

Historic England

Strategic Plan

2026-2031



Introduction

Over the next five years Historic England will work to bring new life to heritage, to build a better future for every place and everyone.

Our Strategic Plan sets out how we will focus our expertise and resources to deliver the greatest public value. It has a clear conviction at its heart: that heritage can contribute powerfully to help the country meet pressing societal issues – supporting places and communities and helping create good homes, good jobs and good growth.



Centred on three priorities

- 1 Growth
- 2 Place
- 3 Sector

It describes the outcomes we seek and the actions we will take to achieve them, charting an ambitious, proactive and collaborative course to ensure **heritage is not only protected and championed, but acts as a solution.**

As Co-CEOs we have seen first-hand what heritage in all its forms can do for a place – how a restored building can anchor a high street, how a well looked-after place attracts investment and lifts community pride.

That is the change our Strategic Plan is designed to accelerate, and we are proud and excited to lead Historic England into this next chapter.

Together with our sector, our partners and our colleagues we are determined and ready to unlock the full potential of heritage for the nation – and to show, in every place where we work, what that means in practice

Claudia Kenyatta and Emma Squire
Co-Chief Executives of Historic England





Our Vision

Bringing new life to heritage to build a better future
for every place and everyone

Priorities

- 1 Growth
- 2 Place
- 3 Sector

Ways of working

-  Partnerships
-  Inclusion
-  People
-  Innovation
-  Fewer, better

Our Values

Passionate | Curious | Collaborative | Open | Responsible



Ashton Old Baths, Ashton-under-Lyne. Historic swimming bath building with a new wooden pod for creative office space

Our priorities

1 Growth

England's heritage is a **powerful engine for economic growth** - boosting jobs, housing, tourism and the creative industries.

Heritage-led growth is good growth. It creates value for places and the people that live in them. Heritage can unlock thousands of new homes, drive investment, and spark innovation. Heritage isn't a barrier but a vehicle for sustainable development.

We will deliver national growth ambitions by ensuring the positive role of heritage is recognised and through embedding heritage in local plans and skills pathways.



2 Place

Heritage is everywhere. It's the buildings, highstreets, landscapes, parks, archaeology and neighbourhoods that shape our everyday lives.

By putting heritage at the centre of local decision making, we will help **create places where people feel proud to live, work and belong.**

We will empower communities to shape the future, and improve the resilience, of their places, supporting them to revive spaces and bring them back into use for the benefit of local people.



3 Sector

Most decisions about heritage are made locally - by councils, Combined Authorities, charities and by the many private owners who care for the buildings and landscapes that define our national story.

By supporting and empowering the people and organisations who steward heritage we strengthen the foundation on which place-shaping and heritage-led growth depends.

We will embed working with, and for, the sector into our core mission. Working in places across England we will provide leadership, building capacity and helping create a thriving heritage eco-system so that **everyone involved in caring for heritage can play their part with confidence.**



Top to bottom: Happier Festival Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings. Employees at Fish and Chip Shop, Lincoln. Contractor working at The Charterhouse, Coventry

1 Growth

What does success look like?

Heritage is a catalyst for local and national prosperity.

Why have we selected this as a priority?

Because a well-managed and cared for historic environment can play an important role in realising England's long-term economic, environmental and social opportunities, creating jobs and prosperity.

Alignment with Government Missions

1. We'll support **kickstarting economic growth** by ensuring the potential of heritage in boosting jobs, housing, tourism and the creative industries is harnessed
2. We'll **break down barriers to opportunity** by working with others to increase the supply of heritage construction roles
3. We'll play our part in **making Britain a clean energy superpower** by engaging early and collaboratively on infrastructure delivery for clean energy

What do we mean by growth?

We have adopted the government's definition that growth balances economic development, social development and environmental protection.

How will we know we are making a difference?

Outcome 1

Market actors have the **confidence to engage with heritage**, appreciate its value and benefits and proactively work with us

Outcome 2

Historic buildings and sites are **increasingly (re)used and maintained** through appropriate development and investment, ensuring more heritage is in good condition for people to use and enjoy

Outcome 3

More people have the **skills needed** to work on heritage assets effectively, strengthening the sectors' capacity and capability for sustainable growth

Outcome 4

The **benefits of heritage are considered by default** in major developments and infrastructure schemes

How will we achieve the change?

