

Commission

Minutes of the 334th meeting held on 8 December 2021 at 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1 and via video-conference

Commissioners present: Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Nicholas Boys Smith
Professor Martin Daunton
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Michael Morrison
Patrick Newberry
Susie Thornberry
Richard Upton
Sue Wilkinson

Staff present: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Claudia Kenyatta, Director of Regions
Tom Godbehere, Head of Human Resources (for part)
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance (notes)
Amy Pitts, Director of Communications & Public Engagement
Sandra Stancliffe, Head of Learning, Volunteering & inclusion (for part)
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Others present: Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman, English Heritage Trust (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting. There were no apologies.
- 1.2 This was Nicholas Boys Smith's last meeting, as his second term as Commissioner ended on 31 December 2021. On behalf of Commissioners and staff, the Chairman thanked Nicholas for his valuable contribution to Commission and its sub-committees. Nicholas would continue on the High Streets Heritage Action Zone Strategic Programme Board as an independent member.

Declarations of Interest

- 1.3 There were no declarations of interest. Minutes of 23 September 2021 Commission meeting and matters arising
- 1.4 The minutes of the 333rd Commission meeting held on 23 September 2021 were approved as a correct record.

1.5 **Commission approved the minutes of the 333rd meeting held on 23 September 2021 as a correct record.**

2 Chairman's Report

- 2.1 The Chairman presented his regular report, which detailed activities since the last meeting and forthcoming events. Highlights included a recent induction event hosted at the Globe Theatre, London, to welcome the first cohort of apprentices participating in the Hamish Ogston Foundation Heritage Building Skills programme.
- 2.2 Commissioner recruitment: The deadline for applications had closed and the Assessment Panel had submitted its shortlist of interview candidates for Ministerial approval. Interviews were scheduled to take place in January 2022.
- 2.3 Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme: The Chairman and Chief Executive continued to make the case for the inclusion of heritage in the post-Brexit agri-environment ELM scheme, and to reinforce the importance of continued Defra funding of rural heritage. A meeting with Victoria Prentis MP, Minister for Farming, Fisheries & Food had been arranged.

2.4 **Commission noted the Chairman's report.**

3 Chief Executive's Report

- 3.1 The Chief Executive presented his regular report, which included the latest performance dashboard and principal updates from each Group since the last meeting.
- 3.2 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) priorities: Although the Government's planning reform agenda had been paused, Historic England continued to engage constructively with DLUHC and DCMS officials on planning matters. Other current areas of engagement included the role of heritage in relation to the levelling up agenda and the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper. **A short 'elevator pitch' had been developed to support Historic England's engagement with DLUHC, which would be shared with Commissioners.**

ACTION: Ian Morrison

- 3.3 Intangible Cultural Heritage: Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) was a factor in Historic England's approach to casework, public engagement and other activities but, at present, ICH was not treated as a distinct activity within Historic England and there was no dedicated resource. The findings of a recent research project, looking at opportunities and challenges of incorporating ICH more overtly in Historic England's work, had been shared with DCMS, both to demonstrate those areas where Historic England might be able to support any Government duties (should the UK become a signatory to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage), and also an indication of the resources that this might require.
- 3.4 Commission noted the updates on other issues in the report, including the Statement of Matters, issued in November 2021 by the Secretary of State for the Department for Transport, in relation to the A303 (Stonehenge) proposals; ongoing discussions with the

Government Property Agency (GPA) over the transfer of the freehold of the Cambridge office; major casework updates; and the successful Heritage at Risk launch in November 2021, which had achieved significant national and regional media coverage.

Principal updates from HE Groups

- 3.5 **Corporate Services:** There would be a small annual increase in shared service income as a result of Building Digital UK (BDUK) separating from DCMS and becoming its own entity from 1 April 2022. A variation to the existing Memorandum of Understanding with DCMS would be required.
- 3.6 **Policy & Evidence:** Commission was pleased to note the ongoing success of the various vocational training, apprenticeship and entry-level employment programmes running across Historic England and the sector. These included the Hamish Ogston Foundation Heritage Buildings Skills programme, the Historic Environment Advice Assistant Apprenticeship programme, and the Government Kickstart programme.
- 3.7 **Public Engagement:** Commission congratulated the Heritage Schools team on the continuing success of the programme. Headline findings from the recently released 2020-21 Evaluation Report included that 100% of teachers would recommend participation in the Heritage Schools Programme to schools not currently involved; and that 100% would like to continue to work in partnership with the Heritage Schools programme.
- 3.8 **Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings:** The Director of Business Improvement updated Commission on advanced discussions with a potential commercial tenant for the top three floors of the Main Mill. Should discussions come to fruition, a paper would be circulated to Commission outside of the meeting cycle to seek approval to proceed with Heads of Terms. *[Secretary's note: a paper with draft Heads of Terms was circulated to Commission on 21 January 2022 and subsequently approved.]*

3.9 Commission noted the Chief Executive's Report.

4 Spending Review 2021 update

- 4.1 Spending Review (SR21) headlines included a welcome £850m in additional funding for the cultural sector as part of DCMS's settlement. The specifics of Historic England's settlement, including baseline Grant in Aid, were expected in January 2022, once DCMS's business planning exercise had concluded. At DCMS's request, a range of scenarios had been modelled, and Commission noted the range of potential impacts on budgets, core work programmes and service delivery.
- 4.2 Regarding Historic England's strategic funding bids, the £4m capital funding for High Street Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZ) had been confirmed, and it was understood that £6.2m (of the £7.7m bid) for IT & Digital would be funded. Although the £6.2m was welcome news, the £1.5m capital shortfall would nevertheless have an impact on Historic England's ability to deliver a sustainable and fit-for-purpose IT and digital infrastructure, and also on its ability to meet Government cyber-security requirements.

4.3 Commission noted the Spending Review update and the ongoing DCMS business planning exercise.

5 English Heritage Trust performance update

- 5.1 The EH Trust Chairman was welcomed to the meeting. Commission received its regular report on EH Trust performance, which included a 'flash report' as at the end of Period 7 (October 2021).
- 5.2 The EH Trust Chairman reported that it had been a challenging autumn, taking into account the ongoing impact of Covid-19, the fuel supply crisis and recent bad weather. As a result, year-end visitor numbers were expected to be slightly behind target, although membership numbers were solid and showing signs of growth, and income was on track. Conservation project highlights included the works at Lincoln Bishops' Palace, Bristol Temple Church, and the visitor experience improvements at Clifford's Tower, York.
- 5.3 Looking ahead, expected challenges in 2022 included low international visitor numbers, increased material costs and supply chain issues, and the ongoing impact of Covid-19. Nevertheless, the Trust's cash position and free reserves were strong, thanks in part to the CRF loan, and grant funding had helped support the Trust's maintenance and conservation programmes. The Trust's senior management would continue to work hard to keep costs under control.
- 5.4 Responding to concerns expressed by the EH Trust Chairman about the presentation of some information in the report and the risk of misinterpretation, it was agreed that the Historic England finance team would agree the content of future reports with their EH Trust counterparts, whilst ensuring Commission's reporting and assurance needs continued to be met.
- 5.5 On behalf of Commission and Historic England, the Chairman expressed ongoing support and thanked the EH Trust's Chair and its Management Team for their work during challenging times.

5.6 Commission noted the update on the English Heritage Trust's performance.

6 Financial Performance update

- 6.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented a summary of financial performance as at the end of October 2021 (P7). The year-end forecast was for a balanced position overall, with the current revenue overspend (and equal capital underspend) balancing out further over the coming months. An additional £4.5m relating to Round 2 of the Heritage Stimulus Fund had been received in November 2021 for spend in-year, bringing the 2021-22 total grant spend to £91m. Separate sections within the report set out the detailed budget position relating to Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings and the High Streets HAZ programme.

6.2 Commission noted the year to date position (P7) and the forecast to year-end.

7 Historic England Strategy Update

- 7.1 Commission received an update paper on Historic England's *Future Strategy* and Corporate Plan, which had been launched in May 2021. The report included:

- a an update on the suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as agreed with DCMS, plus a mid-year summary of performance against these;
- b an overview of the relationship between Historic England's *Future Strategy* and the corporate and functional strategies and workstreams underpinning it; and
- c progress reports on the main corporate strategies.

7.2 Commission welcomed the update and the work done to date to better align and articulate the connection between the *Future Strategy*, corporate KPIs, and core strategies and functions. It was suggested, however, that some read-across had been lost in summarising the complex picture and distilling the KPIs for core audiences; also, that some important priority areas (for example digital planning, geographical diversity/place, and left-behind places) were not as visible as they might be.

7.3 The Director of Business Improvement explained that the development and presentation of KPIs was a work in progress, and that both the Business & Finance Committee and Audit & Risk Assurance Committee had provided helpful feedback at their recent meetings about how the underpinning logic model and supporting indicators might be made more visible. Feedback from Commission and the two committees would feed into the ongoing development work. As part of the iterative improvement process, year-end performance reporting would also benefit from case studies to help to illustrate 'real world' impacts.

<p>7.4 Commission noted the updates on strategy development and implementation.</p>
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8 Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality update

8.1 The Head of Human Resources and Head of Learning, Volunteering & Inclusion presented an update on the *Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity & Equality 2021-23*, which had been launched in November 2021. The update summarised progress across four strands: our work; our people; our role in the wider sector; and supporting activities. All four strands included short- and longer-term actions. Highlights included the following:

- a As part of the Grants Review, work on the design and delivery of grant programmes to make them more accessible and able to support a greater diversity of organisations.
- b The launch of a first cohort of Inclusion Champions to support staff and teams embed diversity and inclusion in their work.
- c The development of a diversity and equality hub, bringing together resources including templates, advice and guidance for organisations across the wider sector. If successful, it was suggested that this model could be rolled out for other priority areas such as climate change.

8.2 In terms of culture change, the Strategy had been received positively by staff and was embedding well across the organisation. Teams were thinking about how to reflect the Strategy in their work and seeking advice and resources (for example around changes to language used in templates and corporate documents). There had also been enthusiastic engagement across staff discussion forums and a strong take-up by staff of Diversity & Inclusion training courses.

8.3 Commission welcomed the progress report, noting that this was the start of a journey and that some actions would only have an impact over the longer-term.

8.4 Commission noted the progress to date in delivering the Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality, and on future plans.

9 Active Participation update

- 9.1 The Director of Communications & Public Engagement updated Commission on Historic England's Engagement Strategy - now the Active Participation pillar of the *Future Strategy* - and proposed next steps. The aims of Active Participation were to:
- a work together with a greater number, and a more diverse range, of people to champion and protect the historic environment;
 - b build on the range of work underway already across the organisation, encouraging a shift toward a more inclusive, co-creative and collaborative mindset; and
 - c move away from being seen as a stand-alone expert, to more of an expert mobiliser, bringing people together.
- 9.2 There were close ties with both the Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity & Equality, and the Wellbeing and Heritage strategy.
- 9.3 Work to date had been around discovery and co-development of the strategy outline and roadmap. Current activity was focused on developing tools and resources to share with colleagues in early 2022, with plans to host a 'big conversation' across Historic England and a 'big participation' moment later in the year to help bring Active Participation to life.
- 9.4 Commission welcomed the update on work to date and the proposed next steps for embedding the Active Participation approach.

9.5 Commission noted the approach and next steps for Active Participation.

10 Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and High Street HAZ update

- 10.1 Commission noted the mid-year update on Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) Rounds 1-3 and the High Street HAZ programmes, which drew out key data and some illustrative examples from each round:
- a Steady progress was being made across HAZ Rounds 1-3. A piece of work had been commissioned to look specifically at Round 2 schemes, with the aim of identifying issues that might be causing delivery and expenditure challenges.
 - b High Streets HAZ schemes were now in Year 2. In-year capital expenditure remained challenging, although mitigation measures would help to achieve forecasts, and over 50 schemes now had works on site. There was also a great deal of Cultural Programme activity driving momentum locally.
 - c A small number of schemes that were unlikely to spend their full grant allocation by a significant amount had been red-rated. The lead partners were aware of Historic England's concerns and the possibility of losing grant this financial year. The likelihood of some schemes being unsuccessful had been built into the original programme design.

- d The High Street HAZ Knowledge Hub (a peer to peer network for High Street HAZ project officers) was proving to be a popular and useful resource for capturing and sharing learning (both good and bad experiences), building capacity, and providing support across schemes.\

10.2 Commission noted the update and welcomed the clear and helpful RAG-rated monitoring information.

10.3 Commission noted:

- a **the update on HAZ Rounds 1-3**
- b **the plan for delivering HAZ Rounds 1-3 in the remainder of 2021-22; and**
- c **the update on the High Streets HAZ programme.**

11 Culture Recovery Fund update

11.1 Commission received a detailed summary and update on Historic England's role in the delivery of the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) including progress to date, ongoing work, resourcing, risks and next steps.

11.2 The Director of Business Improvement reported that some of the temporary teams set-up to help deliver the programme were now being stood down; although some would continue to support the ongoing active phases, including Round 3 of the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage, its extension programme (ERSX), and Round 2 of Grants for Programmes of Major Works, which ran to 31 March 2022.

11.3 Looking ahead, the impact evaluation for the majority of the CRF would be carried out through consultants appointed by DCMS, although Historic England had been asked to lead on the evaluation of Rounds 1 and 2 of the Heritage Stimulus Fund. As part of its evaluation approach, Historic England would be looking to bring together quantitative and qualitative findings, as well as conclusions about the longer term impact, and wider benefits and value of heritage.

11.4 Commission congratulated the teams involved in delivering CRF for their considerable achievements, recognising the significant scale of the challenge, the timescale and resourcing pressures, and steep learning curve. The positive outcome for so many organisations was testament to the hard work and skill of those involved, and DCMS's confidence in Historic England's evidence and expertise. The CRF programme had also been a valuable example of the benefits of cross-agency working; both in terms of outcomes and also in building ongoing working relationships.

11.5 Commission noted the update on the Culture Recovery Fund.

12 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

12.1 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committee meetings.

12.2 Commission noted:

- a the July 2021 Historic Places Panel Review Paper on Dover;
- b the minutes of the 16 September 2021 London Advisory Committee;
- c the minutes of the 16 September 2021 Historic England Advisory Committee;
- d the minutes of the 17 September 2021 Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings Strategic Programme Board;
- e the minutes of the 7 October 2021 Historic Estate Conservation Committee; and

12.3 Commission approved the revised Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings Strategic Programme Board Terms of Reference.

13 Casework Report and Planning Bulletin

13.1 Commission received its regular update on Historic England's business critical casework and recent and forthcoming planning developments.

13.2 Commission noted the Casework Report and Planning Bulletin.

14 Any Other Business

14.1 The Chairman paid tribute once again to departing Commissioner Nicholas Boys Smith and thanked him for his considerable contribution to Historic England. Nicholas would be much missed on Commission and it was welcome news that Nicholas would continue to be involved with Historic England through the High Streets HAZ Strategic Programme Board.

14.2 On behalf of Commission, the Chairman paid tribute to the Chief Executive and members of the Executive Team and thanked them for their incredible work during the challenging year. He wished all Commissioners and staff a pleasant and restful break.

14.3 There were no further items of business.

15 Closed Session

15.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

**Siobhan O'Donoghue
December 2021**

Commission

Final Minutes of the 333rd meeting held on 23 September 2021 at Cannon Bridge House, EC4 and via video-conference

- Commissioners present:** Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Nicholas Boys Smith
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Michael Morrison
Patrick Newberry
Richard Upton
- Staff present:** Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Louise Brennan, Regional Director (Midlands)
Katharine Grice, Communications Director
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance (notes)
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary
- Others present:** Anders Egeland-Eriksen, DCMS Public Appointments Campaign Manager (for part)
Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman, English Heritage Trust (for part)
Mark Stuart-Smith, Chief Financial Officer, English Heritage Trust (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting, including Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman of the English Heritage Trust, and Anders Egeland-Eriksen, Public Appointments Campaign Manager at DCMS, who was observing the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Commissioners Martin Daunton, Susie Thornberry and Sue Wilkinson. Apologies had also been received from Claudia Kenyatta, Regions Director, and Amy Pitts, Director of Communications & Public Engagement. Louise Brennan, Regional Director (Midlands) and Katharine Grice, Communications Director, were attending to represent the Regions Group and the Communications & Public Engagement Group respectively.

Declarations of Interest

- 1.3 There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of 24 June 2021 Commission meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the 332nd Commission meeting held on 24 June 2021 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

2.2 **Commission approved the minutes of the 332nd meeting held on 24 June 2021 as a correct record.**

3 **Chairman's Report**

- 3.1 The Chairman presented his regular report detailing activities since the last Commission meeting and forthcoming events.
- 3.2 Commissioner recruitment: The campaign to recruit up to four new Commissioners had launched on 23 August 2021. Applications from candidates with a broad range of skills and expertise were encouraged, including individuals with particular experience of architectural history, the planning system, digital engagement, and management of historic properties. The recruitment would also seek to improve the diversity and gender balance of Commission. The Assessment Panel would comprise Emma Squire, DCMS Director (chair), Trevor Phillips (independent member) and Sir Laurie Magnus. Commissioners were encouraged to share the advert with their contacts and networks.
- 3.3 Covid-19 Recovery: Round 3 of the Culture Recovery Fund had launched on 25 June 2021. As part of this final £300million round, the Heritage Stimulus Fund had been boosted by £35million, bringing the total fund to over £80 million.
- 3.4 Cabinet re-shuffle: Commissioners noted the key personnel changes at DCMS and DLUHC (formerly MHCLG) as a result of the recent Government re-shuffle.
- 3.5 Other activities covered in the report included a number of meetings and discussions with Defra and Natural England officials about the Environment Bill and the Environmental Land Management scheme, following the House of Lords debate on 23 June 2021; and the Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings fundraising event, held on 17 September 2021, which had been attended by a number of Commissioners.

3.6 **Commission noted the Chairman's report.**

4 **Chief Executive's Report**

- 4.1 The Chief Executive presented his regular report, which included the latest performance dashboard and principal updates from each Group since the last meeting.
- 4.2 Performance Dashboard: HR data continued to show an increase in stress-related sickness absence. The situation was being monitored and managers were supporting individuals.
- 4.3 Our People: The six-month hybrid working trial period would begin w/c 27 September 2021. The majority of staff who had applied for hybrid working arrangements had requested either two or three office-based days per week. There were a range of attitudes to returning, and a period of adjustment was anticipated as staff re-familiarised themselves with commuting and the office environment. A small number of staff had requested a move to full-time remote-working and these were being handled on a case by case basis. Commission encouraged support, particularly for middle managers, who were likely to be experiencing the pressure of managing teams under new hybrid arrangements.

