**heritage
lottery fund**

Thinking about...
Community participation

November 2010

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- downloading it from **www.hlf.org.uk;**

- emailing **enquire@hlf.org.uk;**

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- using Text Direct **18001 020 7591 6042.**

If you require a copy of this guidance in an alternative format (large print, braille or audio version), or if your first language is not English, we can provide it in the appropriate format or language if you ask us. It is also available in Welsh.

Thinking about... Community participation

Contents

Thinking about... Community participation

1   Introduction

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up in 1994 to distribute money raised bythe National Lottery to heritage projects throughout the UK. In our first 12 years we awarded over £4billion in grants to over 26,000 projects, from multi million-pound investments in well-known sites and buildings to small grants making a big difference to community groups. We have a range of grant programmes for projects of different types and sizes – see Appendix for more information.

We can offer advice **before you apply,** but first please use our website **www.hlf.org.uk** to:

- read the guidance in the application materials for the grant programme you are interested in;

- decide broadly what you want to do and roughly how much money you are likely to ask us for;

- fill in a pre-application enquiry form online or in hard copy; and

- send it through our website or send it to your country or regional HLF team who will then contact you to offer advice on your project.

2   Our aims

HLF gives grants to support a wide range of projects involving the local, regional and national heritage of the United Kingdom.

We have three main aims which relate to learning, conservation and participation.

To receive a grant your project must:

- help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage.

Your project must also do either or both of the following:

- conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy;

- help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage.

2.1   Meeting our aims

There are a number of ways you can meet the two aims that focus on people. We have described these below with a link to the guidance on each.

Help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage

We call this our **Learning** aim. There are three main ways you can meet this aim:

- provide information about your heritage and interpret it for people – for further information see *Thinking about interpretation;*

- create opportunities for people to gain new or increased skills – for further information see *Thinking about training;* and

- hold events or activities to help the general public or particular groups of people learn about your heritage – for further information see *Thinking about learning.*

Your project might do one of these things or a combination of them depending on its size and scope.

Help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage

We call this our **Participation** aim. There are three main ways you can meet this aim:

- create opportunities for people to volunteer in your project – for further information see *Thinking about volunteering;*

- help your community to take an active part in your project, including helping people make decisions about heritage – this guidance is about that; and

- develop new and/or wider audiences for your heritage – for further information see *Thinking about audience development.*

Your project might do one of these things or a combination of them depending on its size and scope.

Although you do not have to meet our Participation aim if you are carrying out conservation work to your heritage, we encourage you to think about how the public can take an active part in your project, for example in the conservation itself.

3   What do we mean by community participation?

Community participation is about involving people in the development of the services, sites and spaces that they use or are affected by.

By community participation, we mean people having an active role in your project, in particular taking part in decision-making and delivery. These people could be your audiences, or potential audiences, people that live or work locally,

Thinking about... Community participation

or people that have a stake in the heritage of your project because of their background or experience.

Community participation should be built in from the start of your project and can run through its planning, management, delivery and evaluation. Community participation can enhance any project and should be considered as part of all of your activities, from learning programmes, interpretation and events, to the conservation and management of heritage assets, including historic buildings and parks.

In this guidance we outline five ways or levels in which people could participate in your project. The five levels offer increasing degrees of influence or control to the people you involve:

1   **Informing:** telling people about your project. This might be one of the first things you do and you should view it as preparation for more active involvement.

2   **Consulting:** giving people choices about what happens in your project and a chance to shape it.

'Informing' and 'consulting' are important first steps in any project. They are, however, passive ways to involve people and your project will not fully meet our Participation aim if it only includes this type of activity. You could include 'informing' and 'consulting' activity alongside more substantial participation, or in a project which primarily meets our aims in other ways.

Real participation is active and gives people a meaningful personal stake in a project. Involving people at the following levels can meet our Participation aim:

3   **Deciding together:** creating opportunities for people to make decisions about and influence the direction of your project.

4   **Acting together:** creating opportunities for people to develop and deliver your project, taking a role in heritage conservation and/or learning activities.

5   **Supporting others to take the lead:** empowering people to have ownership of the project, make final decisions and deliver activities with some independence.

Community participation can involve a significant shift from providing activities for existing and potential audiences to involving them in the development of activities. The level you use and the amount you are able to involve people will vary from project to project, depending on the size of your organisation, the type of project you are undertaking and your previous experience of community participation.

In the rest of this guidance we outline in greater detail these five different levels and the benefits community participation can bring for your project. We also provide advice on being inclusive, partnership working, and training and support. In section 10, we outline what costs you can include in an application to us.

Thinking about... Community participation

4   What are the benefits of community participation?

For your project

• Increasing the range of skills, knowledge and experience in your project.

• Bringing richness, new perspectives and new ideas or ways of working.

• Ensuring the project reflects local needs, represents communities in a sensitive way, and avoids negative impacts.

For your organisation

• Creating links with the community and providing powerful ambassadors for your organisation.

• Building new skills and experience that your organisation can use for other work and in the future.

• Showing public accountability.

• Inspiring and demonstrating organisational change and innovative practice.

For individuals involved

• An opportunity to use existing skills and experience while gaining new ones.

• Gaining confidence.

• Meeting people and/or feeling part of their community.

• Seeing their ideas and work recognised and knowing that they have made a difference.

For your local community

• Transferring skills and experience which individuals gain to other community projects and activities.

• Strengthening local pride, sense of community and quality of life.

• Linking people together so they feel less isolated and have more support within their community.

• Learning about and enjoying their local heritage.

• Organisations working more closely together and identifying opportunities for joint projects.

For heritage

• More people feeling committed to their local heritage and valuing it.

Thinking about... Community participation

- People taking action to look after heritage.

- Better use of heritage assets.

