

The Future of English Heritage

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

In July 2013, the Government announced that it will work with English Heritage to consult on establishing a charity to care for the historic properties in the National Heritage Collection on a self-financing basis, supported by Government investment of £80 million.

Deborah Lamb, Director of National Advice and Information at English Heritage, will join the Board to discuss the implications of the announcement for local government.

A letter from Baroness Andrews, the then chair of English Heritage, to Cllr Flick Rea about the changes is attached at **Annex A**.

Recommendation

Members are invited to discuss issues arising from the proposed changes to English Heritage with Deborah Lamb.

Action

To be taken forward by officers, as directed by Members.

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Background

1. Local government is at the forefront of protecting, improving and managing the historic environment. For the last year, the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board has focussed on the links between heritage, the visitor economy and the economy. This culminated in a joint LGA / English Heritage seminar on 10 July and a good practice publication that shared examples of councils putting heritage centre-stage in their drive to create great places to live, work and visit.
2. English Heritage is the Government's lead advisory body for the historic environment and has a statutory role in the planning system. Central to their role is the advice they give to local authorities on development proposals affecting listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas. Sir Laurie Magnus, Deputy Chairman of the National Trust, has recently been appointed as Chairman of English Heritage and took up the post on 1 September.

The proposals

3. In July 2013, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that English Heritage will be awarded an £80 million one-off lump sum to invest in the National Heritage Collection of 420 historic sites, monuments and collections in its care.
4. This will support its plan to transfer management of the Collection to a charity, licensed by English Heritage's governing body, The Commission.
5. The National Heritage Collection, which includes Stonehenge, Kenwood, Audley End, Dover Castle and Charles Darwin's home Down House in Kent, will remain in public ownership. However, the new charity will have more freedom to generate greater commercial and philanthropic income to safeguard and present to the public this vulnerable and important collection of cultural treasures.
6. Under current plans, the new charity will be set up by March 2015. It will retain the name English Heritage and in due course, will be completely self-financing and no longer need tax-payer support.
7. The new arrangement will also impact upon English Heritage's planning and heritage protection responsibilities, which will be known as the National Heritage Protection Service - until a friendlier title is chosen. This will continue to use its statutory powers, advice, research and awareness-raising to protect England's heritage at large – including historic streets, villages, towns, cities, ancient archaeological remains and even the heritage beneath our coastal waters.
8. The National Heritage Protection Service will continue to be the Government's expert on all aspects of England's archaeological and built heritage and factors affecting them. It will continue to protect England's heritage and to take a leading part in identifying those parts of England's heritage that matter to people most and are at greatest risk - and to concentrate efforts on saving them. At the same time, it will become more

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public-facing and enhance its service to owners, developers and the public, ensuring that heritage across the country is understood, valued, cared for and enjoyed.

9. The Commission, the current governing body appointed by DCMS, will run the National Heritage Protection Service and will license the English Heritage charity to run the National Heritage Collection.
10. Public consultation will begin shortly. The discussion at the CTS Board is an early opportunity for local government to have its say.

Conclusion and next steps

11. The consultation on the future of English Heritage is an opportunity to build upon our strong national and local partnership and to embed even closer working with councils through new ways of working.

Financial Implications

12. There are no financial implications for the LGA arising from this report.