- 4.4 Planning Reforms: Planning reform work had been paused in light of the Cabinet re-shuffle, although Historic England would continue to engage constructively and frequently with DLUHC officials and others on proposals. The expectation was that opportunities for improvements around heritage protection would not be lost. It was hoped, for example, that statutory status for Historic Environment Records (HERs) would still be included in reforms.
- 4.5 Brand awareness: Commission welcomed the latest YouGov results indicating that the public's recognition of Historic England had increased to 44%, a 2% rise in six months.
- 4.6 Climate Change update: A draft climate change strategy for Historic England was being shared internally, with feedback expected to inform a final draft Strategy for the next five to ten years. In parallel to the Strategy, a Climate Change Programme was being developed to ensure effective coordination of climate change-related work across the organisation.
- 4.7 Government Property Agency: Discussions with the Government Property Agency (GPA) continued around its request for the transfer of the Cambridge office freehold. A number of concerns had been raised following receipt of the draft Heads of Terms, including the need for greater assurances about reimbursement against rent charged. Proposals would be shared with the Business & Finance Committee at its November 2021 meeting, although any transfer would require Commission approval.
- 4.8 Commission noted the updates on other issues in the report, including the outcome of the Judicial Review of the Development Consent Order for the A303 (Stonehenge) tunnel, which had quashed the decision of the Secretary of State for Transport to allow the scheme; and the removal of Liverpool's World Heritage Site status.

Principal updates from HE Groups

- 4.9 Corporate Services: Space (for up to 25 desks) at Cannon Bridge House had been sub-let to VisitBritain from September 2021. A number of other ALBs were interested in letting space, but negotiations would need to be informed by the results of the hybrid working trial period.
- 4.10 Policy & Evidence: Commission welcomed the news that Historic England had been awarded £2.87m grant funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for the 'To Unpath'd Waters: Marine and Maritime Collections in the UK' project. This was the latest success for Historic England as an Independent Research Organisation in securing funding for a range of programmes and projects. Commission also noted new key appointments within the Policy & Evidence Group, including a Carbon Manager and Head of Sector Resilience and Skills.
- 4.11 Public Engagement: The national high streets campaign had launched on 20 September 2021 with a week-long call-out on social media (using #HighStreetLove) asking people what they loved about their high street. There had been excellent engagement with MPs and local authority partners so far.
- 4.12 Regions: Year 2 of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) programme was progressing well, with almost half of schemes having capital projects on site. Across a number of schemes there was an emerging trend around the price and supply of building materials and labour shortages, which was expected to impact on the viability of some individual projects. A Commissioner who had recently visited a High Street HAZ encouraged the idea of a festival to celebrate some of the talent being showcased through the High Street HAZ Cultural Programme.

- 4.13 Commission noted that Commissioner Ben Derbyshire had accepted the Chairman's invitation to chair the Historic Places Panel from 1 January 2021, which would help strengthen the link between Commission and this important group.
- 4.14 Business Improvement: In response to a query around the impact on staff of delivering the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF), the Director of Business Improvement reported that recruiting for some of the fixed-term administration roles was becoming more challenging, and that this had a knock-on impact in terms of pressure on colleagues across Groups. Commission also received a summary of the main monitoring and assurance arrangements in place (including at CRF Board level) and noted that learning from the delivery of CRF grants was also informing the current Review of HE Grant Programmes.

4.15 **Commission noted the Chief Executive's Report.**

5 English Heritage Trust performance update and Annual Review of the EH Trust and the National Collection

- 5.1 The EH Trust's Chief Financial Officer was welcomed to the meeting. Commission received its regular report on EH Trust financial performance, noting the better than anticipated position as at P5 of 2021/22. Other key headlines noted included the latest unrestricted cash position, visitor numbers to date and projections to year end, and continuing cost controls. The EHT Chairman also reported that English Heritage projects had been shortlisted for three different RIBA architectural awards.

Annual Review of the English Heritage Trust 2020/21

- 5.2 Commission also received Historic England's Review of the EH Trust for 2020/21, which provided a snapshot of how the Trust had performed in its operation and care of the National Heritage Collection in Year 6 of the eight-year operating licence.
- 5.3 Despite the significant challenges during the trading year, the Trust had ended the year with an unrestricted operating surplus of £3.8m. This outturn had been achieved in part through Government emergency support, and also by the Trust retaining much of its membership base, cost efficiencies and underspend.
- 5.4 The following points were discussed:
- a Taking into account a range of factors, including the likely challenges of the coming financial year, the current projection was for the Trust to break-even by the end of 2022/23, moving to self-sufficiency thereafter. Key to achieving this would be fundraising income, and the EH Trust Chairman reported that he was comfortable that the Trust's new Fundraising Strategy would help deliver its ambitious fundraising income targets.
 - b Historic England, the EH Trust and DCMS were holding discussions about a two-year extension to the Property and Operating Licence to March 2025. In response to questions from Commissioners, the General Counsel & Corporate Secretary clarified that public procurement rules would be applied to any subsequent licence renewal process, including market testing.
 - c Of the £52m capital grant for backlog repairs, the Trust expected to spend the remaining £15.7m by the end of 2022/23, in line with original projections. Extending

the timeframe (in line with the proposed extension to the Operating Licence) could be explored, if necessary.

- d Discussions about extending shared service contracts (which were due to expire at the end of 2022/23) had also been brought forward to align with licence extension negotiations. Feedback from shared service leads was being gathered to inform discussions about the future shape of these services. Early clarification about each organisation's requirements and minimum thresholds, and a more mutual and partnership-based approach to shared services, was encouraged. An update report on Shared Service negotiations would be brought to the 25 November 2021 Business & Finance Committee meeting.

ACTION: Director of Corporate Services / EH Trust Chief Financial Officer

- e The impact of the challenges faced during 2020/21 on staff was perhaps not conveyed adequately in the Annual Review, and it was reported that organisational exhaustion and staff morale were key corporate risks. The Trust's staff, particularly those on the front-line, were vital to the organisation's success, and management was exploring ways of rewarding its people within the constraints and conditions of the emergency funding.

Annual Report of the Historic Estate Conservation Committee 2020/21

- 5.5 The Chair of the Historic Estate Conservation Committee (HECC) introduced the annual report, which summarised the Committee's work during 2020/21. Although the programme of site visits had been disrupted severely by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee had held three virtual meetings during 2020/21, and a summary of the business considered at each of these was included. 2021/22 visits had started, which would help to assess the impact, if any, of the reduced level of routine maintenance on the historic estate.
- 5.6 On behalf of Commission, the Chairman thanked Michael Morrison and the other members for the significant amount of time and energy they devoted to the Committee.

5.7 Commission noted the 2020/21 Annual Review of the English Heritage Trust and the National Collection, including the Historic Estate Conservation Committee's annual report for 2020/21.
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6 Overview of 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts and Financial Performance

- 6.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented an update on the production and sign-off of the 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts, and a summary of financial performance up to the end of August 2021 (P5).

2020/21 Annual Report & Accounts

- 6.2 The Audit & Risk Assurance Committee had reviewed a draft of the Report and Accounts at its June 2021 meeting and would consider a finalised version with audit adjustments at its meeting on 22 October 2021. Various sign-off processes would follow, with a final expected laying date of late November 2021. To facilitate this, and in line with the 2019/20 process, Commission was asked to authorise delegation of final approval of the Report and Accounts to a sub-committee. *[Secretary's note: the sub-committee (comprising the Commission Chairman, the Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, and the Accounting Officer) met on 22 October 2021 and approved the Report and Accounts for submission to DCMS.*

Subsequent to Ministerial sign-off on 19 November, the Chairman and Chief Executive signed the Report and Accounts, which were certified by the NAO Comptroller and Auditor General on 25 November 2021, and laid before Parliament on 30 November 2021.]

Financial Performance

6.3 The year end forecast position at P5 was for a small deficit, after agreed use of reserves. This deficit related mainly to Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings, including NLHF retention profiling, although steps were in place to manage this. A hard forecasting exercise at P6 would help to flush out areas of underspend and identify actions to bring the forecast back to a balance position for year-end.

6.4 **Commission:**

- a **noted that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee would review the Annual Report & Accounts for 2020/21 at an additional meeting on 22 October 2021;**
- b **authorised the approval of the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 to a sub-committee of Commission;**
- c **authorised the Chairman and Chief Executive to sign the Annual Accounts on behalf of Commission; and**
- d **noted the year to date position (P5) and the forecast to year-end.**

7 Spending Review 2021 update

7.1 Commission received an update on the Spending Review (SR21). SR21 was expected to conclude on 27 October 2021 alongside the Autumn Budget statement, with the detail for Historic England likely to follow in the subsequent weeks:

- a Staff had been working closely with DCMS since June 2021, responding to a range of requests and providing numerous submissions, many at very short notice.
- b Regarding the baseline, Historic England had been asked to model a range of scenarios, including a 'flat-cash' settlement, which would equate to a real-term £3.6m p/a reduction in baseline.
- c In terms of Strategic Funding Cases, the current expectation was that DCMS would submit three funding cases to HM Treasury: New Model cost pressures; IT and Digital Support; and High Street HAZ programme recoupment.
- d Each of the long list SR21 bids was supported by an underpinning economic case, meaning that it would be possible to take them forward outside of the SR21 process, for example as part of the fundraising pipeline, or as bids to help deliver Government programmes such as the Levelling Up Fund and Future Towns Fund.

7.2 Commission considered the implications of the three Strategic Funding Cases being unsuccessful. Of particular concern was the IT and Digital Support bid, which was essential for addressing Tailored Review recommendations around critical infrastructure improvement, as well as the delivery of statutory duties and Government priorities. Failure to secure funding would also affect cyber security accreditation. Historic England's Digital Strategy would potentially need to reflect some difficult decisions about prioritisation.

7.3 Commission noted the Spending Review update.

8 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

8.1 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committee meetings.

8.2 It was suggested that themes emerging from discussions at recent advisory committee meetings (including local authority capacity, quality design and heritage-led place-making) might be a useful topic for a future Commission discussion.

8.3 Commission noted the minutes of the:

- a **16 June 2021 Audit & Risk Assurance Committee;**
- b **16 June 2021 Business & Finance Committee;**
- c **1 July 2021 London Advisory Committee; and**
- d **1 July 2021 Historic England Advisory Committee.**

9 Casework Report and Planning Bulletin

9.1 Commission received its regular update on Historic England's business critical casework and recent and forthcoming planning developments.

9.2 Commission noted the Casework Report and Planning Bulletin.

10 Any Other Business

10.1 The next Commission event would be the 13 and 14 October 2021 visit to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. The Briefing Pack would be issued the week prior to the visit.

10.2 Any Commissioners interested in the Cabinet Office's ALB Review programme were encouraged to notify the Chairman's office before 24 September 2021.

10.3 There were no further items of business.

11 Closed Session

11.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

Siobhan O'Donoghue
September 2021

Commission

Final Minutes of the 332nd meeting held on 24 June 2021 at Cannon Bridge House, EC4 and via video-conference

Commissioners present: Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Nicholas Boys Smith
Professor Martin Daunton
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Patrick Newberry
Susie Thornberry
Richard Upton
Sue Wilkinson

Staff present: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Claudia Kenyatta, Director of Regions
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance (notes)
Amy Pitts, Director, Communications & Public Engagement
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Others present: Caroline Cattini-Dow, Principal Building Services Engineer (for part)
Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman, English Heritage Trust (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Commissioner Michael Morrison.
- 1.3 Commissioners joined the Chairman and staff in congratulating Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence, on his OBE for services to heritage and the Covid-19 response.

Declarations of Interest

- 1.4 The following declarations were noted:
 - a Item 11, Heritage Action Zones update: Commissioners Nicholas Boys Smith and Ben Derbyshire declared interests as their organisations were engaged in individual High Street HAZ schemes.
 - b Item 12, Re-appointment of Historic England Foundation Trustees: The Chairman declared an interest as one of the HE Foundation Trustees being recommended for re-appointment.

1.5 **Commission noted the declarations of interest.**

2 Minutes of 29 April 2021 Commission meeting and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the 331st Commission meeting held on 29 April 2021 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

2.2 **Commission approved the minutes of the 331st meeting held on 29 April 2021 as a correct record and noted the matters arising.**

3 Chairman's Report

3.1 The Chairman presented his regular report detailing activities since the last Commission meeting and forthcoming events. Recent meetings included virtual visits with various Historic England teams; his annual appraisal meeting with Emma Squire, the DCMS interim Director General; and a positive and informative first meeting of the Culture and Heritage Capital Advisory Board, chaired by former Commissioner, Lord Mendoza.

3.2 Sector recovery continued to be a major focus. Commissioners noted that HM Treasury approval and the formal announcement of Round 3 of the Culture Recovery Fund (including Round 2 of the Heritage Stimulus Fund) was expected shortly.

3.3 The Chairman provided an update on DCMS's Contested Heritage Advisory Board, of which he was a member, and which had now met twice. Historic England had provided support to DCMS in developing its draft guidance for owners and custodians, to help explain the Government's policy on contested heritage and ways of addressing the issues it raised, within the context of 'retain and explain'.

3.4 **Commission noted the Chairman's report.**

4 Chief Executive's Report

4.1 The Chief Executive presented his regular report, which included the latest performance dashboard and principal updates from each Group since the last meeting.

4.2 Performance Dashboard: 2020-21 full-year casework figures (and comparative data for 2019-20) indicated an overall drop in new designations, which was mainly as a result of the pandemic and restrictions on site visits, including the increased likelihood of challenge to recommendations made without a site visit.

4.3 HR data also indicated that cases of stress-related sickness absence were increasing, exacerbated by increasing workloads and intense periods of activity. The situation was being monitored, and management continued to support individual staff and re-prioritise work programmes where necessary.

4.4 Apprenticeships and Youth Training: Commission was pleased to note the £4.325m Funding Agreement with the Hamish Ogston Foundation for the delivery of a five-year training and apprenticeship programme for heritage craft skills in the North of England. This programme, as well as Historic England's status as a gateway organisation in the Government's Kickstart scheme, were welcome examples of Historic England's commitment to 'levelling-up' the heritage sector, and the creation of employment and participation opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds.

- 4.5 Spending Review 2021 (SR21): In addition to the stand-alone Spending Review submission, DCMS had also asked Historic England to work with other ALBs (including ACE, NLHF and the Architectural Heritage Fund) to coordinate an over-arching DCMS ALB SR21 business case focused around resilience, levelling-up and inclusion across the heritage and cultural sectors.
- 4.6 Planning Reforms: Historic England continued to engage constructively and frequently with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on development of Planning White Paper proposals, including opportunities for improvements around heritage protection.
- 4.7 Commission noted the updates on other issues in the Chief Executive's report, including high-profile casework (engagement with the City of London Plan and Vision for Birmingham); Historic England's contribution to a range of Government initiatives including the Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund, and the Museum Maintenance, Estate and Development Fund; progress with Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings; the growth in social media followers; and the positive regional media coverage of Historic England's work, particularly around High Street Heritage Action Zones.

4.8 Commission noted the Chief Executive's Report.

5 English Heritage Trust performance update

- 5.1 The EH Trust Chairman provided his regular update on the Trust's performance, which included a summary of financial performance against budget; current operational challenges (particularly around wage inflation and the labour market); engagement around the Stonehenge A303 proposals and judicial review; the outcome of a review of the management of a legacy fund (the Elizabeth Wagland Fund); and overviews of major project and conservation work underway. Commissioner and EH Trustee, Sue Wilkinson, also provided an update on her recent visit to Hurst Castle, which had suffered a collapse of a large section of its east wing in February 2021.
- 5.2 As part of the enhanced monitoring arrangements put in place to address the Tailored Review recommendations, Commission also received the first of what would be a regular tailored report on EH Trust financial performance.

5.3 Commission noted the update on the English Heritage Trust position.

6 Appointment of English Heritage Trustees

- 6.1 In line with the Trust's Articles of Association, Trustee appointments were subject to Commission approval. Following the recent recruitment exercise, the EH Trust Chairman now presented the Trust's recommendations for appointment for formal approval.

6.2 Commission approved the following appointments to the EH Board of Trustees:

- a **Liz Bromley and Tanvi Gokhale each for a four-year term from 1 July 2021 to June 2025;**
- b **Kay Boycott for a four-year term from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2025.**

7 Tailored Review update

- 7.1 The Government's Tailored Review of Historic England, published in November 2020, included 31 recommendations, and Commission now received a summary of progress against each of these. Each of the recommendations specific to Historic England had been aligned with a 'Tier 2' corporate activity, showing resource and owner, following finalisation of the 2021-22 Corporate Plan; the recommendations relating to the EH Trust were being progressed in liaison with Trust colleagues and were presented separately.
- 7.2 Commission welcomed the update and noted that, overall, activity to address the recommendations was progressing well, with most actions underway and some nearing completion. Progress in addressing some recommendation areas, for example those around sector leadership and reviewing Historic England's grant processes and mechanisms, had been accelerated in response to Covid-19.
- 7.3 Responding to a Commissioner's query about Recommendation 20 (improve communications with the general public and stakeholders around Historic England's role in providing planning advice), it was noted that a project to review how Public Engagement Advisers might work more closely with Development Advice teams (in addition to Partnership and Listing teams) had identified some good examples and a number of recommendations to take forward.

