM initiative** another example of good strategic activity. HELM was also commended in evidence presented to the Select Committee.

EH Commissioners

One EH commissioner responded to this question, also in very positive terms, citing focused leadership; clearer objectives, targets and responsibilities and more customer-focused management as key achievements; all delivered rapidly and against funding constraints.

Few suggestions were made by any stakeholders on what **future efficiencies** might be possible. As above, a period of **stability** was advised by some stakeholders – advice also presented to the Select Committee; divesting EH's of its property management responsibilities was suggested by three heritage sector respondents (see 'balance of

resources' question below). One stakeholder also questioned whether five-year plans were sufficiently far-reaching, and recommended a move towards longer-term strategic plans covering the next 20 years.

Several respondents did suggest, however, that efficiencies could be achieved across the heritage sector if greater emphasis was placed on the **maintenance** of historic buildings, rather than restoration and re-building. It was suggested that EH's grants programme is currently skewed towards the latter, and that more attention to preventative maintenance would reduce the number of historic properties falling into disrepair, at considerable cost to their owners and, ultimately, to English Heritage.

4. Does the full range of activities carried out by English Heritage contribute cost-effectively to the stated strategic goals of the organisation? (see also Question 5)

Fewer stakeholders responded to this than to any other question (although a number touched upon it in their responses to Question 5), with a large majority of respondents either disregarding it or declaring that they were unable to comment on the cost-effectiveness of EH's operations. Some replied that they did not know enough about EH's goals to provide an answer.

Of the six who responded in depth, four were from the heritage sector, one a regional agency and one an NDPB. The latter suggested that all EH's activities contribute in some way to their strategic goals, although preferred not to comment on the cost-effectiveness of these activities. They suggested, however, that more collaboration could be undertaken with equivalent bodies in Wales and Scotland. The regional agency also commented that EH's activities do contribute to its strategic goals, but opined that **education activities**, felt to have been a real strength in the past, have been neglected.

There was no consensus among heritage sector respondents on whether EH's activities contribute to its strategic goals – let alone cost-effectively. One asserted that "EH has worked hard in recent years to ensure greater synergy between its activities and its strategic goals" but noted that any assessment of this "should be undertaken within a context which also explores the impact of its reduced support from Government". Two schemes cited by heritage sector respondents as effectively contributing to EH's strategic goals were **HERS** and **HEEP**; however, another stakeholder used this question to express concern about EH's reduced funding for the publication of backlog excavation projects and for research-driven **archaeological projects** in general.

Lack of funding was cited by two heritage sector stakeholders as a reason why EH is unable to address its strategic goals: "the strategic goals of the organisation will inevitably remain goals unless there is adequate funding to carry out the range of activities necessary to achieve them",

one opined. "EH's budget is about half what it should be if it were to tackle its remit properly", said another.

5. Has English Heritage the right balance of resources between:

- **those activities which aim to deliver current government priorities;**
- **those activities which aim to fulfil statutory responsibilities;**
- **and**
- **other activities?**

As with Question 4, with which there is some overlap, comparatively few responders chose to address this question. A number responded that they did not know enough about the allocation of EH's resources or were not qualified to comment. While failing to address this question directly, however, several responders used this heading – as well as the terms of reference's other clauses – to complain that the heritage sector has received **poor funding settlements** from the Government in recent years, particularly in comparison with the arts and sports. Again, this was felt by several respondents – notably those within the heritage sector - to reflect the **Government's overall commitment to heritage and the historic environment**.

One claimed that "the Government does not have clearly articulated priorities for heritage but sees it as instrumental in delivering other economic and social priorities". Another declared that "EH has recently been hampered by disproportionate reductions in its budget which not only damages its ability to operate cost-effectively, but also **sends a powerful message to the sector that it is undervalued**".

The consequence of stand-still funding settlements was articulated in gloomy terms by one heritage sector stakeholder: "English Heritage's share of Government cash is in permanent decline . . . this will only serve to damage our stock of historic buildings". Concern about the **decline in EH grants** was also widely voiced in Select Committee evidence. It was noted in this evidence that all other DCMS sectors have received more money, especially arts and sports.

Local authorities

Most respondents who chose to address this question directly were either local authorities or heritage sector organisations. Four local councils commented specifically on EH's **balance of resources**, highlighting areas of perceived under-resourcing which impinge on their interaction with EH. "EH's resources to fulfil its statutory responsibilities seem to be limited in certain areas", noted one local authority, specifically citing the regular inspection of scheduled sites and a lack of Field Monument Wardens.

Another observed that, while "EH delivers its statutory responsibilities to the best of its abilities... we are concerned about the level of resources available to perform its roles in light of its new statutory responsibilities

for compiling the national list". One council commented that insufficient resources hindered EH's capacity to respond to **pre-application planning enquiries**. It was also suggested that EH concentrate resources on providing **expert advice**. The one other NDPB to approach this question noted that resource allocation has reduced the amount of archaeological survey work undertaken by EH in recent years.

Heritage sector

Alongside comments on EH's overall financial resourcing, heritage sector organisations proffered comments on the internal balance of resources and energies between the organisation's multiple roles. Two felt that the delivery of current Government priorities has at times diverted EH resources from its **statutory responsibilities**, especially casework and listing, with one commenting that "the balance between activities to support Government priorities and direct funding to historic assets is a key concern". One went further, averring that "there is a strong feeling within the sector that Government priorities in other policy areas have at best distracted EH from, and at worst, been in direct conflict with, its statutory responsibilities".

