

Culture White Paper Statement

24th March 2016

The Heritage Alliance

The Heritage Alliance welcomes the Culture White Paper as the latest in a sequence of Government statements on the value of heritage and its place in national life. This Culture White Paper demonstrates a new, more holistic approach bringing together the strands of arts, heritage, libraries and museums to showcase a dynamic, vibrant and innovative cultural sector –local, national and international in scope. It is excellent to see mention of so many Heritage Alliance members recognised for their effort and ingenuity.

The 2016 White Paper's summary of research and contemporary opinion on the value of culture and its potential shows there is plenty more to do. We welcome its key theme of increasing access and opportunity for all.

Many of the measures to develop the role of culture in place making are already in the public domain such as confirmation of Historic England's Heritage Action Zones and the additional £20m for First World War Centenary Cathedral Repairs funds among others.

Of the new measures we particularly commend:

- The Cultural Citizens programme led by ACE and HLF to boost cultural participation in areas of high deprivation.
- The Great Place scheme of 12 pilot projects to back local communities who want to put culture at the heart of their local plan and policies.
- The appointment of Bernard Taylor to chair the new Church Buildings Review, announced in the Budget, reporting to DCMS and the Chancellor by April 2017.
- The new £3million funding to the Architectural Heritage Fund to advise communities on how to make best use of historic buildings including through ownership.
- Historic England is tasked with identifying how it can offer more support to local authorities; to work with Local Authorities on national and local heritage records so that communities and developers have easy access to historic environment records; and to work with other heritage organisations to develop the heritage sector's international commercial offer.

The White Paper also announces major reviews of public bodies including the Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as a separate Review of museums and a consultation on public libraries in England.

This White Paper illustrates the government's ambition and strategy for the cultural sectors. Yet, as Minister Ed Vaizey commented, many of the themes in Jennie Lee's first White Paper in the mid 1960s are still relevant today. In this long period of austerity, his acknowledgement that political leadership is needed as well as leadership within and across the cultural sectors and beyond is perhaps the most important sentence in the whole document.

Further comment will follow in Heritage Update on 1 April 2016.

Contact

Kate Pugh
Chief Executive
The Heritage Alliance
10 Storeys Gate
London SW1P 3AY
020 7233 0800
kate_pugh@theheritagealliance.org.uk