7.4 Commission noted the progress against the Tailored Review recommendations.

8 Financial Performance

- 8.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented a summary of financial performance to the end of May 2021 (P2), which had also been discussed in detail by the Business & Finance Committee at its meeting on 16 April 2021.
- 8.2 Further to the position set out in the report, DCMS had confirmed two additional elements of funding: approx. £750k to provide support for the tail-end of Round 1 of the Heritage Stimulus Fund (HSF1), which was currently being funded internally through grants budgets; and approx. £35m for HSF2, as part of Round 3 of the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF3), largely for grants but with some resource for administration and programme support. The resulting grants budget for 2021-22 was approx. £85m, which included £35m for High Streets HAZ.
- 8.3 At this early stage in the year, the overall year-end forecast position was an approx. £814k deficit, mainly due to the £710k deficit on Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings NLHF retention profiling, although this was expected to be corrected in-year. The current £115k capital deficit would be managed to a budget position.
- 8.4 It was noted that, to maximise the long-term legacy of Historic England's grants programmes (such as the High Streets HAZ programme) and to ensure as broad an impact as possible, teams were developing ways of sharing learning and expertise across schemes and beyond. Products, such as guidance documents and a training curriculum, were also being developed. The current Grants Review also aimed to capture learning about how funding might be best delivered to help ensure the range of grant schemes had maximum impact in places.

8.5 Commission noted the financial position to the end of May 2021.

9 2020-21 Year-end Performance and Corporate Risk

- 9.1 Commission received the year-end corporate performance summary, which had also been considered in detail by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) at its meeting on 16 June 2021:
- a In headline terms, and within the context of Covid-19, the organisation had performed well in 2020-21. Thirteen of 22 key outcome measures, and 24 of 37 key output measures, had seen equal or improved performance compared to 2019-20.
 - b Generally, performance had been affected where activities had required a physical presence (for example site visits, events and exhibitions). Other areas, such as Research publication downloads, online training opportunities, and online views of the Archive and the National Heritage List for England, had seen improvements.
 - c The work to develop and embed a new and streamlined suite of outcome-focused KPIs continued, including the adoption of a sub-set of these KPIs as part of the Framework Agreement with DCMS for 2021-22. The Business Planning team was also reviewing performance reporting structures, including KPI and performance reporting to Commission and the performance dashboard.
- 9.2 Commission also received the current risk register, noting that it was reviewed by the Executive Team each month and by ARAC at each of its meetings. It was noted that there had been iterative improvements to risk management and reporting in the previous 12 months, which had been welcomed by the committee.

9.3 Commission noted:

- a **the year-end summary of corporate performance during 2020-21; and**
- b **the current Corporate Risk Register.**

10 Historic England Carbon Reduction Plan

- 10.1 Caroline Cattini-Dow, Principal Building Services Engineer, was welcomed to the meeting to present a summary of Historic England's approach to carbon reduction. The presentation included: an introduction the three main elements of the carbon reduction programme; an overview of the baseline data collection approach; a report on progress to date in developing the Carbon Reduction Strategy; and next steps towards its implementation.

10.2 Key points from the presentation included the following:

- a Historic England's obligation (as a DCMS ALB) to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and to have a road-map in place from FY 2022-23; and the intention to model how Historic England might achieve a more ambitious target of net zero emissions by 2030.
- b Use of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Protocol (Scopes 1-3) using 2019 data to establish Historic England's baseline, which included 76% of emissions falling under Scope 3 (business travel, waste disposal, IT, and purchased goods and services, etc) – this being in line with the majority of other organisations that had completed baseline studies.
- c The steps taken already, including the move to wholly renewable energy tariffs and exploration of low- and zero-carbon technologies (such as ground and air source heat pumps) across the estate.
- d Recruitment of a Carbon Manager to lead on work internally and to support Historic England as a sector leader in this area. It was hoped that the successful candidate would be in post from September 2021 to take forward development of the Strategy, with implementation from April 2022.

10.3 The following points were raised in the subsequent discussion:

- a The commitment to net zero – particularly around reducing emissions from commuting and business travel – would have significant implications on operating models. These implications were being considered as part of discussions around future hybrid-working models.
- b It was queried whether funding might be available to support Historic England's sector leadership role in this area, for example to help others establish baseline information, and to work collaboratively and strategically across the sector – including with the EH Trust – on carbon reduction. Opportunities for involving volunteers might also be explored.
- c In terms of Historic England's role in providing guidance to owners and planning authorities, a range of Advice Notes had been published around energy efficiency and changes that could be made to historic properties. Along with other businesses and organisations, Historic England had also contributed to the recent Grosvenor Group report, *Heritage and Carbon: How Historic Buildings Can Help Tackle the Climate Crisis* (external site), which identified challenges and made recommendations on measures that could assist owners and managers of historic buildings to reduce carbon emissions. Historic England was also researching and promoting the role of heritage in climate change mitigation and adaptation, for example by recycling and reusing existing historic buildings.

10.4 Commission welcomed the clear and thorough presentation on this important topic. It was agreed that, at a suitable future meeting, **Commission should receive an update on this work and determine whether Historic England should commit to a more ambitious target date for net zero emissions.**

ACTION: Director of Policy & Evidence

10.5 Commission noted the overview of progress to date and next steps for Historic England's Carbon Reduction Programme.

11 Heritage Action Zones update

- 11.1 The Director of Regions presented a year-end update on Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) Rounds 1-3 and the High Street HAZ programmes. Despite the impact of the pandemic, delivery was in line with expected patterns:
- a Overall delivery of Round 1 HAZ schemes was good, particularly in terms of engagement, building repair, training and listing outcomes. Round 2 delivery was less consistent, with perhaps some lessons to be learned around realistic project ambitions. There was strong performance across Round 3 schemes.
 - b Two schemes from Round 1 had now completed. The pilot evaluation approach being used for the Elsecar scheme would be rolled-out across the other Round 1 HAZ schemes that would complete in 2021-22.
 - c As reported previously, in response to an external review and internal audit of the HAZ programme, the delivery approach for Rounds 1-3 had been simplified. Teams had been working through a 25-point action plan, which had now been completed and closed. Learning from both reviews had also informed the High Street HAZ programme.
 - d Year 1 of the High Street HAZ programme was now complete. The pandemic had been a significant factor in limiting partners' ability to deliver their schemes, but also on businesses physically on the High Street. Other factors outside of Historic England's control (such as availability of external match-funding) had also had an impact.
 - e Following an external Rapid Review of Round 1, a number of recommendations were being taken forward. Partners had also been encouraged to focus on delivering high-impact capital projects in Year 1 and had been given the opportunity to bid for additional funding.
- 11.2 Commission welcomed the overview and assessment of progress. **The full visual summary of Rounds 1-3 Heritage Action Zones would be circulated by email.**

ACTION: Director of Regions

11.3 Commission noted:

- a **the update on HAZ Rounds 1-3**
- b **the plan for delivering HAZ Rounds 1-3 in 2021-22; and**
- c **the update on High Streets HAZ (section 5)**

12 Re-appointment of Historic England Foundation Trustees

- 12.1 As the sole member of the Historic England Foundation (HEF) – the charitable foundation established to support the work of Historic England and raise funds for a range of projects and programmes – Commission was responsible for the appointment and re-appointment of the Foundation's Trustees. A number of existing HEF Trustees had now reached the end of their first appointment terms, and Commission was presented with proposals for re-

appointment. It was noted that the terms would be staggered to help with continuity and succession planning arrangements.

- 12.2 Commission discussed the aims of the Foundation, the remit of the Trustees, and the Foundation's achievements to date. Noting the impact of the pandemic on fundraising during 2020-21, Commission also considered how current and new Trustees' expertise and skills might be maximised.

12.3 Commission:

- a **approved the proposed re-appointments, or extension of terms of appointment, for current HEF Trustees as set out in the report; and**
- b **noted the formation of a Nominations Committee, composed of HEF Trustees, for the purpose of recruiting and proposing additional HEF Trustees including to the role of Chair of Trustees.**

13 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

- 13.1 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committee meetings.

13.2 Commission noted the minutes of the:

- a **4 March and 27 May Historic Estate Conservation Committee;**
- b **15 April 2021 Historic England Advisory Committee; and**
- c **12 May 2021 Remuneration & Appointments Committee.**

14 Casework Report and Planning Bulletin

- 14.1 Commission received its regular update on Historic England's business critical casework and recent and forthcoming planning developments.

14.2 Commission noted the Casework Report and Planning Bulletin.

15 Any Other Business

- 15.1 There were no further items of business.

16 Closed Session

- 16.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

**Siobhan O'Donoghue
July 2021**

Commission

Final Minutes of the 331st meeting held on 29 April 2021 via video-conference

Commissioners present: Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Alex Balfour
Nicholas Boys Smith
Professor Martin Daunton
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Victoria Harley
Michael Morrison
Patrick Newberry
Susie Thornberry
Richard Upton
Sue Wilkinson

Staff present: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Claudia Kenyatta, Director of Regions
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance (notes)
Amy Pitts, Director, Communications & Public Engagement
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Others present: Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman, English Heritage Trust (for part)
Kate Mavor, Chief Executive, English Heritage Trust (for part)
Charles O'Brien, Chair of the London Advisory Committee (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting, including the Chair of the English Heritage Trust, Sir Tim Laurence. The Trust's Chief Executive, Kate Mavor, would join the meeting for Item 5 - EH Trust update.
- 1.2 Commission noted that this was the last meeting for Alex Balfour and Victoria Harley, whose Commissioner terms ended on 31 May 2021. The Chairman thanked Alex and Victoria on behalf of Commission for their valuable contributions during their seven-year terms of office. Commission was pleased to note that Victoria had agreed to continue as an independent member of the Historic Estate Conservation Committee.

Declarations of Interest

- 1.3 There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of 25 February 2021 Commission meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the 330th Commission meeting held on 25 February 2021 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

- 2.2 The following updates were noted:

- a Para 4.4, Chief Executive's Report (reducing Historic England's carbon footprint): An item covering Historic England's approach to reducing its carbon footprint had been scheduled for the 24 June 2021 Commission meeting.
- b Para 6.6, EH Trust's Application for Cultural Recovery Fund repayable finance: Further to the position set out at the 29 April 2021 meeting, it had been agreed that the Chair of Historic England's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee would receive EH Trust Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting papers and have regular 1:1s with his EH Trust counterpart, but would not have observer status on the Trust's ARC.
A Secretary's Note would be added to the minutes to reflect this.

ACTION: Head of Governance

- c Item 8, Historic England's Strategy and Corporate Plan: Historic England's Future Strategy, *Championing Heritage – Improving Lives*, and the refreshed Corporate Plan 2021-22, had been published on 16 April 2021.
- d Para 9.1c, Financial Performance (21-22 Settlement Letter): the outstanding matter of the pensions funding gap had been resolved; funding had been confirmed in the final settlement letter from DCMS.

<p>2.3 Commission approved the minutes of the 330th meeting held on 25 February 2021 as a correct record and noted the matters arising.</p>

3 Chairman's Report

- 3.1 The Chairman presented his regular report detailing activities since the last Commission meeting and forthcoming events. It was noted that the first meeting of the DCMS Contested Heritage Advisory Board had not taken place as planned on 23 April 2021 and had been re-scheduled for 12 May 2021.
- 3.2 The Chairman thanked Commissioner Nicholas Boys Smith for chairing the virtual High Streets Heritage Action Zone Parliamentary Roundtable on 23 April 2021.

<p>3.3 Commission noted the Chairman's report.</p>

4 Chief Executive's Report

- 4.1 The Chief Executive presented his regular report, which included the latest performance dashboard and principal updates from each Group since the last meeting.

- 4.2 Performance Dashboard: Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the dashboard reflected that performance was at expected levels and that the organisation had largely spent to budget, which were both considerable achievements.
- 4.3 Covid-19: In anticipation of restrictions easing and offices re-opening, staff had been surveyed on their indicative views on hybrid- and remote-working as part of future arrangements. Around 62% of the 812 respondents had indicated that hybrid working was an approach they would be interested in. Any changes to working patterns would need to be considered corporately, including the day to day business need; alignment with the future office estate strategy (including the needs of the English Heritage Trust at shared offices, and an assessment of lease terms and lease-break opportunities); and strategic workforce planning, including the appeal or otherwise of remote working to particular demographics. Issues such as ensuring managers were equipped with the skills to manage teams remotely, and ensuring adequate network connectivity and appropriate working environments, were also being worked through. It was also possible that people's preferences may change over the medium-term.
- 4.4 Culture Recovery Fund (CRF): CRF Rounds 1 and 2 were in the closing stages, with recipients of CRF Round 2 funding announced on 2 April 2021. DCMS was finalising the details of Round 3 as part of the £300million allocation announced in the Spring Budget. HM Treasury confirmation was expected sometime w/c 10 May 2021.
- 4.5 In terms of monitoring CRF-funded projects, although physical site visits were restricted, projects were subject to Historic England's evaluation programme, which included assessments of the quality of delivery, and post-completion monitoring (further information here). Historic England had a strong track record in funding heritage at risk projects, with good intelligence at a local level and existing relationships with recipients in many cases. More broadly, the Government Internal Audit Agency and the National Audit Office were carrying out their own evaluation and assessments of the CRF.
- 4.6 Historic England had delivered over £80m in grants during 2020-21, four-times the regular level of spend. Around 200 staff had been involved directly in the emergency funding programme, which had been resourced internally through re-deployment and secondments, often at short-notice, and fixed-term external recruitment. Not all roles had been back-filled, and the current level of grant delivery resourcing was not sustainable in the long term. Elsewhere, the review of grants processes was helping to identify lessons to be taken forward, and progress was being reported to the Business and Finance Committee. **Commission would be informed of the outcomes of the Grants Review.**

ACTION: Director of Business Improvement

- 4.7 Levelling-up Fund: Discussions continued with DCMS and MHCLG officials regarding Historic England's role. The current understanding was that Historic England would be involved in the assessment of bids submitted in the current round, but could expect to have a more pro-active delivery role in future rounds.
- 4.8 Policy & Evidence highlights: The Museum Maintenance, Estate and Development Fund (MEND) grant scheme was expected to launch in mid-May 2021. Historic England's role would be in offering technical support and specialist advice to the Arts Council, which was administering the fund, and to scheme applicants.
- 4.9 Communications and Public Engagement highlights: Content continued to focus on the High Street HAZ programme and Covid-19 sector recovery. Recent highlights included the

High Street Tales podcast series and the #UncoverMore campaign, highlighting places and organisations that had benefitted from CRF funding.

- 4.10 Regions highlights: There was good progress in implementing recommendations from the High Streets HAZ Year 1 rapid review, including actions to help streamline and simplify the programme, and to introduce more flex in terms of project funding and eligibility. Partners had been supported in the re-design of their schemes where necessary, including re-allocated budget to deliver new proposals. Around 20% of High Street HAZ schemes now had work on site and this was expected to increase over the coming weeks.
- 4.11 Listing: In response to a Commissioner's query about Listing recommendations, it was explained that resources were focused toward thematic and area-based designation, rather than reactive spot-listing requests, with the particular aim of addressing the under-represented categories of heritage identified in the Saunders Review.
- 4.12 Business Improvement highlights: Historic England was working with Cabinet Office and DCMS on increased grant controls. It was noted that the 400% uplift in Historic England's grant spend was mirrored across other Government departments and ALBs.
- 4.13 Commission noted the updates on other issues in the Chief Executive's report, including: Historic England's role in relation to the Heritage Sector Recovery Plan; ongoing discussions with MHCLG around planning reforms; the likely timetable for the Judicial Review of the Stonehenge A303 proposals; and updates on major casework including Anglia Square in Norwich, and the proposals within the Liverpool World Heritage Site. It was noted the World Heritage Committee was due to meet in July 2021.

4.14 Commission noted the Chief Executive's Report.
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5 English Heritage Trust performance update

- 5.1 The EH Trust Chairman and Chief Executive provided their regular update on the Trust's performance, which included an overview of some of the major projects, conservation, and maintenance work that had been carried out recently:
- a The Trust had spent the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) grant by 31 March 2021, and the £23.4million loan via the CRF's repayable finance scheme had strengthened the Trust's going concern position. The on-site works enabled by the emergency funding and the financial security from the loan had also been positive for morale. However, key to the Trust's recovery and success would be the lifting of final Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. Almost 200 staff remained on furlough, although part-time furloughing had been implemented to help ease the impact on individuals.
 - b Around 60 sites had re-opened by the Easter weekend. Stonehenge had re-opened on 12 April 2021, along with several shops and holiday rentals, and further sites would open in the coming weeks. Feedback from visitors, particularly on safety measures and the welcome from site staff, had been very positive.
 - c The 2020-21 year-end forecast position was for approximately 2 million visitors, 945,000 members, and an overall loss of £7.5million. Looking ahead, free reserves were around £16million and unrestricted cash was £5million. Based on current assumptions around social distancing restrictions, etc. the 2021-22 visitor budget was around 4.1million visitors.

- d The Historic Estate Conservation Committee's programme of site visits would recommence shortly, in line with guidance for Historic England staff. Regarding the collapsed east wing battery at Hurst Castle, rock armour was on site and a revetment would facilitate access and enable the under-pinning and repair works to begin.
- e It was noted that Commissioner Professor Martin Daunton's term on the Trust's Blue Plaques Panel had ended. The EH Trust and Historic England Chairmen would discuss offline whether the resulting vacancy should be filled by a Commissioner.

5.2 Commission noted the update on the English Heritage Trust position.
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6 DCMS Framework Agreement

- 6.1 The existing Management Agreement between DCMS and Historic England expired at the end of 2020-21 and a new Framework Agreement to cover 2021-22 was being prepared. The current draft was presented for noting and the following points were highlighted:
- a There had been detailed negotiations with DCMS to ensure current operational freedoms (including those around reserves and pay remit) were reflected adequately.
 - b Nevertheless, in line with Cabinet Office guidance and common across all new Framework Agreements being rolled-out, the Agreement included new restrictions and increased monitoring requirements that could have resourcing implications, including around procurement and fraud reporting. Future iterations of the Agreement would also include a requirement that DCMS approve Historic England's Corporate Plan.
 - c Corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as adopted recently by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, had been accepted by DCMS and were reflected in the Framework Agreement. These included two KPIs relating to the EH Trust, which were part of the larger set of KPIs used by Historic England to monitor the Trust's financial and non-financial performance.
 - d Commission noted that, as part of wider Government monitoring measures for all ALBs, an annual Chair appraisal process had been introduced. The Chairman was due to have his 1:1 with the DCMS interim Director General on 16 May 2021.
- 6.2 Commission thanked the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Business Improvement for their continuing work on the Agreement, which would be finalised over the coming weeks, and noted the potential workload implications of supporting the new reporting requirements.