English Heritage's role of both delivering statutory responsibilities and **managing heritage assets** was also discussed by some stakeholders. One characterised this as an "intrinsic conflict"; another felt that this leads to confusion about its role and remit in the minds of the public. One response commented that "this combination of roles in an NDPB is unique, potentially confusing in terms of external perception of its duties and creates difficulties in reconciling priorities in distribution of resources".

The three heritage organisations and three local authorities which raised this issue suggested that the management of Properties in Care (PiCs) could be handled by a devolved or separate organisation, or at least reviewed. These opinions on EH's resource allocation was encapsulated by one local authority, which wrote that EH should "concentrate on being the advisor, enforcer and advocate rather than a provider". This issues was also raised in evidence to the Select Committee, which urged a clearer **demarcation between EH's guardianship and advisory roles**, with ring-fenced budgets.

6. How effective are English Heritage's relations with other key organisations in the built environment sector and beyond? How focused is it on its stakeholders and customers?

Across the stakeholder groupings, there was a clear view that EH is a well-managed organisation and has strong and productive relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders. As noted in sections above, this ranges from grant recipients such as parish churches, to architects and developers and to large scale housing renewal schemes. Heritage sector organisations in particular also acclaimed the expertise and commitment of its staff.

There were some suggestions of organisations in the built environment sector with which EH could profitably improve links, however, including CABE and HLF (although these relationships were perceived by more than one respondent to be strong already) and Natural England.

Developers and planners

Among stakeholders in the development and planning sector, three respondents approached this question directly. One noted that it had regular liaison meetings and good lines of communication with English Heritage. Another reported more variable relations with EH on planning applications and large scale developments, and suggested there should be greater transparency in the Commission's consideration of planning applications.

At the same time, this submission suggested that "there is now a **better understanding of the commercial realities of development** at English Heritage and also a willingness to work with developers to secure the best outcomes for all involved", attributing this to new management arrangements and a change in EH's focus. One stakeholder acclaimed their interaction with EH on their joint areas of activity, observing that "EH and their staff are a 'shining example' of the type of partnership we aspire to establish".

Local authorities

Improving links with **local communities** was identified by two local councils as an area for further improvement. One commented that EH should do "more work on 'winning hearts and minds' with local communities to explain what is distinctive about the area's buildings, including materials and style"; two others identified getting '**hard to reach**' or '**less traditional**' groups to participate and engage more with heritage assets as being a challenge both for EH and for local councils. One respondent (from the heritage sector) suggested that EH could look more closely at diversity, in partnership with other cultural agencies, and alongside further work on cultural impact and volunteers. To capitalise on the growing public interest in heritage, another heritage sector stakeholder suggested that EH should employ more than one community outreach officer per region.

Heritage sector

As for its 'customers' in the heritage sector – although few would see themselves in such terms – as already noted, most reported **fruitful relations** with EH **at both senior management and officer level**. One respondent claimed that EH are becoming more focused on their stakeholders – "more customer-oriented and outward looking". Recent campaigns such as 'Inspired!' and 'History Matters – Pass it On' were also generally well received, with one stakeholder noting that the latter seemed to indicate EH's increasing commitment to "supporting partnerships of public sector and voluntary bodies".

7. Could Government and English Heritage bring more influence to bear to raise awareness of the contribution of the historic environment to key agendas at national, local and regional level?

Regional agencies

As already noted, regional agencies generally reported that EH plays an active role at a regional level in ensuring heritage contributes to large scale **regeneration and growth schemes**, and to **LAAs**. Two also noted its input into Regional Economic Strategies and one its influence on the Regional Spatial Strategy. The comment from one RDA that "EH have over recent years begun explicitly outlining the economic benefits of investing in the historic environment", was broadly representative, although the same agency also noted that EH could have had more input into the regional Strategic Economic Assessment. The one respondent from the developers and planners grouping to fully address this question also felt that EH had become more **attuned to economic considerations**, stating that "the new focus on the commercial benefits of conservation is constructive and therefore welcome".

Local authorities

Local councils broadly echoed the consensus among regional agencies that EH has made big strides in raising awareness about how heritage can contribute to other agendas such as **economic development, education and social cohesion**. Five local authorities responded to this question, one reporting that EH is "quite good at this already", another that it has made "good progress in this area", particularly in working with the Regional Cultural Consortium.

As noted above, two city councils praised EH's input into their large scale regeneration schemes; another noted under this heading that "greater understanding and appreciation of how heritage can be a part of **regeneration** is now accepted by EH. Before they were seen as a barrier to regeneration – this has now significantly changed". One council, however, believed that EH could do more to highlight how supporting the historic environment can improve public health (both mental and physical), community safety and cohesion, and the role of the historic environment in developing a 'sense of place' in localities.

Heritage sector

Within the heritage sector, this question was addressed in detail by six respondents. There was a general sense that EH has **considerable and growing influence** in expounding the contribution of the historic environment. One noted that EH "has made great strides" in relating the historic environment to sustainable communities, social inclusion, urban regeneration and lifelong learning, another that it has made "great progress in recent years in getting the historic environment onto the regional agendas and onto the national agendas of other Government departments".

Specific praise was given to EH publications which make the case for heritage, and, from one respondent, for its influence and impact on the building skills and training agenda. Several respondents also believed, however, that EH's message too often falls on deaf ears in Government, limiting its influence. Three stakeholders also suggested that, overall, the historic environment still does not have the influence that the green/natural environment has and lacks the organised public support that groups such as RSPB provide.

APPENDIX FOUR

Review bibliography

The documents on this list were available to, and consulted by the review team as part of the review. They are listed in order of publication date, from earliest to most recent.

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