5   What is right for your project?

You need to decide the level of community participation you want in your project. Different levels are appropriate in different circumstances. What is right for your project will depend on what you want to achieve, what it is practical for you to do and who you will involve. All projects will probably include community participation to some extent, at the very least informing people about what is happening and consulting those affected.

Thinking about the following steps and questions should help you decide:

Clarify why and how you want to involve others

- What do you want to gain from community participation?
  This could draw on the benefits outlined in the previous section. It may also be that you want to support wider community or government goals and/or are working towards a longer-term ambition.

- How open do you want your project to be?
  This is about identifying the level that you see as ideal. It may depend on your current or potential role in the community, and your future aims for participation. It may also relate to how you want to be perceived in your community.

Identify anything that might limit community participation

- How much room is there for people to influence the project?
  You need to assess the degree to which you can give people control over the way the project goes. There may be boundaries or constraints that can't be avoided. Examples of these include planning or listed building consent, public accountability and environmental issues, meeting deadlines, following good practice or ensuring accessibility. It may be possible to use different levels for different elements of the project to maximise participation.

- What resources do you have to support this work?
  Consider the knowledge, skills, and experience you have or can access to involve people. Remember that you will also need the time to plan and facilitate participation. If you have little experience of participation, you may want to build up the level through the project duration.

Thinking about... Community participation

Consider who should be involved and what will be acceptable to them

- Who will be affected by the project?
  There may be a wide range of groups with an interest in what you are planning. If there are a lot of groups affected, it may be possible to involve different people at different levels or in different parts of the project.

- What level will people want?
  Some people will want greater control and accept the responsibility that comes with this, while others will prefer to be less involved. The level people want may also depend on the heritage or theme of the project. Some topics can be very emotive and groups that are connected to these or that have been under-represented in the past may have strong feelings about how much influence they have.
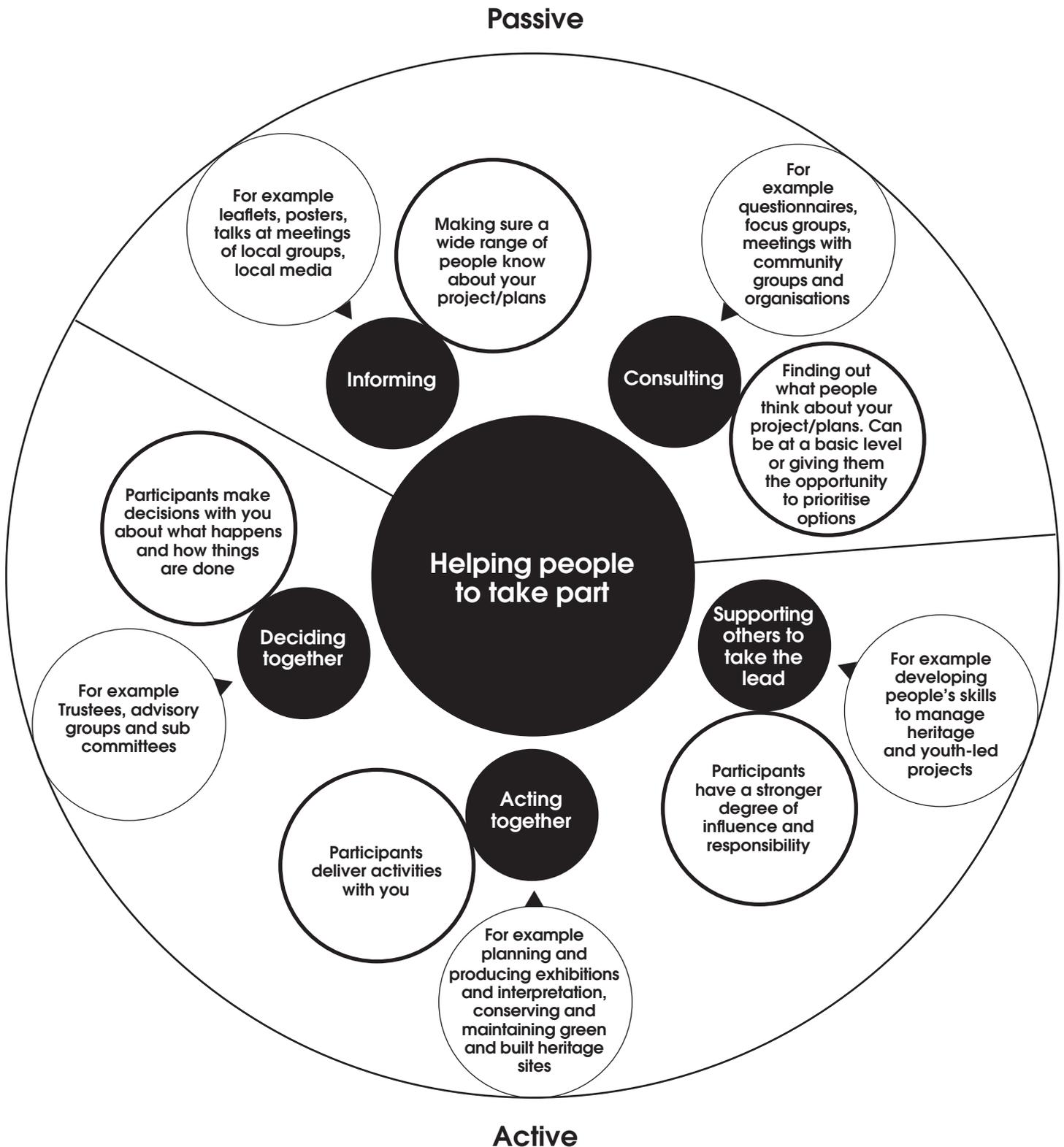
Finally, consider whether you will be able to respond to what people want. To have meaningful participation people's contributions need to be included as a significant part of your project. You may need to work or approach your project in new ways. You need to be prepared for this, and willing to allow others to influence the project, support their involvement and work in partnership. Where there are limitations, it is best to be upfront about what is open for change. While we want projects to be ambitious, we do not expect you to take on more than you can manage.