6.3 Commission noted the draft Framework Agreement.
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7 Financial Performance

- 7.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented the summary of financial performance to the end of March 2021:
- a The pre-audited 2020-21 year-end position was a £100k net overspend. This reflected a £1.1m revenue underspend and a £1.2m capital overspend as a result of in-year budget management in response to Covid-19, including IT infrastructure improvements.
 - b In light of the final DCMS settlement letter, the 2021-22 forecast was for a balanced budget. The Executive Team was now re-assessing the cost pressures identified previously, including the additional resource required to support contested heritage work, in line with DCMS and MHCLG policies.
 - c The settlement letter reflected full funding of the additional pension costs, which was welcome news. However, the position for future years was not certain, and there would be a recurring funding gap unless the remaining costs were included in Historic England's baseline as part of the Spending Review 2021 process.
 - d A further cost pressure area, which had been discussed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), was in relation to increasing Government cyber-security requirements. Options being considered including bringing in additional support on a fixed-term basis, or through ongoing supplier support, and an update would be provided to ARAC at its June 2021 meeting.

7.2 Commission noted the financial position to the end of March 2021.
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8 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

- 8.1 The Chair of the London Advisory Committee (LAC), Charles O'Brien, was welcomed to the meeting to present the Committee's 2020-21 annual report to Commission, which summarised the LAC's work over the last twelve months, and identified areas for future development:
- a In terms of key themes from the year, there was an increasing trend of applicants engaging with Historic England at a late stage, and there had been an increase in the number of cases relating to the City of London that had required a robust response. To help address the latter, there had been an effort to identify and articulate the special character of the City of London, and to engage with key figures in the City of London Corporation about its longer-term vision.
 - b The Committee had identified a need in some areas of London for development through master-planning; also for certain types of development, such as public sector infrastructure programmes.
 - c The Committee had also considered how it might better measure its effectiveness, possibly through an audit of the casework it had advised on over a longer time period and an assessment of whether there had been an appreciable impact.
- 8.2 It was noted that, whilst the most recent appointments to the Committee had improved its diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity, there was still some way to go to achieve the corporate ambition of improving diversity across Historic England's decision-making bodies.

Recruiting for specialist skills was a particular challenge, but opportunities to appoint members with broader, more generalist expertise, should be explored further.

- 8.3 On behalf of Commission, the Chairman thanked the LAC Chair and its members for their work and support during the year.

Minutes and updates from sub-Committees

- 8.4 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committee meetings.

8.5 Commission:

- a **noted the London Advisory Committee Annual Report for 2020-21; and**
- b **noted the minutes of the:**
 - **11 February 2021 London Advisory Committee;**
 - **11 February 2021 Historic England Advisory Committee;**
 - **11 March 2021 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee;**
 - **11 March 2021 Business and Finance Committee;**
 - **23 March High Streets HAZ Strategic Programme Board; and**
 - **9 April Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings Strategic Programme Board.**

9 Casework Report and Planning Bulletin

- 9.1 Commission received its regular update on Historic England's business critical casework and recent and forthcoming planning developments.

9.2 Commission noted the Casework Report and Planning Bulletin.

10 Any Other Business

- 10.1 Once again, the Chairman paid tribute to departing Commissioners, Alex Balfour and Victoria Harley, and thanked them for their tremendous contribution to Historic England. In turn, Alex and Victoria reflected on some personal highlights, and thanked and expressed best wishes for the future to fellow Commissioners and staff. Commissioners looked forward to an opportunity later in the year to be able to say farewell in person, and for Alex and Victoria to be presented with their departing gifts.
- 10.2 There were no further items of business.

11 Closed Session

- 11.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

Siobhan O'Donoghue
May 2021

Commission

FINAL Minutes of the 330th meeting held on 25 February 2021 via video-conference

Commissioners present: Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Alex Balfour
Nicholas Boys Smith
Professor Martin Daunton
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Victoria Harley
Michael Morrison
Patrick Newberry
Susie Thornberry
Richard Upton
Sue Wilkinson

Staff present: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Claudia Kenyatta, Director of Regions
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
John Neale, Head of Development Advice (for part)
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance
Jane Parsons, Governance Officer
Amy Pitts, Director, Communications & Public Engagement
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Others present: Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman, English Heritage Trust (for part)
Kate Mavor, Chief Executive, English Heritage Trust (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting. A warm welcome was extended to Tim Laurence and Kate Mavor, Chairman and Chief Executive of the English Heritage Trust; and to Jane Parsons, Governance Officer, attending as part of her induction.

Declarations of Interest

1.2 Commission noted the following declarations:

- a Item 4, Chief Executive's Report (York Central and Rochester High Street HAZ): Commissioner Ben Derbyshire declared an interest as Chair of HTA Design LLP, which was involved in both projects.
- b Item 6, English Heritage loan request: Chairman Sir Laurie Magnus and Commissioner Sue Wilkinson declared interests as English Heritage Trustees. The Chairman was also a member of the Culture Recovery Fund Board.

1.3 **Commission noted the declarations of interest.**

2 Minutes of 3 December 2020 Commission meeting and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the 329th Commission meeting held on 3 December 2020 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

2.2 Planning White Paper: Historic England's Head of Planning Strategy had been seconded to MHCLG's Planning Reform team for six months. The scope and timetable for MHCLG's heritage 'policy sprint' was becoming clearer and **a briefing would be available shortly. Commissioners would be invited to join a discussion to inform Historic England's contribution to the heritage policy sprint.**

ACTION: Director of Policy & Evidence

2.3 **Commission approved the minutes of the 329th meeting held on 3 December 2020 as a correct record and noted the matters arising.**

3 Chairman's Report

3.1 The Chairman presented his regular report detailing activities since the last Commission meeting and forthcoming events. A significant amount of time continued to be spent in relation to his role on the Culture Recovery Fund Board and its Investment Sub-Committee.

3.2 Commission welcomed the announcement by DCMS on 21 January 2021 regarding the establishment of its Culture and Heritage Capital framework and programme. Former Commissioner, Neil Mendoza, would chair the Culture and Heritage Capital Advisory Board.

3.3 **Commission noted the Chairman's report.**

4 Chief Executive's Report

4.1 The Chief Executive presented his regular report, which included the latest performance dashboard and principal updates from each Group since the last meeting.

4.2 Covid-19 response and heritage sector support: Work continued with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Arts Council England (ACE) to deliver the Government's programme of emergency funding, including assessment of Culture Recovery Fund Round 2 (CRF2) applications. The Analytics department had also contributed to spatial analysis and mapping of application and grant data to support the CRF Board. Discussions were ongoing regarding a potential CRF3, and Historic England was also making the case for a further round of capital grants through its Heritage Stimulus Fund.

4.3 Sector Recovery Plan: Working with the Historic Environment Forum, Historic England had compiled a Heritage Sector Recovery Plan, setting out how the heritage sector could recover from the impacts of Covid-19 and be sustained. Noting the link between re-

opening and recovery, there was disappointment that indoor heritage attractions had not been included in those services scheduled to re-open in early April 2021 as part of the Government's roadmap. Representations had been made from across the sector.

- 4.4 Reducing Historic England's carbon footprint: Historic England's carbon footprint baseline had now been established; the next stage was to develop a deliverable strategy for carbon reduction across the organisation. Work on advice regarding carbon reduction across the historic environment sector was also underway. **Both would be shared with Commission in due course.**

ACTION: Director of Policy & Evidence

- 4.5 Casework: Commission noted the updates on high-profile casework, including the Judicial Hearing date for the challenge to the A303 Stonehenge scheme decision, and that discussions were ongoing regarding the acquisition of Thornborough Henges.
- 4.6 Public Engagement: Commission supported the intention to focus campaign efforts in 2021 around the High Street HAZ programme, as a way of delivering and supporting both Corporate Plan objectives and Government priorities. Plans for 2021 had also built in capacity to be able to respond rapidly to emerging priorities as needed, for example sector recovery, climate change and contested heritage. Scoping work for 2022 programmes was underway, with a view to continuing engagement around the High Street HAZ programme and taking forward the place-marker scheme.
- 4.7 Estates: The Chief Executive reported on continuing discussions with the Government Property Agency (GPA) regarding its efforts to acquire the freehold of the Cambridge office (Brooklands). There was still much uncertainty, particularly around the accounting ramifications and the legal agreement for transfer, and work had now been pushed back to early FY 2021/22. Commission's authority would be needed for any transfer.
- 4.8 Apprenticeships: The Historic Environment Advice Assistant (HEAA) Level 4 apprenticeship programme had won an Association of Colleges' Beacon Award for excellence in real world learning. Commission also welcomed the news that the Hamish Ogston Foundation had increased its support for the heritage craft and construction vocational training programme to £4.3m over the next five years.
- 4.9 Shared Services: DCMS had provided formal confirmation that it wished to extend the Agreement for finance shared services for a further two years, up to December 2023. The extension of the Agreement, which was formally between DCMS and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, was noted by Commission.
- 4.10 Digital training and engagement: Commission noted the impressive statistics in terms of webinars delivered during 2020-21, views of technical conservation advice, social media followers, and views of social media content.
- 4.11 High Street HAZ programme: Findings from the external rapid review of Year One of the programme would be discussed by the High Street HAZ Strategic Programme Board at its March 2021 meeting. Recommendations and actions around supporting external partners in delivery of programme spend, and streamlining internal processes, were being developed.

4.12 Commission noted the Chief Executive's Report.

5 English Heritage Trust performance update

- 5.1 The English Heritage Trust Chairman and Chief Executive updated Commission on the Trust's performance, including a summary of the expected year-end position:
- a Headlines for 2020/21 included a reduction of more than £60m in expected income and around 1.9 million visitors (compared to 6.4 million in 2019/20). The year was expected to end c.£5m down but with free reserves of c.£16m. Membership income had held up well, despite the limited opportunities to sign-up new members.
 - b There was cautious optimism that the £12.6m of DCMS capital funding and the £2.9m received from the Heritage Stimulus Fund would be spent in-year. Projects underway included visitor facilities at Marble Hill House, Clifford's Tower and Boscobel House.
 - c The Conservation Maintenance Programme had continued throughout 2020/21 with large scale de-vegetation and repairs. Visitor facilities, including toilets and car parks, had been upgraded across a number of sites in anticipation of re-opening, and additional outdoor catering facilities had been put in place.
 - d Assumptions for 2021/22 were based on social distancing measures being in place throughout the year. Pre-booking and timed admissions meant that, despite a reduction in overall capacity, visits would be distributed well throughout the day. Smaller (and traditionally less popular) sites had done well in 2020/21 in terms of domestic visitors, but the reduction in overseas visitors would continue to have a considerable impact. 2021/22 projections for philanthropic income were modest.
- 5.2 The EH Trust Chairman reiterated that success in 2021/22 would be dependent on the re-opening of sites in line with the Government's current roadmap; and approval and receipt of the £23.4m loan through the Culture Recovery Fund repayable finance scheme, which was the subject of the separate, subsequent discussion.

5.3 Commission noted the update on the English Heritage Trust position.
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6 English Heritage Trust application for Culture Recovery Fund Repayable Finance

- 6.1 The EH Trust had applied for a loan of £23.4m under the Culture Recovery Fund's repayable finance scheme (administered through the Arts Council England (ACE)) in order to support liquidity and underwrite costs needed to achieve financial sustainability. Trustees had approved the value of the loan based on a prudent forecast of low visitor numbers and social distancing measures being in place throughout 2021/22.
- 6.2 The repayment profile would be agreed when the loan offer was made formally (expected w/c 8 March 2021) but would be fixed repayment over 20 years with no repayments due in the first four years. Interest would be charged at 2% per annum.
- 6.3 Should the CRF loan be granted, it would become the largest liability in the consolidated Historic England Group accounts, and Commission approval was required. Given the short turnaround time for processing the loan agreement before the 31 March 2021 deadline, Commission was asked to delegate authority to approve acceptance of the loan offer to a sub-committee, comprising the Chair of Business & Finance Committee and the Chair of Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, in consultation with the Chief Executive as necessary.

- 6.4 Issues that the Commission sub-committee would consider in detail on behalf of Commission included: the need for the loan; how the loan would be used; how the loan would be repaid; the potential risks to Historic England; appropriate monitoring and oversight arrangements; and the EH Trust's treasury management and investment policies.

The EH Trust Chairman and EH Trust Chief Executive were not present for the following part of the discussion.

- 6.5 Commission noted that there were risks for Historic England, although remote, for example if the Trust failed and the National Heritage Collection - and the loan liability - reverted to Historic England, or if the licence for the Collection was granted to a different party. As far as was practicable, Historic England had sought assurances from DCMS around financial support for the loan should such circumstances arise.
- 6.6 Commission was also mindful of the need to obtain adequate and regular financial and performance information from the Trust to be able to carry out its oversight role properly. Additional monitoring measures would need to be implemented, with Historic England receiving the same information supplied to ACE as part of its monitoring arrangements. It was also suggested that the Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee should have observer status at the Trust's Audit & Risk Committee. *[Secretary's note: it was agreed subsequently that, rather than observer status, the Chair of the HE Audit & Risk Assurance Committee would hold regular one to one meetings with his EH Trust counterpart, and receive EH Trust Audit & Risk Committee meeting papers.]*
- 6.7 Regarding expenditure control, the loan agreement would require the Trust to exercise pay restraint for at least eighteen months – clarification on what 'pay restraint' meant was being sought. The Trust had so far avoided redundancies, reducing payroll expenditure in other ways, but if out-turn was worse than projected, such reductions in payroll would have to be considered.
- 6.8 Commission concluded that, subject to the conditions set out by the sub-committee being met, it supported the principle of the loan.

6.9 Commission authorised the delegation of approval of the loan offer to the Chair of the Business & Finance Committee and Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, in consultation with the Chief Executive as necessary.

7 Contested Heritage update

- 7.1 The Chief Executive presented a report setting out Historic England's planning role in relation to contested heritage in assessing the heritage harm of a proposal, and the Local Planning Authority's responsibility for weighing-up Historic England's assessment of harm against wider public benefits. The report also set out the more complex position relating to proposals concerning Church of England properties and monuments (known as Ecclesiastical Exemption).
- 7.2 The Chief Executive also updated Commission on recent activity, including feedback from the 23 February 2021 roundtable event with heritage and cultural organisations, hosted by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; the MHCLG Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) relating to unlisted heritage; and a summary of current contested heritage casework, the volume of which remained low. Regarding the WMS, Historic

England had made representations to DCMS about the need to adequately fund the additional resource this might require.

7.3 The following matters were raised in discussion:

- a Recent dialogue with Government, including the roundtable meeting, had been helpful. Historic England had been given the opportunity to explain its statutory role (and clarify that this did not apply to museums' collections) and address the misleading media coverage of the research audit into the impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the Inclusion, Equality & Diversity Strategy.
- b There had been a commitment at the DCMS roundtable to establish a Working Group to develop guidance and case studies to underpin the 'retain and explain' position. Historic England expected to play a constructive role in the group, along with others in the cultural and heritage sectors, and further detail was awaited.
- c Commission was due to meet on 30 March 2021 for a wide-ranging discussion of contested heritage, with a view to establishing a clear and shared understanding of Historic England's 'retain and explain' position. Commissioners requested that the discussion should explore the broader policy underpinning 'retain and explain', particularly the 'explain' element, and stressed the importance of having a convincing strategy of reinterpretation.
- d Regarding current and future research, including that undertaken as part of the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Scheme; whilst noting the current sensitivities, Commission supported Historic England's key role in commissioning proper and objective academic research to inform Historic England's position and the wider debate.

7.4 The report would be re-presented to Commission to support its further discussion of contested heritage on 30 March 2021.

7.5 Commission noted the update on Contested Heritage, in advance of the dedicated session on 30 March 2021 on these issues.

8 Historic England Strategy and Corporate Plan update

- 8.1 The Director of Business Improvement and Director of Communications & Public Engagement presented proposals for refreshing the Corporate Plan for 2021/22, and for developing a Strategy document (to sit above the Corporate Plan) to bring together key current work (and that in development), and to provide a strong, compelling narrative about the vision, ambition and future impact of Historic England.
- 8.2 The Strategy would be a particularly useful tool in supporting 2021 Spending Review submissions but, as such, would need to be developed at pace. It was therefore proposed that an initial Strategy be prepared for publication in April 2021, alongside the refreshed Corporate Plan and Group budgets; this document would then be the basis for wider consultation, engagement and longer-term development.
- 8.3 A summary of the guiding principles, an outline structure and early draft text had been shared with Commission; **a final draft of the Strategy, which was being prepared**

externally, would be shared with Commissioners for more detailed comment and input in advance of publication in April 2021.

ACTION: Director of Business Improvement / Director of Comms. & Public Engagement

- 8.4 Commission was invited to share high-level comments and provide a general steer on the current draft to inform the Strategy's ongoing development:
- a Commission broadly welcomed the outline draft, in particular the three real life impact themes of thriving places, connected communities and active participation, which positioned Historic England well and set out its relevance and ambitions.
 - b There was encouragement for a greater emphasis of Historic England's expertise and authority; this, and Historic England's ambition to be more inclusive and to engage broadly, were not necessarily incompatible.
 - c It was important to acknowledge that, as much as heritage could unite people, it was often complex and difficult.
 - d More might be included about Historic England's role and ambition as an influencer and shaper within the wider heritage and culture sector.
 - e Other themes and issues that the Strategy might seek to reflect included: the move toward integrated place-based funding; flexible resourcing and staff deployment; defining what 'thought leadership' meant in practice (for example in terms of social, economic and sustainable impact); reference to intangible heritage; and investment and philanthropy.

8.5 Commission:

- a **noted progress towards the development of a new Historic England Strategy and refreshed Corporate Plan; and**
- b **commented on the proposed draft content of the Strategy.**

9 Financial Performance

- 9.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented the summary of financial performance to the end of January 2021. The following points were highlighted:
- a Following discussion with DCMS regarding the expected £9m High Streets HAZ underspend, £5m had been reprofiled into 2021/22. The remaining £4m was under discussion with DCMS and HM Treasury. As a result, the expected year-end forecast position was approx. £270k surplus for revenue and capital.
 - b Approx. £30m of grant expenditure was still to go out before year-end, but this was being well managed by Business Improvement and Regions teams.
 - c Historic England had received its provisional 2021/22 settlement letter from DCMS and there remained a partial funding gap of £0.7m relating to pensions. The final settlement letter was expected shortly and would be the basis for 2021/22 budget-setting, due to be considered by the Business & Finance Committee at its meeting on 11 March 2021.

