



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

Making Heritage Work

BIG Lottery Fund
(transcript of online survey submission)

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Dear Sirs

BUILDING CAPABILITIES FOR IMPACT AND LEGACY: A DISCUSSION PAPER

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) is the professional body of the United Kingdom representing conservation specialists and historic environment practitioners in the public and private sectors. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

Thank you for inviting us to participate in this consultation.

Our interest in this consultation relates to the specific and occasional circumstances in which a BIG grant is made to a body whose principal interest is not heritage but whose proposal involves the use of a heritage asset such as a historic building. In such cases it is important that the project is guided by an appropriate heritage professional or practice and that any works are supervised to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation, consents and sound heritage practice.

We think that such circumstances are likely to occur more frequently under the Government's Localism and Asset Transfer programmes.

1. How can we ensure that frontline organisations have the information that they need to be aware of the most effective ways of developing their capabilities and choose the right provider?

The IHBC would like to see offers of BIG grants to specifically provide for the participation of a qualified heritage practitioner where the project involves or includes works to, or the use of, historic buildings or other heritage assets. We think Guidance should be informative on this requirement to ensure that the issues are not forgotten in the application process.

Increasingly frontline organisations are making use of Development Trusts¹, Community Architecture projects and other similar mechanisms to help them progress their projects. These groups, too, need to ensure that they have the appropriate expertise available to them.

2. Should we consider any other approaches to enable frontline organisations to choose the support that they need?

We are happy that frontline organisations should be free to choose their own professionals so long as these are properly professionally qualified and the processes for achieving this aim are made clear in the requirements of the grant or in accompanying Guidance.

1 See "Locality" - <http://locality.org.uk/projects/> and the DTA in Scotland - <http://www.dtascot.org.uk/>.

3. Should we require frontline organisations which receive support to develop ways of sharing their learning with others? How can we help them do this?

The IHBC supports information-sharing to inform future projects of a like type. This could be assisted with pro-forma arrangements based on project requirements made at the project's initiation.

4. What are the key support needs which you think frontline organisations may require in the future?

The greatest need in third sector projects is the avoidance of wasted effort and resource because of inadequate scheme appraisal at the outset. Early professional involvement and scoping (in all the required disciplines) can help to ensure that all the requirements of the project are properly assessed and costed and that there is less chance of nasty surprises or poor scheme implementation because the allocated resources turn out to be less than adequate.

5. What role could we play in enabling social enterprises to secure investment?

We have no view on this.

6. Are there particular support services which could not be funded through a demand-led approach? If so, what are they and why?

We have no view on this.

7. How can we get the balance right between encouraging providers to co-operate and rationalise existing services and allowing frontline organisations to choose the right provider?

We think that each case should be tailored to its merits. There is no single balance between these two competing objectives that will be appropriate in all cases.

8. What are the key areas where support providers could themselves benefit from advice and support?

Good project work provides learning and other benefits for all participants. Feedback from previous projects and current experience from existing ones should be part of the process of improving general expertise in project delivery. BIG could promote this by developing a case-work library.

9. What role could the private sector play in helping to develop the skills and resources of VCS organisations and social enterprises?

The potential for private sector involvement is good, particularly with many local authorities outsourcing their professional support in many disciplines. The private sector can benefit from the special demands of supporting third sector programmes. This is in tune with Government Localism and Big Society objectives.

Yours faithfully



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