

PRIORITISATION

[This is version 2 of the Principles for Prioritisation – changes are highlighted in yellow.]

What is the purpose of investing in and resourcing the historic environment?

Scotland’s heritage stands as a testament to the past and an inspiration for the future; the historic environment bears witness to all aspects of human endeavour from early prehistory through to modern times. It is vital to an understanding of our places and ourselves, contributing to the formation, and understanding, of our national identities.

The importance of the historic environment is also found in its role as an essential social and economic resource; providing benefits across multiple agendas, from health and wellbeing to regeneration and education. Our historic environment is, however, irreplaceable; for it to be successfully passed from current to future custodians requires resource.

During these times of stretched capacities and continued budget constraints, strategic consideration of how decisions relating to distribution of resources and public funding for heritage are made - so the benefits for people and place can be fully realised - has never been more important.

Process

In September 2018 BEFS issued an open call for: ideas, strategies and methodologies for prioritisation within the historic environment. This was in response to the perpetual discussion around the absence of a collective approach to the rapidly approaching cliff-edge; a cliff-edge formed by heightened ecological risks, reducing public funds, stretched human resources, and continually ageing structures. Increased community ownership is being seen as one solution but, without access to funding and resources, communities may well find themselves in the same precarious position as current public and private owners of heritage assets.

There remains a continued impetus for heritage - in all its forms - to receive the care, protection and examination needed, for heritage to be able to facilitate the greatest benefits, and for those benefits to be widely accessible and understood.

Is funding best awarded to ‘whomever shouts loudest’ or to the most adept at completing funding application forms? Is this status quo of funding preferred, or are there better ways to prioritise the allocation of resources? We know there are a range of barriers and challenges to achieving the above, from environmental conditions to unmanaged tourism interest – but how do we categorise those problems; are they severe, urgent, incremental?

These concerns, and more, were addressed at a workshop event in December 2018 where those who had submitted methodologies shared their thoughts on a suggested list of ‘Fundamentals’ synthesised from the submissions, explored commonalities, addressed gaps, suggested data sources and discussed ‘measurability’.

A requested outcome from the event was a set of Principles. Not about protection or conservation, there are perfectly well suited Conventions, definitions and Articles which provide both principles, and practice standards for those. The request was for a set of Principles, based on the agreed Fundamentals, designed to ensure the continued intrinsic value of the historic environment is protected, as well as maintaining and developing the potential of heritage as a resource for sustainable development and increased quality of life in a constantly evolving society.

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Why have Principles for Prioritisation? [section moved to a more prominent position]

To provide a framework for discussion and assessment to help ensure that complex issues are recognised, considered and addressed **for the longer-term**. The Principles provide a consistent way of clarifying and presenting the rationale behind many important decisions, and communicating this approach to stakeholders. **Prioritisation Principles when applied can provide greater potential stability for the historic environment for generations to come.**

The Principles for Prioritisation will guide applicants, practitioners and decision makers in a widely understood, transparent framework – a common language of fundamental prompts, acting together, to make comparison across asset typologies and projects clearer and simpler.

What does this document set out to achieve?

- Encourage increased **Trust** in the funding process
- Communicate in **Clear Language** with terms defined where necessary
- Support **Ambitious** aims for the historic environment
- Inspire **Implementation** at a local and national level
- Be **Accessible** and of use to grass-roots communities, whilst
- **Aiding** the role of Decision Makers and Policy Shapers
- **Providing** framework ideas for use within the Built Heritage Investment Plan

Actions

Those tasked with resourcing the historic environment to:

- Assess funding requests in an **inclusive, sustainable** and **transparent** manner.
- **Agree that the Principles**, and the fundamentals within them, should inform their funding frameworks and decision making processes.
- Acknowledge that these Principles will, over time, need to be **reviewed** at a national level to ensure continued relevance and ability to deliver the best outcomes for people and place.
- **Assess the current legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks** within which decision making is made against the Principles and align where necessary.
- **Ensure as far as possible continuity of organisational governance, and adequate succession planning, aligned to the Principles.**

De-prioritisation

Whilst there are many positives to seeking a framework for Prioritisation, recognition and acknowledgement that de-prioritisation will also take place is also essential. When an asset is de-prioritised actions should include:

- **Learning from, and recording, asset failure – including the social and cultural information**
- **Considering the cause of crisis-points and learning from the circumstances**
- **Appreciating that managed decline is part of the process, but not necessarily terminal**
- **Where possible, ensuring appropriate measures are put in place to minimise loss**

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- Encouraging wider strategic thinking on mixed-resourcing measures (potentially not heritage-led resourcing)

[The following has been restructured to put the Fundamentals and the Principles in relation to each other, rather than separate. The box around the Principles has also been removed to suggest that the document as a whole should be considered.]