9.2 Commission noted the financial position to the end of January 2021.

10 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

10.1 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committee meetings.

10.2 The Chair of the Historic England Advisory Committee (HEAC) also presented the committee's annual report to Commission, summarising its work over the last twelve months, which had included consideration of development proposals within the Liverpool World Heritage Site, and contested heritage. On behalf of Commission, the Chairman thanked the HEAC Chair and its members for their work and support during the year.

10.3 Commission:

- a **noted the Historic England Advisory Committee's Annual Report for 2020-21; and**
- b **noted the minutes of the:**
 - **19 November 2020 Historic England Advisory Committee**
 - **25 Nov 2020 Audit & Risk Assurance Committee**
 - **25 Nov 2020 Business & Finance Committee**
 - **27 Nov 2020 High Streets HAZ Strategic Programme Board; and**
 - **The Historic Places Panel's Review Paper of Nottingham Broadmarsh Centre.**

11 Casework Report and Planning Bulletin

11.1 Commission received its regular update on Historic England's business critical casework and recent and forthcoming planning developments.

11.2 Commission noted the Casework Report and Planning Bulletin.

12 Any Other Business

12.1 There were no further items of business.

13 Closed Session

13.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

Siobhan O'Donoghue
March 2021

Commission

Final Minutes of the 329th meeting held on 3 December 2020 via video-conference

Commissioners present: Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Alex Balfour
Nicholas Boys Smith
Professor Martin Daunton
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Victoria Harley
Rosemarie MacQueen
Michael Morrison
Patrick Newberry
Charles O'Brien
Susie Thornberry
Sue Wilkinson

Staff present: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Claudia Kenyatta, Director of Regions
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance
Amy Pitts, Director, Communications & Public Engagement
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Others present: Anna Hosford, New Citizenship Project (for part)
Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman, English Heritage Trust (for part)
Kate Mavor, Chief Executive, English Heritage Trust (for part)
Sophie Norton, Sector Skills Manager, Policy & Evidence (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Commissioner Richard Upton.

Announcements

1.2 On behalf of Commission, the Chairman congratulated Commissioner Nicholas Boys Smith on his appointment as Chair of the Government's design body steering group, and Commissioner Charles O'Brien on his appointment as MHCLG's adviser on the programme to improve and extend Local Lists. Commissioners also congratulated Amy Pitts, who had been confirmed in the post of Director of Communications & Public Engagement as a permanent appointment.

1.3 This was the last meeting for Commissioners Rosemarie MacQueen and Charles O'Brien, whose terms ended on 31 December 2020. Charles had agreed to continue as Chair of the

London Advisory Committee (LAC) and as a member of the Historic England Advisory Committee (HEAC); and Rosemarie would continue to serve on HEAC, LAC and the Historic Places Panel. The Chairman thanked Rosemarie and Charles on behalf of the Commission for their commitment and valuable contributions during their terms of office.

- 1.4 Commission noted with sadness the sudden death of Phillip Lane, Head of Finance, on 6 November 2020. The Chairman led Commissioners and the Executive Team in paying tribute to Phillip and his contribution to both Historic England and the English Heritage Trust over the last 11 years. Phillip was much respected and would be missed greatly by all at Historic England. On behalf of Commission, the Chairman had written to Phillip's wife to convey sincere condolences.

Declarations of Interest

- 1.5 Commission noted the following declarations:
- a Item 6, Culture Recovery Fund update: Commissioners Sue Wilkinson and Susie Thornberry declared interests as Trustees (and/or employees) of organisations that were recipients of Culture Recovery Fund grants.
 - b Item 4, Chief Executive's Report (major projects – York Central): Commissioner Ben Derbyshire declared an interest as Chair of HTA Design LLP, which was tendering for an advisory role in relation to the proposed development.

1.6 Commission noted the declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of 16 September 2020 Commission meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the 328th Commission meeting held on 16 September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

- 2.2 The following updates were noted:
- a Para 2.2, Matters Arising (Rhodes plaque): There were no further updates to report.
 - b Para 7.2, Review of grants: The Business and Finance Committee would receive an interim update at its March 2021 meeting; Commission would also be updated in due course.

2.3 Commission approved the minutes of the 328th meeting held on 16 September 2020 as a correct record and noted the matters arising.

3 Chairman's Report

- 3.1 The Chairman presented his regular report detailing activities since the last Commission meeting and forthcoming events. A significant amount of time had been spent in relation to his role as a member of the Culture Recovery Fund Board and its Investment Sub-Committee.

- 3.2 Commission welcomed the news that the Tailored Review had been published on 24 November 2020. **An update on Historic England’s action plan would be shared at a Commission meeting.**

ACTION: Director, Policy & Evidence

3.3 Commission noted the Chairman’s report.
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4 Chief Executive’s Report

- 4.1 The Chief Executive presented his regular report, which also included the latest performance dashboard and principal updates from each Group since the last meeting.
- 4.2 Covid-19 response: The programme of office-re-openings continued, although the majority of staff continued to work remotely. Site visits were being assessed on a case by case basis. Lessons learned from the lockdown were being captured, and attention was now turning to possible longer-term changes to ways of working and future accommodation needs. The Chief Executive conveyed his thanks to the General Counsel & Corporate Secretary and the Facilities Management, Safety & Operational Risk, and IMT teams for their work in ensuring staff were safe, well-informed and supported.
- 4.3 Planning White Paper (PWP): The Director of Policy & Evidence updated Commission on the regular meetings with MHCLG and DCMS officials to discuss progress with the PWP proposals, following submission of Historic England’s formal consultation response. **The Director of Policy & Evidence would convene discussions with any Commissioners with a particular interest in more detailed proposals and guidance in the early part of 2021.**

ACTION: Director of Policy & Evidence

- 4.4 Tailored Review: As reported earlier, the Government had published its Tailored Review report on 24 November 2020. The English Heritage Trust Chairman confirmed that the Trust was comfortable with the outcome of the Tailored Review. A number of the recommendations, including those around Historic England’s oversight role, would be picked up in Licence agreement renewal discussions with the Trust and DCMS. Commission noted that the Tailored Review contained helpful recommendations relating to Historic England’s digital capacity and the need for investment in IT infrastructure.
- 4.5 A303 Stonehenge scheme. The Secretary of State’s decision to approve the A303 development scheme had been announced on 12 November 2020. Objectors had indicated their intention to apply for a judicial review of the decision and had until 24 December 2020 to lodge papers formally. The English Heritage Trust Chairman reflected that both organisations could have been more on the front foot in terms of public communications following the announcement, and that there remained more to do in order to win ‘hearts and minds’. The Chief Executive thanked Commissioner Professor Helena Hamerow and fellow archaeologists for their public support of the decision.
- 4.6 Anglia Square, Norwich: Commission noted the Secretary of State’s refusal of planning permission for the proposed redevelopment of Anglia Square, on the grounds that the harm caused by the proposed development would not be outweighed by the public benefit. The applicant had indicated that it was likely to challenge to the decision.

- 4.7 Thornborough Henges, North Yorkshire: The Chief Executive summarised briefly the background to the acquisition and transfer to the English Heritage Trust, which Commission had authorised previously in July 2016. Following protracted negotiations, an opportunity had now arisen to acquire a slightly different land assembly; as the parameters of the deal had changed, Commission and DCMS consent needed to be re-confirmed. **Commission authorised the delegation of final approval of the acquisition to the Historic England Chairman and Commissioners Professor Martin Daunton and Professor Helena Hamerow.**
- 4.8 Contested Heritage: Historic England had not received any formal applications for the removal of listed structures, although pre-application casework and informal discussions concerning contested heritage were increasing. In these instances, Historic England was encouraging thoughtful, long-lasting and powerful reinterpretation, rather than removal, in line with its 'retain and explain' public position, albeit with each case being considered on its own merits. It was noted that HEAC members were due to consider an application by Jesus College, Cambridge, to remove a monument to Sir Tobias Rustat from its chapel at a HEAC Chair's Action meeting on 14 December 2020.
- 4.9 Noting that scoping work for reinterpretation pilot projects was in development, individual Commissioners nevertheless expressed concern that Historic England had not yet provided more guidance on the 'explain' part of the 'retain and explain' position. The Chief Executive commented that both the highly sensitive nature of the issue, and the need for Government and sector partners to be supportive and fully engaged in exploring what meaningful reinterpretation might be, meant that it was difficult for Historic England to be more proactive in its messaging at this stage. The Secretary of State had convened a roundtable discussion with Historic England and sector partners on 16 December 2020 to explore the 'retain and explain' position more fully, and it was hoped that this would help establish a consensus and enable the complex issue to be progressed. **Commission agreed that, following the roundtable meeting, a further discussion on Historic England's contested heritage position would be helpful.** [*Secretary's note: the roundtable event was postponed to 23 February 2021.*]

ACTION: Chief Executive

- 4.10 In response to a Commissioner's question, the Chief Executive confirmed that Historic England did not have a locus regarding non-designated heritage assets or, for example, proposed changes to street names. It was also clarified that, under Ecclesiastical Exemption rules, there were different arrangements for handling planning matters relating to ecclesiastical buildings, although Historic England was consulted on proposals for change.
- 4.11 Inclusion, Diversity and Equality Strategy: The Strategy had been launched to staff on 26 November 2020 and had been well-received. The focus now was on implementation of the Strategy and arrangements for monitoring and oversight. The Chairman thanked Susie Thornberry and fellow Commissioners for their involvement in developing the Strategy, which would be published externally on 8 December 2020.
- 4.12 Staff Engagement Survey: Commission welcomed the positive headlines and improved scores from the recent staff engagement survey, which had been the subject of a more detailed presentation to the Remuneration and Appointments Committee at its recent meeting.

- 4.13 Heritage Schools: There was no update on Historic England's £3.5m Spending Review bid for Heritage Schools funding from the Department for Education. The Heritage Schools programme was a funding priority for the Partnerships & Philanthropy Team, which was exploring alternative sources of funding.
- 4.14 Historic England Archive: The internal consultation on the new strategy and proposed structure for the Archive had closed on 8 November 2020. Conclusions had been fed-back to the Archive team on 2 December 2020.
- 4.15 2021/22 Public Engagement Campaigns: **Commission would welcome outline proposals of 2021/22 public engagement campaigns at its next meeting in February 2021.**

ACTION: Amy Pitts

- 4.16 Owing to time constraints, Commissioners were encouraged to submit further comments and any questions on the Chief Executive's Report outside of the meeting.

4.17 Commission:

- a **authorised the delegation of final approval of the acquisition of Thornborough Henges to the Historic England Chairman and Commissioners Professor Martin Daunton and Professor Helena Hamerow; and**
- b **noted the Chief Executive's Report.**

5 English Heritage Trust performance update

- 5.1 The English Heritage Trust Chairman and Chief Executive updated Commission on the Trust's performance to date:
- a The performance summary as at October 2020 reflected the impact of the severely disrupted season, mitigated through cost controls, efforts to attract additional visitors, and the use of reserves built up over previous years.
 - b The Trust had been unsuccessful in its four-year Spending Review bid to DCMS for additional funding but had received constructive feedback. A further (exceptional) bid in 2021/22 was a possibility.
 - c The Trust Board would consider a range of cost-cutting scenarios at its December 2020 meeting and be asked to provide a steer to the Executive on options to explore further. The EH Trust Chief Executive emphasised the need to consider the potential impact of any short- to medium-term cost-saving solutions (for example, reducing investment in capital programmes) on the delivery of longer-term strategic aims.
 - d The revised programme of 2020/21 conservation and project work was proceeding, with over 50 projects in train. Governance arrangements were being put in place for those projects funded through emergency grants, which would need to be completed within the 2020/21 financial year. Work at Clifford's Tower had also started.
 - e It was regrettable that the programme of 2020/21 Historic Estate Conservation Committee (HECC) site visits was on hold as a result of the impact Covid-19

restrictions, although members were keen to carry out visits on a reduced scale, where possible, in order to provide some degree of assurance and prepare its annual report to Commission.

- 5.2 On behalf of Commission, the Chairman expressed thanks and continued support to the Trust's Chairman, Chief Executive and staff, for their ongoing efforts in the continuing challenging circumstances.

5.3 Commission noted the update on the English Heritage Trust position.

6 English Heritage Trustee Re-appointments

- 6.1 Commission approved the re-appointment of English Heritage Trustee Kunle Olulode for a second term; and approved the proposed appointment extensions for a number of Trustees whose terms were due to expire in the next 18 months. The extensions, which had staggered end dates, would provide important continuity in the difficult operating environment and also facilitate succession planning arrangements. None of the extensions would result in appointment terms totalling more than 10 years.
- 6.2 A recruitment exercise for two new Trustees would begin in 2021, which would seek to address a specific skills gap (philanthropy and fundraising expertise) as well as boost more general expertise. As Historic England would also be recruiting for up to four new Commissioners in 2021, it would be helpful to liaise about the timing of campaigns.

6.3 Commission:

- a **approved the staggered appointment extensions for James Twining, Ronald Hutton, Charles Gurassa, Victoria Barnsley, Ian McCaig and Sarah Staniforth (as set out in the report); and**
- a **approved the reappointment of Kunle Olulode for a second term to run from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2025.**

7 Culture Recovery Fund update

- 7.1 The Chairman introduced the update on the Culture Recovery Fund, the £1.57 billion rescue package for cultural and heritage organisations to help address the impact of Covid-19. Historic England was jointly running the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) for heritage revenue support grant programme with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), and also the Heritage Stimulus Fund (HSF) capital investment grant programme. CRF Round 1 had closed on 14 August 2020 and had received 855 applications for a total of £137m. Discussions were underway with DCMS and sector partners about a second round (CRF2), which would also need to be complete by 31 March 2021.
- 7.2 The Director of Regions went on to provide a more detailed summary of progress in administering the CRF, including the high level of applications; allocation against the available funds; progress in issuing the payments to recipients; and feedback received on the CRF process, which included the complexity of the guidance and the application process, and the challenging timescales. Feedback was being taken into account for CRF2.

- 7.3 Discussions on CRF2 were live, although approval mechanisms were complex and the timescales were very challenging. The expectation was that CRF2 would be primarily for revenue support (run jointly with NLHF), plus a repayable finance scheme. The intention was for the second round to capture a range of organisations that had not applied to the initial CRF fund (including private owners and heritage construction businesses) as well as those impacted by the second national lockdown.
- 7.4 Commission noted the range of risks relating to the overall CRF programme and the specific funds, including stretched contractor capacity and challenges associated with the limited spend window. This latter point continued to be made to DCMS, particularly in light of the extended Covid-19 restrictions. Anecdotal evidence showed a mixed picture in terms of organisations being able to spend within the timeframe, especially small grant applicants, although pre-work by Historic England provided a greater degree of confidence in relation to major works.
- 7.5 Key risk areas for Historic England were resourcing and the impact that the focus on CRF was having on the delivery of other work programme. Short-term recruitment, secondments and temporary restructures were being used to manage the situation as far as possible. Specific challenges included the additional support and resources required for small grant applicants, with many of these organisations being unfamiliar with the grants process. DCMS funding for administrative costs had helped bring in temporary additional resource, and it was hoped that the small underspend could be used to support delivery of CRF2.
- 7.6 The Chairman and Commissioners thanked the Group Directors and their teams for their efforts in delivering this considerable and complex programme, particularly given the challenging timeframes.

7.7 Commission noted the update on the Culture Recovery Fund.

8 Spending Review update

- 8.1 The Chief Executive reported that the expectation was for a one-year 'flat cash' settlement; although it was hoped that the significant work that had gone into preparing the bids could be banked and progressed as part of the next three-year settlement. A major implication of a flat cash settlement was the need to find alternative sources of investment for Historic England's IT and digital capacity (for regular business and CRF2, and delivery of proposals to digitise the planning service). There also remained uncertainty around the pensions position. 2021/22 would see a pay-freeze for the vast majority of staff, except those on the lowest grades.

8.2 Commission noted the update on the Spending Review.

9 Financial Overview

- 9.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented the summary of financial performance to the end of October 2020, which showed a year-end forecast position of a c.£9m underspend, largely in relation to the High Streets HAZ programme grants. Since drafting the report, HM Treasury had confirmed £5m could be carried forward and had requested further information around the remaining £4m in Spring 2021. In-year underspends (relating to the

impact of Covid-19) were being used to help establish IMT infrastructure. Commission noted that Historic England's Grant in Aid (GIA) had increased from £88.5m in 2019/20, to £178m in 2020/21.