If you are producing a conservation management plan for a large capital project, ensure that it reflects the views of the people that will be affected by the development. For further information see our guidance *Conservation Management Planning.*

Thinking about... Community participation

Helping people to take part in your project

This diagram gives an overview of the five levels. The following sections give more detail on what you might do for each level and how to do it.

Passive

For example leaflets, posters, talks at meetings of local groups, local media

Making sure a wide range of people know about your project/plans

Informing

For example questionnaires, focus groups, meetings with community groups and organisations

Consulting

Finding out what people think about your project/plans. Can be at a basic level or giving them the opportunity to prioritise options

Participants make decisions with you about what happens and how things are done

Helping people to take part

Deciding together

For example Trustees, advisory groups and sub committees

Supporting others to take the lead

For example developing people's skills to manage heritage and youth-led projects

Participants have a stronger degree of influence and responsibility

Participants deliver activities with you

Acting together

For example planning and producing exhibitions and interpretation, conserving and maintaining green and built heritage sites

Active

Thinking about... Community participation

5.1   Informing

Introduction

Informing is the starting point for any work you do with people. It is a one-way process but, if it is carried out well, it can help people to feel valued and informed. If you have very limited options for action in your project (for example in what you can do to a listed building or protected site) informing people is an appropriate way of involving them, but it is rarely the only thing you can or should do. Informing people can be used as an introduction to consultation and more active participation.

What are the benefits of informing people?

Informing people is an important part of any heritage project. It helps to:

- gain general support and understanding of your project;

- ensure people know exactly what is planned, and why;

- attract help and new resources, including volunteers, networks and sponsorship; and

- celebrate success.

It is important to start informing people at the planning stage of your project, and then to give regular updates so that people know what is happening at each stage of the project and understand any changes to your original plans.

Tips on informing

You can inform people in lots of different ways.

- Display posters and leaflets or talk to people where they are in their everyday lives: libraries, schools, shops, pubs, community centres and places of worship.

- Set up an information stand or run activities at community events, fetes and festivals.

- Offer to speak at a meeting for a community group or residents association.

- See if council or voluntary agencies have databases of community groups and organisations and send information directly to them.

- Send local or community media press releases, try and get leaflets as an insert in newspapers or be interviewed on radio.

- Ask other organisations or community groups to include your project in their newsletter or on their website, or to link to your website.

- Publicise your website and keep it up to date.

- Recruit ambassadors to spread the word among their own contacts.

When deciding which methods to use you will need to think about which groups of people you are trying to inform. For example, if a lot of local people walk past the site for your project then putting up posters/information on the site is a good way to inform them. If you want to make sure that families find out about your project, try targeting the local school or baby clinic. Using a mixture of methods should give you the best results.

5.2   Consulting

Introduction

Consultation is appropriate when you can offer people some say on what you are going to do. At a basic level you might seek opinions on a limited number of options for one element of your project; at a more in-depth level, you might be asking for new ideas and options by involving members of your local community in planning your project. It is important that you consult, hear the opinions you've been given and then redraft your plans or make decisions based on this. You then need to tell people the decisions you have made and the difference their input made.

You should consult people at the earliest point you can. Build in consultation at relevant stages in the planning of your project, particularly where decisions need to be made that will have an impact on the community, for example when to hold major events.

What are the benefits of consulting?

There are many benefits of effective and timely consultation. These include:

- people feeling they have had a say and been heard;

- reducing the risks of conflict with people later in the project;

- learning new information and ideas or gaining advice that will improve your project; and

- getting new people interested in opportunities for more active participation in your project.

Tips on consulting

You can consult people in lots of different ways. They include:

- questionnaires/interviews;

- meetings;

Thinking about... Community participation

- focus groups;

- going out to where people are – for example pubs, shops, fetes, schools, local organisations, sports events, doctors' surgeries;

- open days at your building or site; and

- informal discussion/conversations.

The methods you choose will depend on your organisation, the resources you have available, and what is appropriate to your project and community. It is much better to do a small amount of consultation well, than to try to do a lot with little time, resources or skills available and therefore do it badly.

Only consult if you are really interested in getting feedback. Only give people realistic options – don't offer a blank canvas if there are only a limited number of options (for example, on where a building will be sited). You don't want to raise unrealistic expectations which you cannot meet. Don't say you are consulting if you are only informing.

If your organisation is new to consultation, or wants to try out new ways of consulting, it might be a good idea to bring in someone to help you do this (they could be freelancers, new employees or volunteers, or people from other organisations with the relevant expertise).

Although widely used, public meetings are difficult to run well, and have many pitfalls. They can easily be dominated by a small number of people and become stage sets for confrontation. You tend to attract only those people who like coming to meetings, unless they are really interested in the topic. For these reasons do not use public meetings as your only method of informing and/or consulting.

Here are two ideas that work particularly well in community settings and do not rely on people reading documents. There are more ideas in the resources in Section 10.

Photo safaris

If your project is site-based, you could do a 'photo safari'. This involves taking small groups of people round the site asking them to take photographs or to highlight as they go ideas and concerns they have, or the things they value most. Reasons for each photograph should be noted down. This list can then be collated to help work out what to do. The photographs can also be used at a public event for other people to add their own comments. This method is great for involving children, young people and those who find it easier to take in information in visual form.

Using maps/models

For many people to understand your project fully and give an informed view, they will need to 'see' what you are going to do, rather than hear or read about it. Maps and models can be used in the early stages of your project.

Thinking about... Community participation

You will need to make or get hold of a map/model of your proposed project. You can involve people in this too if appropriate; for example, get young people to help you build the model. You can then put the maps/model into a space where people can see them and use post-its or discussion to gather views. Alternatively you can take the map/model out to people, for example, existing community groups, schools and residential homes.