The Principles for Prioritisation of the Historic Environment

Fundamentals

These are within the Principles and are:

- Not in any order of importance, or implied importance
- Capable of being weighted, dependant on decision-maker values or funder outcomes
- Applied to both an Asset-led approach and a Benefits-led approach
- Adaptable to both the status-quo of an asset and the related potential
- Relatable to projects as well as to assets
- Supportive of wider UN Sustainable Development Goals and the National Performance Framework

Each Fundamental within the Principles is underlined.

The Principles below should be applied:

Whilst being mindful that Deliverability/Feasibility, Legal/Statutory Duties, organisational financial need, and Ownership constraints/onuses may be preconditions for receiving some avenues of additional resource.

Well managed condition, where assets have been appropriately maintained and cared for, and ongoing active management schemes are to be positively considered.

Principles

By resourcing the historic environment we seek to:

- ❖ Understand and value the intrinsic **cultural significance** of the historic environment. Taking into account the academic value, rarity and significance of any asset (or asset as part of a wider project). This should be fully inclusive of social value, and mindful of any current vulnerability/risk.
- ❖ **Optimise** the potential for the **social benefit** of the historic environment through consideration of the social & community offer/ or service provision of an asset, and the skills development potential of a presented project.
- ❖ Ensure **minimal environmental impacts** now and for the future, enhancing environmental sustainability wherever possible.
- ❖ Encourage wider **economic benefit** realised through financing and resourcing of the historic environment; recognising the importance of project/asset financial sustainability, and acknowledging the potential for leveraging further investment.

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- ❖ Increase **engagement and inclusivity** through: appropriate alternative use/adaptability of the historic environment, improved accessibility/engagement potential; and through a vision which sees assets and places as interconnected. Rewarding the positive role a variety of engaged stakeholders and partnership and collaborative working can bring to any place or project.

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Glossary

Term	Definitions - for the purposes of the document	Notes	Source
Academic Value	Adding to the canon of knowledge and research, increasing understanding.		
Accessibility	The quality of being able to be reached or entered. The quality of being easy to obtain or use. The quality of being easily understood or appreciated.	<i>access</i> here can be physical where possible, but also digital if applicable	Dictionary
Adaptation	Adaptation means changing a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.		BURRA Charter
Asset	An item of property owned by a person or company, regarded as having value.	<i>value</i> here could be financial, academic, social, cultural. An asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having cultural significance.	Dictionary HES
Collaborative	Produced by or involving two or more parties working together.		Dictionary
Community	A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. A particular area or place considered together with its inhabitants. The people of a district or country considered collectively, especially in the context of social values and responsibilities. The condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common.	HES - A community is a group of people connected by location or by a common interest. community of place A community of place, or place-based community, is a group of people connected because of where they live, work, visit or otherwise spend a large amount of time. It can also refer to a group of people related to a particular geographic location. communities of practice and interest Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, such as members of a club, professional bodies, associations and institutes. A community of interest is a group of people who identify with or share a similar interest or experience – for instance, young people leaving care, vulnerable adults, the local business community, those with protected	Dictionary & HES

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		characteristics such as disabled people, or people from black and minority ethnic communities.	
Condition	The state of something with regard to its appearance, quality, or working order.		Dictionary
Cultural Significance / Significance	Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.	The term <i>cultural significance</i> is synonymous with cultural heritage significance and cultural heritage value. Cultural significance may change over time and with use. Understanding of cultural significance may change as a result of new information.	BURRA Charter & HES
Deliverability	Something that can be done, especially something that is a realistic expectation.		Dictionary
Decision Makers	A decision-maker for the historic environment is anyone who has a role or interest in making decisions that might affect it. Decision-makers in this context could refer to individuals, public and private sector organisations, communities, local authorities, owners or developers.		HES
Economic Benefit	Economic benefits are benefits that can be quantified in terms of money generated, such as net income, revenues, etc. It can also be money saved when discussing a policy to reduce costs.	These benefits can be specific to a project or asset, but can also be wider economic benefits for a place or community.	
Financial Sustainability	The assessment that a project [or asset] will have sufficient funds to meet all its resource and financial obligations [in the longer-term], whether the funding continues or not.	More broadly: Economic sustainability refers to practices that support long-term economic growth without negatively impacting social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the community.	Cultural & Economic Impacts on the Information Society
Engage	Occupy or attract (someone's interest or attention). Involve someone in (a conversation or discussion). Participate or become involved in. Establish a meaningful contact or connection with.		Dictionary
Environmental Impacts	An environmental effect is the result of environmental impacts on human health and welfare. The term is also used synonymously with environmental impact.		OECD

