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-
- > Influencing policy

 - > Underpinning advocacy

 - > Increasing capacity

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Dear Laura,

London Assembly investigation into the impact of the 2012 Games on Lottery Funding in London

I am writing on behalf of Heritage Link, the umbrella body which brings together 83 voluntary organisations concerned with heritage in England representing interests from specialist advisers, practitioners and managers, volunteers and owners, to national funding bodies and local building preservation trusts. Much of the historic environment is cared for - supported, managed or owned - by these organisations. I am a Trustee of Heritage Link and Deputy Chair, and also have responsibility for our engagement with the 2012 London Olympics.

Although Heritage Link is a national organisation, many of our members are based, and have interests, in London. The issue of the diversion of lottery funds is a very significant one for the heritage sector, and indeed Heritage Link was one a consortium of umbrella organisations, alongside the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Central Council for Physical Recreation and the Voluntary Arts Network, which mounted a major PR campaign earlier this year in protest at the second diversion of lottery funds. That campaign was very successful, both in terms of excellent media coverage (including the front page of The Guardian and all the major television news programmes) and in persuading the then Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to commit to repaying the diverted lottery funds to the distributors after 2012.

Holding the Government to that commitment is therefore our first key point: whilst we accept that some diversion of lottery funds is now inevitable, it will be essential to bring all of the lottery distributors, including the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), back to their pre-Olympics level of funding after 2012. The HLF has had a particularly successful track record as a funder, with very few projects having had financial problems, and has broadened the scope, reach and engagement with the UK's heritage over the last ten years.

Looking at London in particular, we are concerned that the reduction in funds available from the HLF over the next five years will have a disproportionately

negative impact on projects in London, because by their very nature these tend to be expensive and difficult to fund. Heritage-led regeneration can have a very positive effect on deprived communities, and it was to be hoped that one of the positive impacts of the Olympics would be to see regeneration of some of the Victorian streetscapes in the five Olympic Boroughs and more widely in London.

Reduced support from the HLF for schemes such as Townscape Heritage Initiatives will make this far less likely, and some of the vital Olympics legacy could be lost. Whilst the new funding from Legacy Trust UK is to be welcomed, at only £40million to be spread throughout the UK over culture, heritage and sport, the impact in London will be minimal.

Overall, therefore, our concern is that the reduction in funding available for projects in London, from the HLF and also from the Big Lottery Fund, will have a negative impact on the ability of voluntary sector organisations to rescue historic buildings and to find viable new uses for them. It will also potentially mean that fewer community-based projects will take place, which would be particularly disappointing when the Olympics should be about involving a broad cross-section of community groups in related activities.

Heritage Link is not opposed to London having won the 2012 Games, and indeed is leading the development of the heritage sector's major project for the Cultural Olympiad, 'Access All Areas'. However, it is also important to see that the reduction in lottery funding will have a negative impact in the short term on projects in London, and therefore that this needs to be redressed once the Olympics have completed, so that the positive outcomes for London and for its regeneration can be maximised.

Please do let me know if you need any more information.

With kind regards,

Ian Lush
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