5.3 Deciding together

Introduction

At this level, you want people to be involved in managing and organising your project – making decisions about what and how things happen throughout the project. People can take part in a number of ways, for example, by becoming a Trustee of your organisation (with the associated legal responsibilities) or by becoming a member of a working or advisory group for the project, which is a more specific and time-limited commitment.

For small community groups, this type of participation will be core to their organisation and for a community based project, most of the management will be done by members of the local community. Larger organisations may have to make changes to their governance in order to involve community representatives. Where direct participation in management is not possible, advisory panels may be an option.

What are the benefits of deciding together?

- Local people know their area best, and how decisions will affect the community.

- Involving more people will bring new skills and experience to the management of your project and organisation.

- Including a wider range of communities and more diversity brings different points of view and new ways of looking at issues.

- Community participation in management is more likely to embed the project within the community, helping its future success and increasing the likelihood of getting more local support and people involved.

Recruiting people to help make decisions for your project

You can involve people in decision-making in different ways or roles. They include:

- trustees;

- sub-committees of existing board or management committee;

- steering groups – that oversee the project as a whole;

Thinking about... Community participation

- advisory panels – you could have a 'community' advisory panel, or invite members of the community to sit on a wider panel; their role is to give ideas and advice on the project without being given decision-making responsibilities;

- specialist advisors (for example architect, access auditor, teacher) – you may want to make contact early so you can call on their professional expertise when you need them; and

- working groups – it may make sense to set up groups to oversee particular parts of your project, for example exhibition content or access planning; your working group(s) will involve people with a particular interest or skills in that area.

Involving people on your management board

Before you try to attract members of your local community onto your steering or management group/board you should plan how you will do it.

- Look at how far your board reflects the local community it serves, including by age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, parental/caring responsibility.

- Think about overcoming barriers for potential new members – offering payment for childcare, having flexible meeting times, simplifying your paperwork.

- Do a skills assessment of current management members – financial knowledge, understanding of relevant laws, heritage experience and skills, environmental knowledge, practical and administrative skills etc.

- Draw up a person specification outlining the skills, knowledge and experience you need, for example accounting skills, fundraising, PR.

- Set out the role members will play with any specific responsibilities.

- Develop a promotional strategy – advertise widely through local media, community networks and local meeting places to attract the kind of person you want.

- Identify and use key interview questions and a scoring process.

- Induct your new member well with the help of an induction plan, a pack of key documents and 'buddy' support.

- Make sure they are aware of responsibilities, both legally and practically, for example reading briefing papers and attending x number of meetings per year.

- Identify the benefits to them of joining your management group, for example to widen personal networks, develop new skills, improve career prospects.

Thinking about... Community participation

Steering or Working Groups, Advisory Groups or Subcommittees

These groups are usually short term, and are set up to take on a specific task, for example to publicise a consultation event, organise an information day, develop a policy, advise on local biodiversity, or plan the refurbishment of a heritage building.

The sub-group should be made up of people with the relevant skills and experience for the task allocated, playing to members' strengths. People who don't wish or who are ineligible to become management committee members (people under 18, for example) can be involved in managing particular elements of projects.

Groups need clear terms of reference, so members can understand:

• their task or purpose and the topics or issues they need to cover;

• how often they should meet and how and when the group will end;

• their role in sending out the agenda, taking and circulating the minutes etc.;

• delegated powers – decisions or action they can take alone; what should be referred back to staff or committee;

• when and how they should report to staff and/or Trustees;

• funding available to them, and how they access and account for it; and

• how their members are appointed and for how long.

5.4   Acting together

Introduction

At this level of participation people contribute to the delivery of the project in practical, hands-on ways. It involves deciding together and then working together to carry out the activities planned. This type of participation is sometimes called collaboration, co-production or co-creation.

Acting together transforms people from audiences or consumers of heritage to partners in the development and delivery of heritage activities. Deciding together recognises that participants bring knowledge and ideas to projects, as well as an insight into how people's experience of heritage could be improved. Acting together further blurs the distinction between professionals and users, those that maintain and interpret heritage and those that learn from and enjoy it. Here people become more than consultees, advisers and decision-makers. They also have a role in producing what is on offer for themselves and the wider community.

Thinking about... Community participation

What are the benefits of acting together?

In addition to all of the benefits of deciding together:

- participants have increased commitment to the project and your organisation;

- working together brings additional resources, such as time and expertise;

- new ideas and different approaches to delivering activities can motivate and inspire existing staff and volunteers and increase the success of your project;

- the people involved can engage directly with your target audiences, helping to build their trust, attract first timers and ensure they have a good experience of heritage;

- the community becomes a visible part of your project, generating wider interest from media and other local and/or community organisations; and

- participants build the knowledge and skills to maintain and share their heritage.

Tips

You can get people involved in a range of ways, for example participants could:

- help research, write and prioritise the actions within a conservation management plan;

- create new interpretation for a collection, building or site that is presented in their own voice or words;

- develop displays and exhibitions based on stories or objects that they have selected;

- identify repairs and understand conservation issues for a church or village hall, and utilise their own and other community members' skills to carry out the work;

- develop and put on events, guided tours or outreach activities;

- document the history of a local area, undertaking research, interviewing residents and depositing materials in an archive; or

- work with consultants to plan a major redevelopment for a heritage attraction and help to prepare and conserve the site.

Acting together often works best when you involve people as a group, and then set up a series of meetings or workshops. You could work in partnership with a community organisation, work with an existing group, for example users of another organisation, and/or recruit people onto a new group that you have created especially for the project. These people could be involved in formal structures such as steering or advisory groups, or decision-making

could be incorporated into more informal sessions where you also work on the development and delivery of activities. It may also be that you involve different or more people in delivery roles, than those sitting on decision-making groups that oversee the project as a whole.