1. Shift perceptions by making the case for the catalytic power of heritage
2. Provide tools and expertise to enable re-use, new development and infrastructure
3. Increase the supply of heritage construction skills
4. Forge Strategic Partnerships to unlock housing solutions, de-risk complex sites and influence local growth plans



Repurposed Tobacco Warehouse
Liverpool, Merseyside

2 Place

What does success look like?

Heritage is a valued, vital ingredient for making places better for people.

Why have we selected this as a priority?

Because heritage can support community cohesion and resilience by restoring and sustaining local pride in place, optimism and identity.

Alignment with Government Missions

1. To support **safer streets**, our work will ensure people feel pride in place
2. We'll **break down barriers to opportunity** by supporting community cohesion, wellbeing and youth empowerment through our place-based work
3. We'll support **kickstarting economic growth** by enabling heritage to be used as a catalyst for thriving, resilient places

Which Places?

We will target investment in places where we can make the biggest difference, with a strong emphasis on communities experiencing double disadvantage, while also investing selectively in those areas with the greatest potential for heritage to fuel rapid, shared growth that benefits the overall economy.

How will we know we are making a difference?

Outcome 1

Heritage contributes to the **vibrancy, resilience and distinctiveness** of places

Outcome 2

Communities experience **greater pride and belonging** through understanding and engaging with their heritage

Outcome 3

People's **happiness and health improve** as more individuals actively engage with heritage

How will we achieve the change?

1. Identify priority places to deliver bigger impact in fewer places.
2. Adopt a more strategic approach to grants and investments
3. Ensure that more heritage and non-heritage bodies deliver good societal outcomes through heritage
4. Maximise the contribution of heritage to shape successful, sustainable places through enhanced master planning advice

Dogtember, a fundraising swim in support of the Saltdean Lido Trust, Brighton



3 Sector

What does success look like?

The sector is more resilient and better placed to deliver the heritage services the country needs

Why have we selected this as a priority?

Because without a resilient, well-resourced sector, heritage cannot fulfil its potential as a driver of growth and place-shaping. Historic England has a primary responsibility to support, convene and strengthen the organisations who make up the heritage ecosystem.

Alignment with Government Missions

1. We'll support **kickstarting economic growth** by working to strengthen the financial, workforce and organisational resilience of the heritage sector and local authorities, supporting high-quality advice, skilled jobs and effective stewardship that underpin sustainable growth.
2. We will build sector capacity and skills, helping to **break down barriers to opportunity** by supporting more confident decision-making, workforce sustainability and long-term organisational resilience
3. We'll help **make Britain a clean energy superpower** by strengthening sector skills and evidence to support climate adaptation and appropriate retrofit, enabling infrastructure delivery in heritage-rich places

Who do we mean by the sector?

People and organisations who work to conserve, research, engage, educate or advocate for heritage or who manage resources to enable this work.

How will we know we are making a difference?

Outcome 1

The sector is **effective, innovative and equipped** with the knowledge, skills, evidence base and infrastructure needed for success

Outcome 2

The heritage sector is **unified, representative and responsive**, with shared priorities and policies that reflect actual need

Outcome 3

The sector **operates with sustainable and resilient business models** and enjoys greater long-term financial stability

How will we achieve the change?