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Feasibility	The state or degree of being easily or conveniently done.		Dictionary
Fundamental	A central or primary rule or principle on which something is based.		Dictionary
Heritage	Heritage can mean different things to different people. It can be anything from the past that you value and want to pass on to future generations.		HLF definition
Historic Environment	Scotland's historic environment is the physical evidence for human activity that connects people with place, linked with associations we can see, feel and understand.		HES definition OPiT
Implement	Put (a decision, plan, agreement, etc.) into effect.		Dictionary
Inclusivity	The practice or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of minority groups.		Dictionary
Impact	The effect of changes on the historic environment is often referred to as the impact. This can be positive or negative. There can be an impact on the physical elements of a place as well as on the setting of a place, changing its surroundings so that our understanding and appreciation is altered.		HES
Interconnected	The linking of constituent parts.	In this case both a spatial and cultural understanding can be brought to bear.	Dictionary
Leveraging	To use something that you already have in order to achieve something new or better.	Used here financially, but could equally apply to skills and capacity.	Dictionary
Methodology	A system of methods used in a particular area of study or activity.	Method: a particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one.	Dictionary
Ownership	The act, state, or right of possessing something.		Dictionary
Partnership	Partnership - in which two or more individuals/organisations pool money, skills, and other resources, and share profit and loss in accordance with terms of the partnership agreement. In absence of such agreement, a partnership is assumed to exist where the participants in an enterprise agree to	The less formal definition is a more likely scenario: <i>partnership is assumed to exist where the participants in an enterprise agree to share the associated risks and rewards proportionately.</i>	Business Dictionary

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Place	Place means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.	Place has a broad scope and includes natural and cultural features. Place can be large or small: for example, a memorial, a tree, an individual building or group of buildings, the location of an historical event, an urban area or town, a cultural landscape, a garden, an industrial plant, a shipwreck, a site with in situ remains, a stone arrangement, a road or travel route, a community meeting place, a site with spiritual or religious connections.	BURRA Charter
Principle	A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning.		Dictionary
Prioritisation	The action or process of deciding the relative importance or urgency of a thing or things.		Dictionary
Protection	The act of protecting, or the state of being protected; preservation from injury or harm.		Dictionary
Service Provision	Here used to mean 'providing a service'.	Service could be widely defined from local shop to canal depending on the asset in question.	
Skills Development	Skills development is the process of (1) identifying your skill gaps, and (2) developing and honing these skills.	These could be skills for the heritage workforce or individuals and groups involved with a project or asset. The skills may/may not be heritage focused depending on the need.	
Social Benefit	Provides wider societal benefits - such as increased wellbeing, loneliness prevention, work within SIMD areas, inclusivity, inequalities reduction etc		
Social Value	The value found in the asset/project by the connected communities.	Other definitions include: What contribution to society do community projects, investments and mainstream businesses make? More research by University of Stirling may inform this definition.	

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Stakeholder	A person with an interest or concern in something.	The interest often implies a financial or resource involvement.	Dictionary
Strategy	A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.		Dictionary
Sustainable	Able to be maintained at a certain rate or level.		Dictionary
Transparent	Easy to perceive or detect.		Dictionary
Use	<p>Use means the functions of a place, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.</p> <p>Compatible use means a use which respects the cultural significance of a place. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.</p>	Use includes for example cultural practices commonly associated with Indigenous peoples such as ceremonies, hunting and fishing, and fulfilment of traditional obligations. Exercising a right of access may be a use.	BURRA Charter
Vulnerability/risk	Exposed (someone or something valued) to danger, harm, or loss.	Implication here of imminent risk.	Dictionary