Group meetings or workshops should be well organised, but also involve participants in shaping meetings where you can. These sessions should clarify the scope of the project and everyone's roles, build participants' knowledge and skills, and support them to deliver project activities. Those involved will need to develop new practical skills, knowledge about the heritage at the heart of the project, and an understanding of how to create and implement plans. For example, they may need to be able to work with external experts and contractors, write and design interpretation, undertake conservation and maintenance activities, and use evaluation techniques. You can use external trainers and staff from other organisations to provide training when you do not have the expertise within your own organisation.

You might take a different approach if you are working with an organisation, rather than a community group or newly recruited individuals. See Section 7 on partnership working for advice on effective working with other organisations and individuals.

5.5   Supporting others to take the lead

Introduction

At this level the balance of control tips, giving a greater degree of influence to the community based organisations or people involved. This is about supporting participants to take ownership of the project or a specific part of it. Your role is to help others develop and carry out their own plans. As much as possible, decision-making and delivery is undertaken independently, while you provide mentoring and professional assistance where it is needed.

This is not necessarily the best approach just because it gives community based people or partners the greatest degree of control. Often, you will be aiming for an equal relationship, with mutual respect for the expertise of professionals and community members and recognition that you and your participants are stronger together. In this case, 'Acting together' would be appropriate. Participants may also prefer to take on less responsibility and be involved at another level.

Supporting others to take the lead is, however, the most empowering level for participants. Projects involving young people, in particular, often work best when they have the opportunity to lead the project. Some projects will start on a lower level of participation and build up to a point where participants have greater control.

Benefits

• Ensuring community based partners and participants have a strong sense of ownership of the project and the heritage that it focuses on.

Thinking about... Community participation

- Helping participants to develop leadership skills and building the capacity of community based groups and organisations, especially for small partner organisations.

- Creating opportunities for people or groups to speak for themselves, and take control of their own representation, especially for those who have been disadvantaged or under-represented in heritage audiences.

- Sending a strong message that you want to be an open organisation and are willing to take risks and try new things to be a part of the community.

- Demonstrating that you trust participants.

- Encouraging active citizens by helping people to develop the motivation and skills to take responsibility for caring for heritage now and in the future.

Tips

A project at this level could:

- support young people to research, plan and create an exhibition or event for the wider community;

- help a community group to build the skills and experience to take increasing responsibility for the management of a heritage building or green space;

- run training for an under-represented group (for example, disabled people, refugees or gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people) and assist them to draw together photographs, papers and letters for a new collection to be deposited in the local archive;

- enable a small organisation to take specific responsibility for the conservation of a historic boat;

- assist communities leading research into the local historic environment, including plans for an archaeological excavation and survey; or

- provide space and advice to a community organisation to restore a garden with historic varieties of plants, or a habitat to encourage local wildlife.

It is important to clarify your role in the project. As the applicant, it is likely that you would still have a substantial role in developing and delivering the project and ensuring its success. You will need to find a balance between taking accountability for the project, supporting participants and allowing them some independence. It may be useful to separate these roles out and also use external trainers, facilitators or advisors.

Some organisations are nervous about giving a high degree of control to other people. In some cases, participants too may not be entirely ready to take full responsibility for a project. It is possible to introduce this level into a project through a specific element or in a gradual way. To do this, set some boundaries on what is and isn't open to change. Choose an aspect of the project with

participants for them to take ownership of. Build up to the level. Develop the leadership skills of participants and enable them to take increasing control of the activities.

Participants will need help with capacity building. This involves developing their skills and experience to be able to take more independent responsibility for heritage and their area of work or interest. As well as leadership skills, they might need a range of practical skills to deliver exhibitions, events, building maintenance or whatever activities they are involved with as a part of the project. If you are working in partnership with a community based organisation, they may require business planning and financial skills. It also might be important to ensure participants know how to make heritage accessible and appealing to a wide audience. External facilitators can be helpful when you do not have all of the skills needed to build participants' ability to have a leading role.

6   Being inclusive

You will need to consider all of the people who could be affected by your project, not just those that you know and already have on board. In most cases it will affect people or groups based locally, however there may be others connected to the heritage in your project because of their history or identity. They too should have the opportunity to take part.

Your first step is to think about who is already involved, and then who could be. Identify the make-up of your local community, and see who is missing from your project. You may want to look at the census data for your area (**www.statistics. gov.uk).** You could also get ideas for potential partners and participants through local community groups. Your local Council for Voluntary Services, library or council may have lists of organisations linked to particular groups (for example, refugees or disabled people).

Work out who you will involve, and when and how you plan to do this. The number and range of people you involve will depend on:

- the size and scope of your project. If for example you have a large scale project that potentially affects everyone in your area now and into the future, you may require more extensive involvement than a small project with temporary outcomes.

- the level of participation you have decided on. You will need to limit the number of people involved in some ways, for example too many people on a steering group would make it difficult to function. Sometimes it is better to include a smaller number of people or partners to ensure that they have a strong role and a positive experience. You can get those involved to help you consult further, get feedback from audiences and test their ideas on the wider community.

- how experienced you are in community participation. If you are new to this kind of activity, it might be a good idea to prioritise one part of the community to start with – don't try and do everything at once.

Thinking about... Community participation

Being inclusive is not just about inviting people into your project, but ensuring they feel welcome and valued when they do get involved. Be friendly, keep people informed, listen and respond to people's contributions and concerns, and try to make it as easy as possible for them to attend meetings or sessions. Sometimes it is good to bring new people and fresh perspectives in during the project, especially if it is being delivered over a long period. Think about how to manage this, as it can be difficult for both the new and existing people if there has been little change so far.

Gaining different views is a strength of community participation, but you need to be aware that this can also be challenging. People can have strong opinions about what should happen, and there can be conflicting ideas between and within communities. You might also disagree with what participants want. The following suggestions should help you to manage this.

- Keep in mind the aims and priorities of the project and discuss these with participants at the outset.

- Consult with other people beyond those immediately involved (ideally, get participants to help you with this).