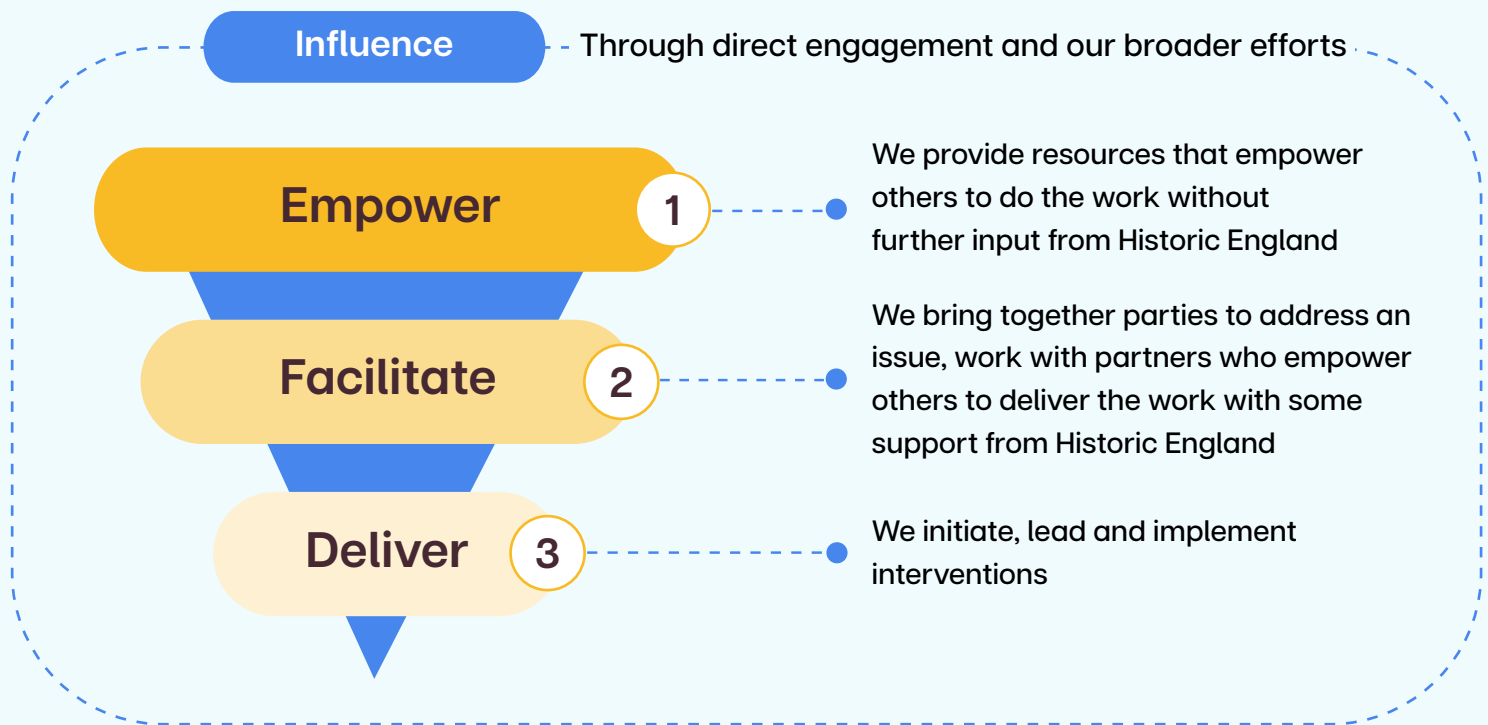
1. Ensure the sector remains relevant, reaching and connecting with diverse audiences, and building the evidence base
2. Support the sector to increase the physical resilience of heritage assets in a changing world
3. Improve sector bodies organisational resilience by supporting the sector to develop the skills it needs
4. Support heritage organisations to self and peer support, and to access more diversified and longer-term income streams, strengthening financial resilience.

Flowers Barrow Hillfort,
East Lulworth, Dorset



How we work

Determining Historic England's level of input and influence



Ways of working



Partnerships – We achieve more by working through and with others than we ever could alone. We will continue to build deeper, more strategic partnerships across public, private and voluntary sectors.



Inclusion – Heritage is for everyone. We will work to ensure our work and our workforce reflects the full diversity of England's communities and that everyone can access and benefit from their heritage.



People - Our success is driven by our people. We will invest in their skills, development and wellbeing so Historic England is a place where talented people can do their best work.



Innovation – We will embrace new thinking, technology and ways of working to solve old problems and find new opportunities.



Fewer, Better – We will make deliberate choices about where to focus our energy and resources, concentrating effort where we can make the greatest difference.

Strongly governed, connected portfolios will oversee the delivery of each strategic priority

Essential Enabling

Strongly performing backbone functions will continue to act as the organisation's engine and are vital to effective delivery. Three essential enabling activities will underpin our priorities of Growth, Place and Sector.



Digital Services

Support our internal and external stakeholders by using AI, new business systems and data to deliver smarter, faster, more connected services and a culture of continuous digital improvement.



Income Generation

Become more financially resilient, confident and commercially capable, embedding income generation across all our directorates.



Estates and Historic England to Net Zero

Meet our commitment to reach net zero by 2040 through our Carbon Reduction Plan.

Realise our vision for a modern, good quality, affordable and green office estate that enables and supports staff to successfully deliver their best work and is proportional to our needs.

Sutherland Road, Waltham Forest,
Greater London





Former Little Mesters' Workshops,
Sheffield

Historic England protects and brings new life to the heritage that matters to us all, so it lives on and is loved for longer.

historicengland.org.uk

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