9.2 Commission noted the financial position to the end of October 2020.

10 Public Engagement Strategy

- 10.1 Anna Hosford, Head of Strategy at the New Citizenship Project, the specialist engagement consultants working with staff on developing Historic England's Public Engagement Strategy, was welcomed to the meeting.
- 10.2 Commission was talked through a short presentation, which summarised: the aims and ambition of the Strategy; Phase 1 (discovery and design); Phase 2 (co-creation interviews and workshops with a diverse range of internal and external participants); the high-level learning from the work to date; and the opportunities for building on this learning, both in terms of day to day work and also specific campaigns and work programmes. It was explained that the ultimate aim of the Strategy was to see Historic England working with a larger and more diverse range of people to champion and protect the historic environment together, across all its work. Next steps in developing the Strategy included working with teams across Historic England to develop action plans and toolkits to support staff in understanding and advocating the aims more widely with the public and stakeholders.
- 10.3 Commission welcomed the presentation, endorsing the aims and approach, direction of travel, the work to date, and proposed next steps. The move toward listening and engaging, rather than broadcasting, was a positive step, and a Commissioner commented that the Strategy was a tangible manifestation of the Change Programme aspirations. The following observations and suggestions were raised in the subsequent discussion:
- a The potential tension between Historic England as 'expert' and the views of the broader public. Also, in moving toward a role of enabler, the degree to which Historic England would be comfortable in giving a platform to views that were not necessarily its own. The example of contested heritage was used to illustrate both.
 - b Acknowledging that Historic England was one of a range of experts. It would be helpful to look to others in the sector and beyond to see how these organisations were challenging themselves and looking to bring in other voices.
 - c Recognition of the cross-cutting nature of the Engagement Strategy, for example the connections with the emerging work on intangible culture heritage, and the Inclusion, Diversity & Equality Strategy.
 - d Broadening engagement was likely to require staff with additional skill-sets, as well as a shift in culture. Staff workshops were planned for early 2021 to set out the Strategy and encourage open conversations with staff about shaping activities for delivery. Commissioners suggested some pilot projects could be helpful for testing and learning.
- 10.4 **Details of a series of drop-in sessions to be held w/c 7 December 2020 would be shared with Commissioners following the meeting.**

ACTION: Director of Communications & Public Engagement

10.5 Commission noted the direction of travel of the Public Engagement Strategy and endorsed the move to the next phase.

11 Apprenticeships and Vocational Training update

- 11.1 Sophie Norton, Sector Skills Manager, was welcomed to the meeting to present an update on the work of Historic England's Sector Resilience & Skills Team, and cross-group working with the Partnerships & Philanthropy Team, in delivering Historic England's strategic commitment to addressing skills challenges in the heritage sector.
- 11.2 Recent work included the development of a three-tiered model for establishing and investing in opportunities to 'prepare' people for work in the heritage sector, 'enter' the heritage sector workforce, and 'sustain' it. Apprenticeships, including Historic England's Historic Environment Advice Assistant apprentice role, continued to be at the heart of the model, but were now book-ended by other vocational opportunities and training initiatives, which were able to attract Government and philanthropic support.
- 11.3 Commission welcomed the news of the £3.5m grant from the Hamish Ogston Foundation for heritage craft and construction vocational training. The Partnerships & Philanthropy team had helped to generate over £6m in funding for apprenticeships and vocational training since its establishment, and Commission recorded its particular thanks to Caroline Crewe-Read, former Head of Partnerships & Philanthropy.
- 11.4 In response to a Commissioner's query about supporting the work of craft colleges, the Sector Skills Manager explained that the Historic Environment Trailblazer programme was exploring future options for a higher-level apprenticeship in heritage construction, which could provide viable vocational routes for people to develop specialist skills.
- 11.5 **A further update on apprenticeships and vocational training would be brought back to Commission in 12 months' time.**

ACTION: Director of Policy & Evidence

11.6 Commission:

- a **endorsed the three-tier model set out in the report; and**
- b **noted the update on apprenticeships and vocational training.**

12 HAZ and High Streets

12.1 The Director of Regions presented the update on Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) Rounds 1-3 and the High Street HAZ programme, including mid-year performance and evaluation data.

HAZ Rounds 1-3

12.2 There continued to be good performance in terms of community engagement, volunteering and skills-building outputs. Economic outputs were still proving slower to deliver, and capital spend had been impacted by Covid-19. Following a review over Summer 2020, HAZ

leads had re-balanced a number of delivery plans and revised planned expenditure. The number of monitoring indicators had also been reduced from over 30 to 15.

12.3 Learning from Rounds 1-3 and the recent review was being used to influence thinking on the remaining years of the HAZ schemes. Options included extending the duration of a small number of schemes where there was a clear rationale and potential to deliver the project successfully. As a Historic England programme, HAZ Rounds 1-3 allowed for this flex in terms of targets and approach, whereas the High Streets HAZ programme had to be delivered in line with the agreed Business Case.

High Streets HAZ programme

12.4 The programme had been impacted severely by Covid-19. Although the carry-forward of £5m was good news, it was likely that it would only be carried into 2021/22, which would be challenging. A review across the full breadth of the programme was underway to identify whether more significant measures were needed to ensure successful delivery.

12.5 The High Streets HAZ Strategic Programme Board had met on 27 November 2020 and had discussed delivery challenges in more detail, including the likelihood that some schemes would fail, options for diverting resource to schemes where evidence suggested more could be achieved, and ways of providing more support to delivery partners, both directly and also through a learning network.

12.6 The Strategic Programme Board had also discussed an update on national and local Cultural Programme activities, which were vital in demonstrating to local communities that something was happening. It had also received an inspiring presentation from the Director of the Historic Coventry Trust on the Coventry Burges High Streets demonstrator scheme.
The presentation would be shared with Commission.

ACTION: Governance Team

12.7 Regarding other national schemes (such as Future High Streets and the Stronger Towns Funds), the Director of Regions reported that collaboration and joint-working across these programmes was happening at a local level within regional teams. The main challenge was around resourcing and capacity at local partner level, where there was the likelihood that the larger funds would be given priority.

12.8 In response to queries about consequences of permitted development on the High Street programme, it was confirmed that it was too early to tell what the potential longer-term impact might be.

12.9 Commission noted the update on Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) Rounds 1-3 and the High Street HAZ programmes and noted the resourcing update.

13 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

13.1 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committee meetings.

13.2 Commission:

a noted the minutes of the:

- **24 September 2020 London Advisory Committee;**
- **24 September 2020 Historic England Advisory Committee;**
- **6 October 2020 Remuneration & Appointments Committee;**
- **20 October 2020 Audit & Risk Assurance Committee;**
- **9 November 2020 Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings Strategic Programme Board; and**

b approved the proposed revisions to the Business and Finance Committee's Terms of Reference.

14 Casework Report and Planning Bulletin

14.1 Commission received its regular update on Historic England's business critical casework and recent and forthcoming planning developments.

14.2 Commission noted the Casework Report and Planning Bulletin.

15 Any Other Business

15.1 Commission agreed that an update call in mid-late January 2020 would be helpful.

ACTION: Governance Team

15.2 Once again, the Chairman paid tribute to departing Commissioners Rosemarie MacQueen and Charles O'Brien and thanked them for their considerable contribution to Historic England. Commissioners looked forward to an opportunity in 2021 to say farewell in person and for Rosemarie and Charles to be presented with their departing gifts.

15.3 The Chairman thanked the members of the Executive Team for their incredible work during the challenging year and wished all attendees a pleasant and restful break.

15.4 There were no further items of business.

16 Closed Session

16.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

Siobhan O'Donoghue
December 2020

Commission

Final Minutes of the 328th meeting held on 16 September 2020 via video-conference

Commissioners present: Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Alex Balfour
Nicholas Boys Smith
Professor Martin Daunton
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Victoria Harley
Rosemarie MacQueen
Michael Morrison
Patrick Newberry
Charles O'Brien
Susie Thornberry
Richard Upton
Sue Wilkinson

Staff present: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Tom Godbehere, Head of Human Resources (for part)
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Claudia Kenyatta, Director of Regions
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance
Amy Pitts, Interim Director, Communications & Public Engagement
Simon Ramsden, Head of Planning Strategy (for part)
Sandra Stancliffe, Head of Learning, Volunteering & Inclusion (for part)
Victoria Thomson, Head of National Strategy (for part)
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Others present: Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman, English Heritage Trust (for part)
Kate Mavor, Chief Executive, English Heritage Trust (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence. Commissioners Alex Balfour and Susie Thornberry would join the meeting a little late.

Declarations of Interest

- 1.2 Commissioner Nicholas Boys Smith declared a general interest as Director of Create Streets; Historic England was a partner of the *Creating Communities* conference, organised by Create Streets and Onward. Commissioners had been invited to join the event.

- 1.3 Item 4, Chief Executive’s Report (call in of the 8 Albert Embankment development proposals): Commissioner Richard Upton declared an interest.

1.4 Commission noted the declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of 18 June 2020 Commission meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the 327th Commission meeting held on 18 June 2020 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendments (underlined text):
- a Para 6.7: ‘A public statement (issued 9 June) made clear that Historic England did not condone the unauthorised removal of listed structures, and set out Historic England’s position in support of retention, combined with thoughtful, long-lasting and powerful reinterpretation.’
 - b Para 6.12: ‘...recognition of Historic England as a disproportionately predominantly white organisation in a disproportionately predominantly white sector...’

ACTION: Head of Governance

Matters Arising

- 2.2 Following Commission’s discussion and agreement on 20 July 2020 that the advice given to DCMS not to list the Rhodes Plaque be upheld, Historic England had submitted its findings to DCMS. There were no further updates at this stage.

2.3 Subject to the amendments set out in para. 2.1 above, Commission approved the minutes of the 327th Commission meeting held on 18 June 2020 as a correct record.

3 Chairman’s Report

- 3.1 The Chairman presented his regular report detailing activities since the last Commission meeting and forthcoming events.
- 3.2 Coronavirus recovery and renewal: Commission noted the Chairman’s roles on both the Culture Recovery Board and the joint Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage decision-making panel. An update on Historic England’s role in the administration of the government’s Culture Recovery Fund and Heritage Stimulus Fund was provided elsewhere on the agenda.
- 3.3 Our People: The Chairman reported that staff continued to work incredibly hard, often in challenging circumstances, and morale remained very positive. This had been reflected in the findings of the recent Staff Engagement survey.
- 3.4 Commission also noted the updates on the latest position of the EH Trust, Historic England’s Spending Review submissions, and the development of Historic England’s response to the Planning White Paper.

3.5 Commission noted the Chairman’s report.

4 Chief Executive's Report

- 4.1 The Chief Executive presented his regular report summarising current activities and issues, which also included the latest performance dashboard and principal updates from each Group since the last meeting.
- 4.2 Covid-19 response – people and offices: The IMT team had performed impressively with the roll-out of software and hardware to support home-working. Offices were re-opening on a rolling basis for those staff who wanted, or needed, to return. Social distancing measures meant that capacity was significantly reduced, for example the London office would be able to accommodate only 30-40% of usual staff numbers.
- 4.3 The Historic England Archive remained closed to the public, although some services continued online. Services would be opened-up on a phased basis over the coming weeks. The web team would ensure there was clearer signposting about the status of Archive services on the Historic England website.
- 4.4 Covid-19 sector intelligence: The Analytics department continued to support DCMS and the sector by gathering and analysing intelligence to monitor direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. The analysis had also helped inform Historic England's Spending Review submission.
- 4.5 Local Listing campaign: Historic England was working with MHCLG on its proposals to encourage local authorities and communities to create new or enhanced local lists of heritage assets. The campaign was due to be launched on 22 September 2020.
- 4.6 Heritage and the Environment: *Heritage and the Environment*, a component of the annual *Heritage Counts* audit, was released on 17 August 2020 and included a wide range of evidence relating to the interaction of the historic and natural environment. There were links with both the concept of a 'green recovery' and also the current interest in retro-fitting and re-use of heritage buildings to address environmental and levelling-up priorities. The Director of Policy & Evidence reported that Historic England was in early discussions with DCMS and HM Treasury about a pilot programme to assess the potential impact of VAT reduction on repairs and maintenance.
- 4.7 Planning casework: The Planning Inspectorate had confirmed the dates for a number of high-profile Public Inquiries, at which Historic England would give evidence. Regional teams were monitoring applications for contested heritage-related cases. The General Counsel & Corporate Secretary would share a note with Commissioners outside of the meeting to clarify the current (listed) status of the Colston statue.

ACTION: General Counsel

- 4.8 Listing casework: Commission noted the updates on a number of recent listing recommendations. Requests relating to murals and other wall decorations were becoming more frequent and that this might be a useful area for future research.
- 4.9 Staff Engagement Survey 2020. As reported earlier, the Staff Engagement survey results were very positive, showing a significant improvement across almost all questions and key drivers of engagement. A presentation of the headline findings would be arranged for the December 2020 Commission meeting.

ACTION: Head of Human Resources

- 4.10 Corporate Services: As part of the Spending Review 2020 commission, DCMS had requested additional information about Historic England's estate, and the provision of shared services and the potential to expand this.
- 4.11 Public Engagement Strategy: The Strategy was in its final phase with co-creation workshops being held in September and October. An update would be provided to Commission at its December meeting.

ACTION: Interim Director of Communications and Public Engagement

- 4.12 Archive Review: Proposed changes were due for internal consultation between late September and early November, with the outcome of the consultation due in early December.
- 4.13 Brand awareness and coverage: Commission welcomed the results of the most recent YouGov poll, noting that Historic England had achieved its highest score to date in terms of public awareness. The positive trend in social media followers and media coverage was also commended.
- 4.14 Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings: The construction phase had remained largely on track throughout the coronavirus restrictions and contractors were on site. The LEP-funded wider site project was also progressing. Discussions about a potential anchor tenant continued.

4.15 Commission noted the Chief Executive's Report.

5 English Heritage Trust performance update and Annual Review of the English Heritage Trust 2019/20

- 5.1 The English Heritage Trust Chairman and Chief Executive updated Commission on the latest position, including the Trust's Spending Review submission:
- a The EH Trust Chief Executive thanked the HE Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services for their support in securing the £19.7m in-year emergency funding grant, which had provided the opportunity and means to stabilise the organisation, accelerate the re-opening programme, and re-evaluate priorities for the next three to four years.
 - b Further to the update in the report, 92 pay-to-enter sites were now open and holiday let accommodation was booked out. Trading at re-opened sites was strong, but social distancing requirements had reduced capacity (and therefore spend) significantly. There had, however, been some successes in terms of fundraising and legacies, and the £450,000 generated through the membership appeal.
 - c Latest projections indicated that the Trust could be back on track to achieve financial sustainability by 2024/25, two years later than anticipated in the New Model business case.
 - d Capital projects that remained live included improved visitor experiences at Marble Hill and Boscobel House. The Clifford's Tower castle gateway project had also been recommended for an immediate re-start.

- e Due to the uncertainties related to Covid-19 restrictions, all planned ‘enchanted’ winter events had been cancelled. Staff continued to think positively and creatively about how to engage audiences both on-site and digitally and maximise income opportunities whilst adhering to Government guidelines.
 - f The EH Trust Chief Executive remarked that the Spending Review process had been a learning curve. Further challenge to the Trust’s bid was anticipated, and it would be particularly important to demonstrate the link between the capital element of the bid (investment in maintenance and facilities) and future revenue.
 - g Regarding a ‘Plan B’ in the event the Spending Review bid was not successful, the EH Trust Chief Executive reported that the Trust’s Board was due to consider priorities and a range of cost-cutting scenarios at its next meeting, including cost base reductions and capital projects. Reducing investment in the latter would have consequential negative impacts on future visitor numbers, membership and income.
- 5.2 Commissioners welcomed the update and expressed their support for EH Trust colleagues, commending their hard work and achievements in challenging and uncertain circumstances. The EH Trust Chairman also recorded his thanks to the senior EH Trust team and to the Historic England Chief Executive and Executive Team for their support in recent months.

Annual Review of the English Heritage Trust 2019/20

- 5.3 Commission also received Historic England’s Review of the EH Trust for 2019/20, which provided a snapshot of how the Trust had performed in its operation and care of the National Heritage Collection in Year 5 of the eight-year operating licence. Taking into account the impact of Covid-19 and poor weather, the Review concluded that the Trust had enjoyed a good trading year overall, ending with an unrestricted operating surplus of £7.8m. The Trust anticipated completing the expenditure of the £80m grant for capital investment by 2023; £55.5m had been spent to date.
- 5.4 The Review stressed the importance of identifying the scale of the maintenance backlog and progress on spend in line with the original Asset Management Plan, as well as the re-measured estimate and trend in accordance with the Sustainable Conservation (SCAMP) approach. This was even more important given the in-year emergency funding and the Trust’s SR20 bid. Commission noted the significant challenge of the Trust being able to spend the former within the financial year (i.e, over winter); clarification was being sought from DCMS and HM Treasury on whether contractual commitments could be considered spend.

Annual Report of the Historic Estate Conservation Committee 2019/20

- 5.5 The Chair of the Historic Estate Conservation Committee (HECC) introduced the annual report, which summarised the Committee’s work and site visits during 2019/20. The Committee’s main focus had been the developing Sustainable Conservation Strategy and how this would be translated into practice, particularly at challenging sites. The Report concluded that the general condition of the Estate could be seen to be improving, and that staff were clearly committed to ensuring that work was carried out in the best possible way. Meetings and visits had been conducted on a positive and constructive basis.

- 5.6 The 2020/21 programme of site visits had been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but it was hoped that arrangements could be put in place in advance to ensure visits re-started as soon as practicable.

5.7 Commission:

- a **noted the update on the English Heritage Trust position; and**
- b **noted the Annual Review of the English Heritage Trust for 2019/20.**

6 Financial Overview

- 6.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented the summary of financial performance for 2020/21 to the end of July 2020, and provided an oral update regarding the position as at the end of August 2020. At this stage in the financial year, the forecast was a surplus of £4.9m for revenue due to the anticipated High Streets HAZ grant shortfall. Options were being discussed actively with DCMS.
- 6.2 The additional Government funding (£54.9m to Historic England plus £19.7m for the EH Trust) was not yet reflected, although this would not impact Historic England's net financial position as all the funding would be passed to third parties. Grant-in-Aid did reflect the advanced £10.9m drawdown of the EHT subsidy, which had helped with the Trust's cashflow requirements. Non-GIA income was steady. Fundraising was above budget as was Other Income, due in part to £44k Independent Research Organisation grant receipts.
- 6.3 Estates: Contractors were now back on site at Finzel's Reach (Bristol) and it was hoped that Queen's Square would be vacated by the end of the year. In terms of the wider office estate, future ways of working and offices shared with English Heritage, it was important for the Trust to be clear about its longer-term accommodation intentions.

6.4 Commission noted the financial position to the end of August 2020.

7 Historic England Grants Programmes

- 7.1 The Director of Business Improvement presented an overview of national and regional grant programmes, High Streets HAZ programme grants, Historic England's recent c.£5million emergency funding grants, and the elements of the Government's Culture Recovery Fund delivered by Historic England.
- 7.2 The report also summarised the governance arrangements and the mechanisms used to distribute grants and provided an update on planned work to help streamline legacy grant programmes and processes. This included a Grants Management System pathfinder project, and the recently commissioned review of Historic England grant-making, including external benchmarking, which would help to inform a grants delivery improvement strategy in early 2021. It was agreed that the Business and Finance Committee should receive an interim report on the review of grants before recommendations and responses were finalised.