- Treat people as individuals, and avoid seeing them as representatives of their community.

- Present different voices in your interpretation, or show that there are a range of views around a topic.

- Make sure people feel valued, and know how and why decisions have been made.

While often people will give their time as participants on a voluntary basis, it may sometimes be appropriate to pay people for their time. This is especially the case when you are involving community members that normally work on freelance contracts and/or where it could create a barrier to participation. This could apply to people sitting on a steering or advisory group, or where you are acting together to deliver activities. Offering incentives for consultation can also help to attract a wider range of people to respond.

For more ideas on how to analyse the profile of your local community and reach out to people see our guidance *Thinking about audience development.*

For tips on making sure everyone can take part see our guidance *Improving your project for disabled people.*

7   Partnerships

Introduction

Community participation involves working with others to share decision-making and delivery in your project. We are using the term partnership here to describe the relationship between different people or organisations that have come

Thinking about... Community participation

together to achieve a common purpose. While partnerships generally refer to working with other organisations, similar principles will also apply to work with individual participants, for example people recruited to a community panel or to make up a new group to carry out specific activities.

Good partnerships are beneficial and rewarding for everyone involved, and need a strong degree of trust and commitment from all sides. A partnership in which any community partners are perceived as equal or equally strong in terms of value and influence is sometimes called an equitable partnership. There are things that you can do to make your partnerships as fair and effective as possible. This section sets out key principles and practical steps on working with others.

Principles

A shared purpose with common objectives that are agreed and clearly documented. The project must be relevant to all partners, and everyone needs to know what the partnership is working towards and what they expect to achieve together.

Respect for the different perspectives, knowledge and expertise of each of the partners or people involved. Everyone should feel that their contribution is valued, and acknowledge that bringing different types of experience, ideas and backgrounds together should make the project stronger.

Understanding of the wider context and circumstances for the other partners or people involved. Each partner will have their own independent aims and be accountable to different people or stakeholders in different ways. They will also have constraints around resources, protocols and their other activities. It is important for partners to communicate their own situation and be mindful of what they can reasonably expect from others. If individuals are involved, there will be limitations on the time and type of work that they may want to contribute. Reimburse expenses for individuals volunteering their time.

Defined roles and responsibilities for each of the partners need to be agreed and recorded. This is equally important for individuals, where it should be clear from the outset what will be expected from them, and what they can expect from you.

Transparency and open communication between partners. The boundaries of decision-makers must be clear and, where possible, agreed. Organisations should be upfront about what they can and cannot compromise on, and why. It is important for everyone to know what is happening and understand the reasoning behind decisions.

Agreed processes for communication, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation that are understood by all involved. This should cover the level and frequency of communication, how decisions are made, meeting arrangements, and any relevant financial or practical processes.

Mutual learning where all sides have opportunities to develop their knowledge and expertise. Partners should also be open to changing their perceptions and the way they do things to improve the partnership and develop a better project. This can involve a willingness to take risks and make mistakes, as well as an

emphasis on capacity building, and training and support for all staff, partners and participants.

Working in partnership can be beneficial for all types of organisation, and helps to bring community and heritage interests together. There is, however, no requirement for your organisation to work in partnership with any other organisation unless you are applying to the Young Roots programme (where there needs to be a partnership of a youth organisation and a heritage organisation). You need to consider what is right for your project, and how you will ensure access to the resources, perspectives and expertise that will make your project a success.

Practical steps

- Before approaching potential partners or participants, consider what you have to offer and what others might gain from the project.

- Ensure that the project or the activities at the centre of the partnership will be relevant to everyone involved. If they are not, consider whether you need to change the activities or approach different people to take part.

- Include the perspectives of partners in your application to us. If you have not confirmed your partners, consult potential partners and participants to ensure your plans are heading in the right direction.

- Write a partnership agreement, which sets out roles and responsibilities. Make sure that everyone is happy with the contents and that it is signed by all partners.

- When working with individual participants, give them an outline of both their and your roles and responsibilities as agreed through discussion. It may sometimes be appropriate to ask them to sign a form of agreement.

- Write and agree terms of reference for formal meetings or groups.

- Have regular contact with partners, for example through set meetings. This will help to ensure that you are all progressing in the same direction.

- Monitor the progress of the partnership. Seek feedback from the other people or organisations involved and make changes to your plans or ways of working when they are needed.

- Be up front about your resources, the scope and timescale of the project and the degree of influence the partnership will have. Be willing to negotiate where you can.

- Try and be as flexible as possible. Consider whether there is really a good reason for not budging on a particular issue. If you cannot change something, explain why as openly as possible.

Thinking about... Community participation

- Consider issues of equality. There is often an uneven relationship between partners, with varying levels of resource and access to power and influence. Look at ways of creating a more equitable relationship, for example by enabling community based partners to take a more substantial role in decision-making, opening more direct access to senior staff, supporting them to take a leading role in the project or to take greater responsibility for planning and delivering activities.

- Make sure that your staff have the training and support that they need to facilitate community participation and work in partnership with other people and organisations.

- Help to build the capacity of your partners and participants. This will help their contribution to the project. You should also however try and develop their knowledge and expertise in a way that will benefit them beyond the project.

- Maximise opportunities for learning from the partnership and other partners. Ensure you evaluate the partnership process itself, including the views and experience of everyone involved.

8 Training and support for your community participation work

Community participation often requires organisations to do some things differently. It can involve working with a wider range of people, trying new activities and changing how decisions are made. Community participation needs internal buy-in to make it as successful and meaningful as possible. The staff and volunteers facilitating this work also need training and support to ensure that they have the skills and confidence to involve others in the project. We can fund training for community participation.

Internal buy-in

An effective way of gaining internal buy-in is to use a community participation approach with existing staff and volunteers.

- Ensure that they are informed about what is happening throughout the process.

- Consult them about the project and feed back the results.

- Involve them where you can in decision-making and delivery, including working alongside external participants.

- Draw on their knowledge and expertise to help participants and develop successful activities.

There are also things that you can do to build the support of senior colleagues and develop champions throughout your organisation.

- Identify how community participation and your project will help to meet your organisation's priorities.

- Look for any links with local or national government agendas.

- Generate interest in local media, agencies or other influential organisations.

- Identify where similar activities have made a difference elsewhere.

- Collect and report evidence of the impact of your community participation work from the outset.

- Get leaders and other colleagues to see the impact on people and heritage first hand, by providing opportunities to work with participants directly, see successful outcomes and/or attend celebration events and launches.

Skills and confidence

Staff and volunteers may need to gain new knowledge and skills, for example:

- communication, negotiation and facilitation skills, including chairing, listening and encouraging people to speak;

- an understanding of access issues, and sensitivity to the needs and interests of a potentially diverse range of people;

- the ability to enable others, to see and draw out their skills and abilities, and to encourage and make room for people to develop for themselves;

- media, marketing, consultation, and/or outreach skills; and

- confidence in working with new people and the ability to inspire confidence in others to get involved and help bring a project to fruition.

Some ways of gaining skills and knowledge include:

- training courses within the heritage or community sectors, to find trainers contact your local Council for Voluntary Services or Volunteer Development Agency;

- working alongside consultants or more experienced partners for your first attempts, you can then deliver activities more independently in the future;

- gaining guidance and support through a mentor or peer groups, such as English Heritage's online forum *Our Place* (see section 11); and

- where you have dedicated community engagement staff, ensuring staff or volunteers that have other roles work with them on community participation activities.

9   Evaluating your community participation work

Look at your community participation as part of the monitoring and evaluation of your overall project. Identify:

- how much of it there has been (quantity);

Thinking about... Community participation

- how good it has been (quality); and

- the benefits it has brought for your organisation or project and those involved (impact).

We will expect to see evidence that you have looked at whether you have been successful or not and that you are learning from the experience. Build in evaluation from the beginning. Record the situation as it is at the start (the baseline), and the changes you hope it will make for you and for the people you will involve. Towards the end of your project you can then see if those changes have taken place. Check how well you are doing community participation during your project, and if there's anything you need to do differently.

Issues to think about include:

For your organisation

- How well particular community participation methods worked, and how you might change your approach in future.

- How many new people, groups or organisations your community participation work brought you into contact with, and what benefits they brought to the project.

- What longer-term benefits community participation brought for your organisation, including skills and knowledge and how you might use anything learnt through having the community involved.

For individuals or community based partners

- Why people or partners were interested in the project, what they thought of their experience, and how you might have made their involvement easier or more fulfilling.

- What difference has participating made to them, for example developing skills, confidence or new networks, or has anything else changed for them as a result of being involved.

- What they think might have made the project more successful or encouraged others to participate.

You can produce simple monitoring forms, comment cards or questionnaires. Try to monitor the people whose views you get, collecting basic information such as their age group, gender, ethnicity and anything else of particular relevance to your project (for example that they are from a particular area/village).

You can also find more information in our guidance *Evaluating your heritage project.*

10   What we fund

We will fund the types of activities and materials described in Section 5 within a heritage project. The activities must be on top of the everyday work of your organisation and must be specific to the project for which you are seeking funding.

The costs can include:

- staff time to develop, manage and deliver the activities e.g. time of a Community Outreach Officer or Project Manager;

- freelance staff and professional fees necessary to get the community involved;

- equipment and materials;

- training for staff and volunteers;

- publicity and promotional material; and

- evaluating your activities.

If you are applying to Heritage Grants you will give us an idea of what you want to do in your project and what it will cost in your first-round application; if you are given a first round pass you will then work this up in detail during the development period and submit an activity plan with your second-round application. Refer to *Planning activities in heritage projects.*

You can ask us to contribute to the costs of developing your project between the first and second rounds, and you can include the costs of delivering community participation in your project budget at the second round. This includes specialist help with:

- carrying out research or analysing data about your community;

- holding focus groups and consultation sessions; and

- producing material for consultation.

We cannot give a grant towards existing staff costs, but we can fund short-term contracts or extensions to part-time hours for the purpose of developing your project.

11   Sources of further information

11.1   General resources

Access for all toolkit – enabling inclusion
for museums, libraries & archives

www.mla.gov.uk/website/policy/Inclusion

Including Cultural Diversity and Disability checklists. Provides a good starting place for seeing where you are whatever kind of heritage you have.

Thinking about... Community participation

Spaceshaper toolkit from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

www.cabe.org.uk/public-space/spaceshaper

Spaceshaper is a facilitated, practical workshop which brings together the users and managers of a public space to plan improvements to the neighbourhood that will benefit the wider community. The process works for parks, play spaces, streets and squares.

Spaceshaper 9–14 is a resource specifically developed to provide young people with a voice in the process of improving public spaces.

New Economics Foundation

www.neweconomics.org

A range of publications on co-production.

The Guide to Effective Participation

David Wilcox, 1994

www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/

Huge number of ideas, resources and background on participation.

People and Participation.net

www.peopleandparticipation.net

Web based questionnaire to suggest good participatory methods for consulting people in your project. Provides practical information for those working to involve people, including methods, case studies, news, library, events listing, advice service, and a process planner.

Community planning website

www.communityplanning.net

Information on consultation and involving people and examples of practical tools and methods.

Is Your Parent Group a Clique?

Michelle Bates Deakin

See **www.ptotoday.com/index.php**

Provides advice on how to make your group welcoming, especially to new members.

Thinking about... Community participation

Black Environment Network (BEN)

www.ben-network.org.uk

Provide resources and information on working with, and including ethnic communities.

Participation Works Gateway

www.participationworks.org.uk

Online gateway to the world of children and young people's participation.

11.2   Other helpful organisations

ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)

www.acre.org.uk

The national contact point for 38 county-based Rural Community Councils (RCC).