ACTION: Director of Business Improvement

Covid-19 emergency funding programmes

- 7.3 All emergency funding schemes (HE's resilience grants and emergency Heritage at Risk grants, the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage, and the Heritage Stimulus Fund) were now closed to applications. In broad terms, there had been significant demand for capital and less demand for revenue funding. There had also been a number of ineligible applications in light of the strict criteria. Decisions would be confirmed shortly, followed by contract negotiations with applicants over the coming weeks. As anticipated, there had been relatively low demand from heritage sector organisations for the repayable finance scheme.
- 7.4 The three main areas of risk were: the short timeframes and the requirement for works to be complete by 31 March 2021; communications, including potential adverse publicity in light of unsuccessful applications or organisations not meeting the strict criteria; and specific risks relating to applications from private businesses and owners. To mitigate communication risks, information about applications was being shared between the various grant-awarding bodies, and Historic England was seeking to follow-up with unsuccessful applicants to flag other potential sources of funding.
- 7.5 Historic England's role in assessing and administering emergency grants had also created internal resource pressures, particularly in terms of diverting resources from 'business as usual', albeit for a relatively short-term period. Teams had needed to expand quickly and many of the additional roles had been recruited internally, which had also provided an opportunity for up-skilling and temporary promotions. There would be an associated pressure point at year-end when teams would need to shrink back.
- 7.6 The Director of Business Improvement reported that the internal audit team had been involved throughout the planning and preliminary stages, which had been of great value, and had enabled the emergency grants team to respond to concerns and adopt recommendations quickly. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee suggested that, nearer to year-end, it might be prudent to divert some further internal audit resource toward the emergency grant programmes in order to provide additional assurance around internal controls and risks.
- 7.7 Commissioners thanked the Director of Business Improvement and the Director of Regions for the clear and helpful report on a complex business area. Commission would be notified when successful emergency grant applicants were due to be announced.

ACTION: Interim Director of Communications and Public Engagement

7.8 Commission noted the report on Historic England grant programmes.
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8 Spending Review 2020

- 8.1 Historic England's 2020 Spending Review (SR 2020) submission had been submitted to DCMS in August 2020. Since then, staff had been responding to a range of DCMS queries and feedback, and refining bids and the overarching narrative to ensure close alignment and clear links with government priorities. Feedback from DCMS had been very positive. Core assumptions included SR20 being a three-year settlement. Should assumptions change, Historic England would be able to 'bank' the significant work that had gone into the bids, to be revisited at a future point.

8.2 Commission's discussion focused on the suite of bids for additional funding and included the following points:

- a The two larger bids (High Streets HAZ and Investing in People and Places at Risk) were highly scalable and programmes that HM Treasury had vetted already as credible.
- b Lessons from the current High Streets HAZ programme and HAZ Rounds 1-3 had informed the High Streets HAZ bid, including a simplification of the programme to reduce pressure on local authority capacity, and raising the lower spend threshold for individual schemes.
- c The Digital Engagement and IMT Infrastructure bid was critical in underpinning many of the other bids as well as business as usual. Should it not proceed as a standalone bid it would be necessary to identify resource from within any successful bids.
- d The hidden histories place-marking programme bid had been packaged with other DCMS bids for a wider submission in support of hidden heritage and untold stories, including contested heritage.
- e A £3.5m bid for Heritage Schools funding from the Department for Education had been submitted. Noting the specific challenges around Heritage School funding, Commissioners suggested it might be appropriate to review the programme and seek to integrate it with some of Historic England's wider public engagement work. It was noted that the Partnerships and Philanthropy Team was exploring alternative sources of funding for some of the bids.
- f The Cultural and Heritage Assets in Jeopardy bid, in partnership with National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Arts Council England (ACE), had been informed by the sector intelligence gathered and analysed over recent months.

8.3 Commission welcomed the SR20 update and thanked those involved for producing a comprehensive and well-supported case for DCMS and HM Treasury to consider. Commission would be kept updated on key SR20 developments.

8.4 Commission noted the update on SR20.

9 Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity & Equality

9.1 The Head of Human Resources and Head of Learning, Volunteering & Inclusion were welcomed to the meeting.

9.2 Commissioners had discussed an early draft of the Strategy for Diversity, Inclusion & Equality (the Strategy) on 30 June 2020, and a number of other internal and external stakeholder workshops had informed the current draft. Commission was now being asked to: note the main updates since its June discussion; note the draft Executive Summary, key findings and recommendations; and to agree the principle of an independent board to help advise on the Strategy's implementation:

- a Commission welcomed the updated Strategy and congratulated the team on the significant work in getting to this point. The Strategy was the first step in a longer process, but was balanced in terms of ambition, intent and deliverability.

- b In terms of further refinements, it would be helpful to make clear that the Strategy set out longer-term ambitions, but that the actions identified were for delivery over a three-year period. A shorter list of initial priorities would also help to signal realistic ambition.
- c The importance of partnerships in delivering the Strategy and addressing diversity and inclusion in the wider sector was recognised. An initial partnership project could be very powerful, and an obvious partner was the English Heritage Trust.
- d Although additional resource had been identified to support two fixed-term roles, a longer timeframe for these posts would help ensure the Strategy was embedded and made progress.
- e Commissioners provided a number of other drafting suggestions, including strengthening references to the importance of geographical diversity, and the inclusion of Art History in the proposed review of barriers to entry for heritage sector qualifications.

9.3 The Director of Regions thanked Commissioners for their helpful suggestions, some of which were already in train. The intention was to launch the Strategy in November, and work would continue to identify partners, confirm priorities, and develop the delivery plan. The Head of Learning, Volunteering & Inclusion added her thanks to Commission for its ongoing input, support and commitment to developing and delivering the Strategy.

9.4 Commission also endorsed the principle of establishing a group to provide oversight and advise on implementation of the Strategy, noting that its role, remit and relationship with Commission would be subject to further discussion. It was vital that Commission itself had ownership of the Strategy and responsibility for ensuring implementation.

9.5 **Commission:**

- a **approved the Executive Summary and actions in the draft Strategy for publication in autumn 2020; and**
- b **agreed in principle to the creation of an external board to advise on implementation of the draft Strategy.**

10 **Historic England's response the Planning White Paper**

10.1 The Head of Planning Strategy and Head of National Strategy were welcomed to the meeting.

10.2 Commission noted the report, which set out the proposed general approach to the Planning White Paper (PWP) consultation and sought views on specific proposals to inform Historic England's formal response and ongoing discussions with MHCLG.

10.3 The Historic England Advisory Committee (HEAC) had discussed the PWP in greater detail on 15 September 2020, and the Chair of the Committee and other members provided a summary of the main issues and concerns that had been debated. Commissioners also shared a range views and detailed comments, which staff would seek to take forward in ongoing discussions and in the formal response. Some of the more general observations and suggestions are set out under the broad headings below:

- a Historic England's engagement and response: Historic England's written response and ongoing dialogue with MHCLG should draw on evidence and experience, including more recent experiences such as Heritage Action Zones, and relate to the organisation's remit. The absence of detail in the PWP was an opportunity for Historic England to articulate its concerns in a constructive way and assist Government in working up the detail.
- b Heritage protection: As drafted, the PWP acknowledged only a limited range of heritage assets and there were concerns around some omissions (for example references to archaeology and non-designated heritage assets), which should be emphasised in Historic England's response.
- c Proposed restructure of the planning system: There was concern that the three broad categories of development may not take sufficient account of the variety and complexity of some areas, and may lead to silos and standardised or restricted approaches. An audit or screening of heritage assets could be proposed.
- d Local Planning Authority capacity: Commission noted the need for adequate resources and training for local planning authorities, and the different skill sets that might be required. This also needed to be considered alongside the potential refocusing of Historic England's own resources.
- e Implications for Historic England: The PWP proposals as set out could have significant impacts for Historic England's future role in the planning system. They would require a reassessment of resources in terms of the volumes of casework, types of work and the professional skills required.
- f Green agenda: The PWP was an opportunity to champion the role that retaining and repairing historic buildings could have in contributing to Government's energy efficiency and carbon reduction targets.
- g General: The PWP was ambitious. There was much to welcome in the outline proposals and also some areas of concern, but it was hoped that the emergence of greater detail over the coming months would help address the latter. In particular, more detail would be welcome in due course about funding models and charged-for services; the role of amenity societies and statutory consultees; resourcing the proposals (training and skills, as well as financial); proposals for greater digitisation of the planning system; the development of area-based policies, local plans and design codes, including how local preferences and local character might be balanced; and the role of the national expert design body.

10.4 Commission encouraged staff to continue to engage constructively with MLHCG on the development of the proposals.

10.5 Commission:

- a **noted Historic England's proposed handling of the Planning White Paper consultation; and**
- b **commented on the proposals contained in the consultation, with a view to informing Historic England's response and ongoing discussions with MHCLG.**

11 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

11.1 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committee meetings.

11.2 Commission noted the:

- a minutes of the 4 June Historic Estate Conservation Committee;**
- b minutes of the 18 June Audit & Risk Assurance Committee;**
- c minutes of the 19 June High Street HAZ Strategic Programme Board;**
- d minutes of the 1 July Business and Finance Committee;**
- e minute of the 2 July London Advisory Committee;**
- f minutes of the 2 July Historic England Advisory Committee; and**
- g minutes of the 7 July SFM Strategic Programme Board.**

12 Casework Report and Planning Bulletin

12.1 Commission received its regular update on Historic England's business critical casework and recent and forthcoming planning developments.

12.2 Commission noted the Casework Report and Planning Bulletin.

13 Any Other Business

13.1 There were no further items of business.

14 Closed Session

14.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

Siobhan O'Donoghue
September 2020

Commission

Final Minutes of the 327th meeting held at 09:30 on 18 June 2020 via video-conference.

Commissioners present: Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Alex Balfour
Nicholas Boys Smith
Professor Martin Daunton
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Victoria Harley
Rosemarie MacQueen
Michael Morrison
Patrick Newberry
Charles O'Brien
Susie Thornberry
Richard Upton
Sue Wilkinson

Staff present: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Claudia Kenyatta, Director of Regions
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
Amy Pitts, Interim Director, Communications & Public Engagement
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance (notes)
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Others present: Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman, English Heritage Trust (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of Interest

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of 23 April 2020 Commission meeting and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the 326th Commission meeting held on 23 April 2020 were approved as a correct record. The updates on actions were noted.

2.2 **Commission approved the minutes of the 326th Commission meeting held on 23 April 2020.**

3 Organisational and Sector Response to Coronavirus (Covid-19)

- 3.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on Historic England's organisational response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as its sector coordination role and contribution to recovery.
- 3.2 Staff and offices: Offices remained closed and staff had adapted well to new ways of working. A risk assessment and action plan for re-opening the Swindon office was in development, which would be used as a template for the phased re-opening of the office estate, in line with the latest Government advice. Initially, only staff that had a business need for office-based working would be allowed to return.
- 3.3 The HR team continued to collect weekly staff data, including sickness levels and numbers of staff working reduced hours, mainly as a result of school closures and caring responsibilities. The summer school holidays were expected to have a further impact on working patterns, but staff were being encouraged to use annual leave allowances. A number of individuals and teams had been working intensively to support the organisation, the EH Trust, and to respond to government and sector needs. This had been acknowledged and staff had been thanked, but these levels were not sustainable indefinitely.
- 3.4 Planning and Listing casework. Following the initial decline in casework, numbers had been increasing steadily towards usual levels. A phased transition back to using HE's bespoke casework tracking and processing system (Concase) was underway.
- 3.5 Covid-19 Heritage Renewal Programme: Further to the updates in the report on Historic England's Covid-19 Emergency Response Funds and the Chief Executive's regular email updates to Commission, the Director of Policy & Evidence updated Commission on the current discussions with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), as well other sector bodies, including Arts Council England (ACE) and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), regarding the Government's support package for cultural and heritage recovery.
- 3.6 In particular, Historic England had been making a strong case to DCMS, supported with evidence and modelling, about the scale of heritage organisations and those in associated supply chains whose survival was threatened within the next three to six months. There were also significant risks for large national organisations, and cultural and heritage assets in danger of degradation or loss as a result of their host organisations failing, which the rescue and recovery package would need to capture.
- 3.7 Commission welcomed the update and discussed a range of associated issues, including the potential scale of any financial package; possible methods of support, including repayable finance; the potential opportunities for Historic England's place-based work in supporting recovery and wider Government agenda priorities, as well as risks; and the importance of soft power in supporting the sector.
- 3.8 On behalf of Commission, the Chairman expressed his thanks and sincere appreciation of the Executive Team's hard work and leadership over the recent months.

3.9 Commission noted the report on the organisational and sector response to Covid-19.

4 English Heritage Trust position

4.1 The English Heritage Trust Chairman provided an update on the current position:

- a Although capacity remained significantly reduced, sites had now started to re-open and it was expected that the majority of staffed sites would be open for August, albeit in line with social distancing requirements and with limited catering and retail. Membership had taken a modest hit, but a fundraising appeal to members had raised £250k and many had opted out of the three-month membership extension offer.
- b Latest financial projections reflected an improvement on the information circulated in the papers with a positive position forecast for March 2021, the majority of savings coming from the suspension of conservation and project work. There had also been better than expected legacy and investment income.
- c With support from Historic England, the Trust had prepared a bid for emergency funding, which would in turn help to support other organisations, specialists and craftspeople. The Trust's Chairman also provided details of a Spending Review funding bid that was in development, aimed at addressing both the anticipated ongoing income shortfall as a result of Covid-19, and to re-establish the business plan for financial self-sustainability by addressing the backlog of conservation work and capital investment projects. Historic England and EH Trust teams would continue to work closely with DCMS officials to refine the bid and supporting evidence.
- d At its recent Board meeting, Trustees had agreed to seek a short extension to the current licence agreement and defer discussions about licence renewal for the time being.
- e Regarding contested heritage, a number of statues in the Trust's care had been boarded up temporarily as a precaution against possible damage by protestors.
- f Commission discussed Historic England and English Heritage's role in rescuing nationally significant heritage assets at risk. This was likely to be a very real problem, but the potential scale could not be known at this stage. The Trust had a strategy for acquiring properties that filled gaps in the National Heritage Collection portfolio (in terms of chronology or geography, for example), but Historic England would not be able to pass on properties to the Trust that carried a financial liability.

4.2 On behalf of Commission, the Chairman passed his thanks to the English Heritage Chairman, Chief Executive and the senior management team for their hard work during the recent challenging months.

4.3 Commission noted the report on the English Heritage Trust position.

5 Chairman's Report

5.1 Commission noted the Chairman's regular report detailing activities since the last meeting and forthcoming events, which focused largely on the organisational and sector response to the Covid-19 emergency.

5.2 Commission noted the Chairman's Report.

6 Chief Executive's Report

- 6.1 The Chief Executive presented his regular paper on current issues and significant developments since the last meeting, including: Historic England's engagement with the MHCLG-administered Towns Fund; work with DCMS, ACE and NLHF on the Museums Repair Fund; and summaries of major projects and casework, including the A303 Development Consent Order and the Bramley Moore Dock proposals within the Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site.
- 6.2 Public Engagement: Commissioners congratulated staff on the *Picturing Lockdown* campaign, which received nearly 3,000 images in response to the public call-out, and excellent media coverage. The final 100 images had been announced on 2 June 2020.
- 6.3 Strategy for the future of the National Heritage List for England (Saunders Report): Further to the update provided in the paper, the Chief Executive reported that publication of the Saunders Review and Historic England's response to this would be delayed, in order to take into account issues brought into focus by the recent debates on contested heritage and the need for a strategy to address List entries. An opportunity for Commission to discuss some of the Review's key recommendations in advance of publication would be identified.
- 6.4 Diversity, Inclusion and Equalities Strategy: An invitation was extended to all Commissioners to join members of the Remuneration and Appointments Committee at a meeting on 30 June 2020 to discuss the draft Strategy for Diversity, Inclusion and Equality.
- 6.5 In response to a Commissioner's query, the Chief Executive confirmed that work was continuing on the draft Industrial Heritage Strategy.

Contested Heritage

- 6.6 In light of the recent Black Lives Matter public protests, including the removal of the Grade II listed statue of Edward Colston in Bristol on 7 June 2020, Commissioners were invited to share their views on issues around contested heritage and Historic England's positioning and role in the national response. The Chief Executive reported that DCMS had also requested Historic England's views on immediate and longer-term strategic options for addressing contested heritage by 22 June.
- 6.7 A public statement (issued 9 June) made clear that Historic England did not condone the unauthorised removal of listed structures, and had set out Historic England's position in support of retention, combined with thoughtful, long-lasting and powerful reinterpretation. It had also explained Historic England's statutory role in issuing advice on heritage applications in the planning system to local planning authorities (as decision-making bodies) about levels of harm, to be weighed against public benefit, on a case by case basis. Commission noted that Historic England's role in London was slightly different as there was a power of direction, although this had not been used.
- 6.8 A further statement (due for publication on 19 June) re-capped Historic England's work around contested heritage to date, including the *Immortalised* programme, and the

organisation's commitment to addressing broader issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement, including taking positive action for diversity, inclusion and equality within Historic England and across the heritage sector.

6.9 The following is a summary of some of the main points raised during the discussion:

- a The recent events represented a watershed moment in terms of changing attitudes: Historic England had to be seen to recognise and respond to this.
- b There had been general inertia in terms of addressing issues of contested heritage effectively. Previous debates about difficult heritage assets had resulted in a commitment by owners to re-interpret, but had not been followed-up with visible actions.
- c By advocating retention and re-interpretation, Historic England needed to support and guide owners and communities in doing this effectively. Historic England had explored re-interpretation to a degree as part of the *Immortalised* programme, but more needed to be done to address this skills- and experience-gap. Commission discussed the challenges associated with this: what did meaningful re-interpretation look like? Where were the domestic or international examples of it being done well (physical, digital, creative interpretation or events, etc.)? Were counter-monuments effective?
- d The response had to be research-led, with meaningful audience engagement and research used to establish public opinion and determine the most appropriate response. The views of those people or groups most profoundly impacted by the contested heritage in question (geographically or otherwise) might also be prioritised.
- e There was a tension between the need for a full and considered approach (notwithstanding a strong commitment to action) and the need to respond at pace; particularly in supporting the local planning authorities that would be dealing with challenging cases over the coming months. There were also legal and technical questions associated with removal and re-positioning in terms of designation status, which were noted.
- f Historic England did not need to 'reinvent the wheel'. A great deal of work had been done in this field and research and resources were available. It was about bringing it together and building on this existing material. Connecting with other agencies dealing with contested heritage (for example national museums) would also be helpful in establishing common positions.
- g Practical steps, for example webinars and sign-posting of specific examples, might be explored initially. This could also help with consistency of approach. Addressing shortfalls in List entries should also be a priority and could cross-refer to the wealth of existing research (for example UCL's work on Legacies of British Slave-ownership). Updating the List was also a real opportunity to work with others. Some sort of unilateral programme of assessment and consistent application was suggested, noting that historic assets were in a variety of ownership.