Community Development Exchange

www.cdx.org.uk
Email: admin@cdx.org.uk

Resources, research, training etc. on inclusion, diversity and community involvement.

Community Development Foundation (England, Scotland Wales)

www.cdf.org.uk

Includes a huge range of research around community development, alongside resources. They also provide training and information on evaluation.

Community Service Volunteers (CSV)

www.csv.org.uk

Provide professional media training for voluntary and public sector organisations.

Heritage Link

www.heritagelink.org.uk

Includes resources on diversity and inclusion.

Thinking about... Community participation

National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (England)

www.navca.org.uk

Will provide details of your local Council for Voluntary Service, which will be a contact point for voluntary organisations in your area (formally NACVS).

Oxfam GB

www.oxfamgb.org/uk

Good downloadable resources and background on participatory tools.

Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency

www.volunteering-ni.org

The Volunteer Development Agency for NI

Scottish Community Development Centre

www.scdc.org.uk

National Development Centre for community development in Scotland.

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)

www.wcva.org.uk

Information sheets, publications, training courses and conferences around volunteer management, community involvement and participation.

Participation Cymru

www.wcva.org.uk

Provide support, information and training around participation including consultation, participatory evaluation and facilitation skills.

Federation for Community Development Learning

www.fcdl.org.uk

Website includes research on reaching people, and training resources eg resource packs for the Open College Network Community Development Programme, and Community Work Skills Manual.

Thinking about... Community participation

Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) UK

www.ica-uk.org.uk

Run a range of courses around the country on facilitating and running participatory meetings and events. Have a list of consultants who offer bespoke training.

Appendix

Our grant programmes

General programmes

**Heritage Grants
(above £50,000)**

This is our main programme for grants over £50,000 for all kinds of heritage, and is open to all not-for-profit organisations. All applications go through two rounds (unless you are unsuccessful at the first round) and you can apply for development funding to help develop your project to the second round. Assessment takes three months at each round and the outcome of your application will then be decided at the next available decision meeting.

**Your Heritage
(£3000–£50,000)**

This is our general small-grants programme for all types of heritage project. It is a flexible programme, open to all not-for-profit organisations, but is particularly designed for voluntary and community groups and first-time applicants, with a much simpler application process and a shorter assessment timetable (10 weeks).

Targeted programmes

**Young Roots
(£3000–£25,000)**

Young Roots is a targeted programme for 13–25-year-olds who want to explore their heritage and develop skills. Young Roots projects stem directly from young people's interests and ideas, harnessing their creativity and energy, building their confidence and helping them work with others.

**Parks for People
(£250,000–£5million)**

Parks for People supports the regeneration of existing public parks, garden squares, walks and promenades across the UK.

**Townscape Heritage Initiative
(£500,000–£2million)**

Through our Townscape Heritage Initiative we make grants to help communities regenerate the historic parts of their towns and cities. The programme is designed for areas of particular social and economic need throughout the UK. Partnerships are funded to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic properties within a defined area, some of which may be in private ownership, and improve the quality of life for all those who live, work or visit there.

Appendix

**Landscape Partnerships
(£250,000–£2million)**

Landscape Partnerships is our primary vehicle for promoting heritage conservation as an integral part of rural regeneration, delivered by partnerships representing a range of heritage and community interests to tackle the needs of landscape areas that may be in different ownerships. Each scheme is based round a portfolio of smaller projects, which together provide a varied package of benefits to an area, its communities and visitors.

**Repair Grants for Places of Worship
(£10,000 upwards)**

Through this programme we help conserve and sustain heritage at risk through urgent repairs to places of worship. The UK-wide scheme is delivered through four programmes in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England and Scotland are awarded up to £250,000 and in Northern Ireland and Wales up to £100,000.

You can get more information by:

- downloading application materials from **www.hlf.org.uk;**

- emailing **enquire@hlf.org.uk;**

- phoning our helpline on **020 7591 6042;**

- contacting us by textphone on **020 7591 6255;** or

- using Text Direct **18001 020 7591 6042.**

Our offices

East of England

Terrington House
13–15 Hills Road
Cambridge CB2 1NL
Phone: 01223 224870
Fax: 01223 224871

East Midlands

Chiltern House
St Nicholas Court
25–27 Castle Gate
Nottingham NG1 7AR
Phone: 0115 934 9050
Fax: 0115 934 9051

London

7 Holbein Place
London SW1W 8NR
Phone: 020 7591 6000
Fax: 020 7591 6001

North East

St Nicholas Building
St Nicholas Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1RF
Phone: 0191 255 7570
Fax: 0191 255 7571

North West

9th Floor
82 King Street
Manchester M2 2WQ
Phone: 0161 831 0850
Fax: 0161 831 0851

Northern Ireland

51–53 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8FE
Phone: 028 9031 0120
Fax: 028 9031 0121

Scotland

28 Thistle Street
Edinburgh EH2 1EN
Phone: 0131 225 9450
Fax: 0131 225 9454

South East England

7 Holbein Place
London SW1W 8NR
Phone: 020 7591 6000
Fax: 020 7591 6001

South West

Trinity Court
Southernhay East
Exeter EX1 1PG
Phone: 01392 223950
Fax: 01392 223951

Wales

Hodge House
Guildhall Place
Cardiff CF10 1DY
Phone: 029 2034 3413
Fax: 029 2034 3427

West Midlands

Bank House
8 Cherry Street
Birmingham B2 5AL
Phone: 0121 616 6870
Fax: 0121 616 6871

Yorkshire and the Humber

4th floor
Carlton Tower
34 St Paul's Street
Leeds LS1 2QB
Phone: 0113 388 8030
Fax: 0113 388 8031

Head office

7 Holbein Place
London SW1W 8NR
Phone: 0207 591 6000
Fax: 0207 591 6001

**Textphone:
020 7591 6255**

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