6.10 The English Heritage Trust Chairman also reflected on the range of points that had been made by Trustees at its most recent Board meeting. There had been acknowledgement of the positive steps that had been taken in recent years to address

the lack of diversity and inclusion in the Trust's work and the sector; but also of the need to recognise the 'tectonic' generational shift in attitudes and current strength of feeling, and the need for greater energy, speed and resourcing to implement changes. Historic England and the EH Trust would continue to work together closely.

- 6.11 Commissioners endorsed the draft statement (for publication on 19 June) and voiced its support for the Executive in developing aims and objectives for addressing contested heritage issues in the longer-term, as well responding to the more immediate challenges.
- 6.12 Some of the broader diversity and inclusion issues raised in the discussion, including recognition of Historic England as a disproportionately white organisation in a disproportionately white sector, would feed into the draft Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and be picked-up in the discussion 30 June 2020.

6.13 Commission noted the Chief Executive's Report.

7 Financial Performance update

- 7.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented a summary of financial performance for 2020/21 to the end of May 2020. At this early stage in the financial year, the forecast included a surplus of £5m for revenue due to the expected High Streets grant shortfall. Discussions with DCMS were ongoing regarding options for the underspend in terms of carrying forward or in-year spend.
- 7.2 The main financial risks for Commission's attention included additional in-year Covid-19 related costs, including IT solutions to support remote working, which would be funded from transport and subsistence (T&S) underspends. There were also longer-term implications for the office estate.

7.3 Commission noted the year to date position, the forecast to year end and the financial issues and risks.

8 Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and High Street HAZ update

- 8.1 The Director of Regions summarised headlines from the detailed report on the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and High Street HAZ programmes. The main matters for the Commission's attention were:
- a. the revised joint governance and reporting arrangements for the HAZ programmes, with the regional delivery of HAZ Rounds 1-3 and the High Streets HAZ programme now overseen by a single HAZ Programme Delivery Board;
 - b. the potential impact of Covid-19 on the delivery of the programmes, and the mitigation steps being put in place to address this;
 - c. the year-end update on HAZ Rounds 1-3 monitoring and evaluation; and

- d. an update on progress in implementing the recommendations arising from the reviews of HAZ Rounds 1-3 monitoring, evaluation and benefits realisation.
- 8.2 In terms of the year-end evaluation data for HAZ Rounds 1-3, Commission noted that, generally, there had been good progress in terms of the community engagement and local capacity building outputs. Economic outputs were still proving slower to deliver and these would be subject to attention in the forthcoming review of Delivery Plans.
- 8.3 Commission was asked to consider and approve a number of small changes to the High Streets HAZ Strategic Programme Board Terms of Reference (ToR). Recognising the change in the operating environment and shift in the government agenda in light of Covid-19, it was suggested the ToR might refer to '*enabling sustainable economic growth and activity...*' (currently 'enabling economic regeneration').
- 8.4 Given time constraints, Commissioners were invited to follow-up with comments or queries with the Director of Regions and Director of Business Improvement (as joint Chairs of the HAZ Programme Delivery Board) outside of the meeting.

8.5 Commission:

- a. **noted and approved the joint governance and reporting arrangements for the HAZ Programme;**
- b. **approved the High Street HAZ Strategic Programme Board ToRs, subject to incorporating the suggestion above,**
- c. **noted the High Street HAZ Regional Roles and Responsibilities document;**
- d. **noted the Covid-19 mitigation update for the six Flagship HAZs and the Covid-19 mitigation plans for High Streets HAZ and Cultural programme; and**
- e. **noted the other updates provided on the HAZ and High Streets HAZ programmes, in particular the progress made in addressing audit recommendations.**

9 2019/20 Corporate Performance summary and Risk Register

- 9.1 The Chief Executive presented the year-end corporate performance position and the current Risk Register, which had been considered in detail by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting earlier that day.
- 9.2 The Chair of the Committee reported that members had been satisfied with the progress made in developing corporate performance monitoring, in particular the move towards more outcome-focused key performance indicators (KPIs), as well as more meaningful KPIs for monitoring the English Heritage Trust, which had been recommendations in the draft Tailored Review. The Committee had also been pleased to note the improvements to risk management, including the closer links between Group-and programme-level registers and the Corporate Risk Register.
- 9.3 Given time constraints, Commissioners were invited to share any detailed queries or comments on the year-end report or the Risk Register with the Committee Chair outside of the meeting.

9.4 Commission noted:

- a the year-end summary of corporate performance during 2019/20;**
- b arrangements for corporate performance reporting for 2020/21; and**
- c the current Corporate Risk Register.**

10 Update on the 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts

10.1 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee updated Commission on progress in preparing the 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts and the timetable for finalisation. The Committee had considered Historic England's draft 2019/20 financial statements and associated year-end reports at its meeting earlier that day, but the English Heritage Trust figures were not expected to be finalised and audited until September 2020. The Director of Corporate Services reported that the Historic England, EH Trust and NAO teams were working well together to progress the accounts as far as possible.

10.2 Commission noted the update on the 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts.

11 Draft 2019/20 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee annual report to Commission

11.1 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee presented the Committee's draft annual report to Commission, which summarised the work undertaken during the year and the Committee's conclusions in respect of risk, control and assurance activity during the year, subject to a small number of outstanding updates related to the finalisation of the Annual Report and Accounts. The report also set out the internal audit work completed during 2019/20 and the Head of Internal Audit's overall 'moderate' assurance opinion for the year.

11.2 Commission noted the work that the Committee had considered during the year, including the reviews of key business and operational areas such as grant giving mechanisms and the Heritage Action Zones programme. It was noted that the programme of 'deep dives' had worked well and these would continue in 2020/21.

11.3 Commission would receive the Committee's final annual report alongside the completed 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts.

11.4 On behalf of Commission, the Chairman thanked the Committee chair, its members and those staff involved with the committee's work during 2019/20.

11.5 Commission noted the draft 2019/20 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee annual report.

12 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

12.1 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committees.

12.2 Commission noted the:

- a **minutes of the 30 April 2020 Historic England Advisory Committee;**
- b **minutes of the 14 May 2020 Remuneration & Appointments Committee;**
and
- c **the oral report of the 4 July 2020 Historic Estate Conservation Committee.**

13 Any Other Business

13.1 There were no further items of business.

14 Closed Session

14.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

Siobhan O'Donoghue
June 2020

Commission

Final Minutes of the 326th meeting held at 13:00 on 23 April 2020 via video-conference.

Commissioners present: Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman
Alex Balfour
Nicholas Boys Smith
Professor Martin Daunton
Sandie Dawe
Ben Derbyshire
Sandra Dinneen
Paul Farmer
Professor Helena Hamerow
Victoria Harley
Rosemarie MacQueen
Michael Morrison
Patrick Newberry
Charles O'Brien
Susie Thornberry
Richard Upton
Sue Wilkinson

Staff present: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
Michael Bishop, Director of Business Improvement
Meryl Hayward, Director of Corporate Services
Claudia Kenyatta, Director of Regions
Ian Morrison, Director of Policy & Evidence
Amy Pitts, Interim Director, Communications & Public Engagement
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Head of Governance (notes)
Julia Ward, Head of the Chairman & Chief Executive's Office
Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Others present: Kate Mavor, Chief Executive, English Heritage Trust (for part)

1 Apologies, announcements and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies had been received from Sir Tim Laurence, Chairman of the English Heritage Trust. Kate Mavor, English Heritage Trust Chief Executive, was welcomed to the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

1.3 There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of 13 February 2020 Commission meeting and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the 325th Commission meeting held on 13 February 2020 were approved as a correct record. The updates on actions were noted.

2.2 Commission approved the minutes of the 325th Commission meeting held on 13 February 2020.

3 Organisational and Sector Response to Coronavirus (Covid-19)

- 3.1 The Chief Executive provided an overview of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Historic England, including on staff, estates, major workstreams and communications; and an update on Historic England's wider sector coordination role.
- 3.2 Staff and offices: All offices were closed and all staff were now working remotely, except for a very small number whose roles were unsuitable for homeworking. HR was collecting weekly staff data, including sickness levels and numbers of staff working reduced hours, mainly as a result of school closures and caring responsibilities.
- 3.3 Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) and High Street HAZs: Both HAZ programmes continued to operate, although the delivery of some projects was expected to be affected with local authorities focused on essential services. Funding for the High Street HAZ programme had been confirmed, but discussions were taking place with DCMS around its expectations in light of the current circumstances, and staff were working with lead partners to establish how schemes might need to be adapted.
- 3.4 Planning and Listing casework. There had been a decline in the number of planning case referrals and designation requests. Site visits were suspended and a number of Public Enquiries had also been postponed by the Planning Inspectorate. Staff were monitoring the situation, mindful that there could be a bottle-neck of activity once restrictions were eased. Emergency listing requests were still being dealt with, albeit without the benefit of site visits, in line with the process used for spot-listing.
- 3.5 Scheduled Monument Consent: DCMS had raised some questions about the way that Historic England handled Scheduled Monument Consent. The proposed changes to the process were sensible, and Historic England had responded positively to DCMS, but they would require additional resource, which was not immediately possible under current circumstances.
- 3.6 Public Engagement: Subject to DCMS approval, plans were in train for a campaign seeking images of 'life in lockdown' from the public, to form part of the Historic England Archive.
- 3.7 Sector coordination: A steering group, based around the Historic Environment Forum membership, had been established to help ensure effective collaboration, intelligence-gathering and recovery planning. The group also identified sector priorities to inform the agenda for the weekly briefing calls with the Minister. A number of bodies across the broader heritage and culture sector were collecting information about organisations in significant financial difficulty.

3.8 Historic England emergency response fund: The fund, launched on 17 April 2020, was designed to complement existing Government measures and other sector funds, and was specifically targeted at individuals and groups at particular risk, including small businesses, self-employed contractors, and craft skills. It was too early to predict the likely level of uptake, but there had been a large number of enquiries, primarily about eligibility criteria, and it was noted that other sector funds had been over-subscribed. Mindful of the urgency, the expectation was that funds could be released to successful applicants by mid-May 2020.

3.9 Commission noted the report on the organisational and sector response to Covid-19.

4 English Heritage Trust position

4.1 The English Heritage Trust Chief Executive provided an update on the current position at the Trust and the latest financial projections.

- a Although the Trust had been on track to achieve the New Model goal of financial self-sufficiency, the impact of the pandemic on cash reserves and income generation was considerable.
- b All EH sites had closed on 17 March 2020 in line with Government restrictions and 85% of eligible staff had been furloughed. DCMS had agreed to advance payment of the full 2020/21 subsidy to May 2020; and all expenditure, other than essential maintenance, safety and security activity, and a minimum level of marketing activity, had been cut.
- c A range of scenarios had been modelled, but six months' closure – across the busiest months of the year – was considered a prudent assumption. The Trust was monitoring intelligence both domestically and internationally to inform its planning.
- d On the basis of sites remaining closed to the public up to the end of September 2020, forecasts indicated positive cash balances until November 2020 only. Beyond that, the Trust would require additional support by drawing on the 2021/22 subsidy in advance; and/or using the unspent balance of the £80m endowment for works to the properties. Both required HM Treasury approval.
- e Historic England and the Trust were working with DCMS to re-develop the business case in advance of the 2020 Spending Review. Licence Review discussions would also now need to be on a different basis, likely to be an initial extension to the current licence, which expired in 2023.
- f Emergency maintenance call-out arrangements were in place, but the cyclical maintenance programme had been suspended. It was hoped that this could be reinstated at a relatively early stage, as much activity (for example de-vegetation) could be done safely. Many contractors had also furloughed staff and there were seasonal limitations, but maintenance at gardens and other outdoor spaces at properties would be a focus for re-opening. It was essential that the public was confident about safety.

4.2 Commissioners expressed their sympathies, support and thanks to the EH Trust Chief Executive and her team for their work in such extraordinary and challenging circumstances. In turn, the EH Trust Chief Executive paid tribute to the professionalism and dedication of EH staff. Communication with staff had been frequent and transparent and, despite the hugely challenging circumstances, staff were thinking positively and creatively about engaging audiences digitally and looking ahead to re-opening. The EH Trust Chief Executive also thanked Historic England staff for their support, particularly around managing the complex payroll situation.

4.3 **Commission noted the report on the English Heritage Trust position and discussed the implications for Historic England.**

5 Chairman's Report

5.1 Commission noted the Chairman's regular report detailing activities since the last meeting and forthcoming events, which focused largely on the organisational and sector response to the Covid-19 emergency. Commission noted that the introductory meeting with the Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage had been positive.

5.2 **Commission noted the Chairman's Report.**

6 Chief Executive's Report

6.1 The Chief Executive presented his paper on current issues and activities, and significant developments since the last meeting.

6.2 Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings: Following consultation with partners and in line with Government guidelines, the site had been closed from 25 March 2020. Discussions remained active with potential tenants around the letting of the site, including with the University, although it was noted that the higher education sector was itself facing uncertainty in light of Covid-19. Discussions were also taking place with the LEP regarding the agreed timetable and funding conditions. It was suggested that discussions with other partners, for example Homes England, might be beneficial.

6.3 Stronger Towns Fund: The Director of Policy & Evidence updated Commission on discussions with MHCLG around Historic England's involvement in the Stronger Towns Fund. Commission discussed the importance that placemaking would have in terms of recovery and renewal, and the potential for programmes such as High Street HAZs to demonstrate the contribution that heritage and culture could make.

6.4 UK Research & Innovation bid: Commission noted Historic England's involvement in an outline bid to UK Research and Innovation for a major ten-year investment stream in heritage science infrastructure, although it was emphasised that much depended on the forthcoming Spending Review. Further detail would be provided to interested Commissioners via a briefing note.

Action: Director of Policy & Evidence

IMT Shared Services and Strategy: SSG Advisory had completed the first phase of its review of IMT shared services and was reporting back to both Historic England and EH Trust management. SSG's analysis indicated that the cost of separating the shared service would be prohibitive, and that continuation of the arrangement, albeit in an optimised form, was the preferred option. SSG was also advising on the development of Historic England's IMT Strategy, which would now take into consideration the experiences of widespread remote working, including current operating systems and applications.

- 6.5 Other matters covered by the report included the conclusion of the Taylor Review pilot; internal communications; progress with the review of the HE Archive; and major projects and casework, including Wentworth Woodhouse, the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor, and the A303 (Stonehenge) Development Consent Order (DCO).

6.6 Commission noted the Chief Executive's Report.

7 2020/21 Budget and 2019/20 Out-turn

- 7.1 The Director of Corporate Services presented the 2020/21 budget for approval, which had been considered in detail and endorsed by the Business and Finance Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2020.
- 7.2 The potential impact of Covid-19 had not been reflected, but a balanced position for 2020/21 was considered achievable. There were, however, a number of potential risks, including the forthcoming Spending Review and priority themes; additional IMT costs related to widespread homeworking; and shared services, both in terms of reduction or loss of service, and also full recovery of costs from the EH Trust. Budget projections for 2021/22 onward were deficit budgets, having assumed no inflationary or pension funding.
- 7.3 Despite the fast-moving situation around Covid-19 and the rapid move to homeworking toward year-end, concerns around the possible impact on year-end spend and processes had not been realised, with the majority of spend appearing as planned. The 2019/20 outturn was a small net underspend of approx. £100k. Regarding the finalisation and audit of the 2019/20 financial statements, discussions with the NAO and DCMS indicated that the 2019/20 Annual Report & Accounts would be laid after the summer recess.

7.4 Commission:

- a **approved the final draft of the revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21, noting the risks for this specific financial year and beyond;**
- b **noted the financial position at 2019/20 year end;**
- c **noted the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic were still unclear on the 2019/20 final outturn and on the 2020/21 budget, and that planning work was underway with changes expected to in-year spend profiles.**

8 2020/21 Corporate Plan

- 8.1 The Director of Business Improvement introduced the draft 2020/21 Corporate Plan. In terms of presentation and language, many sections of the Plan had been carried over from 2019/20, reflecting the stability of Historic England's longer-term priorities. However, the Plan was now underpinned by a robust process and framework for planning, resourcing and assessing underlying projects and activities, which provided a 'golden thread' between the Corporate Plan and team-level work plans. It was noted that much of the planning and content, including the Group Plans, had been completed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, and refinement might be needed in the coming months response to the wider circumstances.
- 8.2 Commission welcomed the under-pinning work, in particular the improved processes around allocating resources against desired outcomes. In addition to a number of detailed drafting comments shared in advance of the meeting, suggestions were made around reviewing the narrative in order to improve consistency of voice and to clarify some terms. These would be reflected in the final published version. Broader comments around how the Plan might be presented would be picked up as part of planning work for the next iteration. Reference to cultural heritage capital would also be included.
- 8.3 Although primarily an internal document, the Corporate Plan would be available on Historic England's webpages.

8.4 Subject to revisions in line with the comments above, Commission approved the 2020/21 Corporate Plan.

9 Historic England Committee minutes and updates

- 9.1 Commission noted the minutes and updates from recent sub-committees.

9.2 Commission noted the:

- a Historic Places Panel Review Paper of Reading;**
- b minutes of the 12 February 2020 High Streets HAZ Strategic Prog. Board;**
- c minutes of the 27 February 2020 London Advisory Committee;**
- d minutes of the 27 February 2020 Historic England Advisory Committee;**
- e minutes of the 2 March Historic Estate Conservation Committee;**
- f minutes of the 12 March Audit & Risk Assurance Committee;**
- g minutes of the 12 March Business & Finance Committee; and**
- h minutes of the 13 March SFM Strategic Programme Board.**

10 Any Other Business

10.1 There were no further items of business.

11 Closed Session

11.1 Commission held a closed session with the Chief Executive.

Siobhan O'Donoghue
April 2020