

In partnership



**HERITAGE  
FUND**

# Pride in place

## The RSA Heritage Index 2020

Hannah Webster



## Acknowledgments

The RSA would like to thank National Lottery Heritage Fund for their continued support of this work. A special thanks to Gareth Maer for his advice and support with this year's data and report, and to Anne Young and Tom Walters for input and advice.

The RSA would also like to thank Lewis Payne for his great contribution to collecting and collating the data for this piece of work. Thanks also to colleagues Becca Antink, James Morrison, Amanda Ibbett, Ash Singleton, Ruth Hannan, Anthony Painter, Will Grimond and Joseph Barnsley for bringing this work to life.

Finally, thanks to all the organisations who have supported this work by providing data for the Heritage Index. There are too many to name but more information on them all can be found in our data downloads accompanying this report.

Icons by [icons8](#).

## Contents

	Page no.
<b>i.</b> About us	2
<b>ii.</b> Foreword	4
<b>1.</b> Heritage in 2020	6
<b>2.</b> Introduction to the Heritage Index	10
<b>3.</b> Note on data and methodology	12
<b>4.</b> Data insights	16
<b>5.</b> Insights from the 2020 Heritage Index	22
<b>6.</b> Recommendations	29

# REALISING



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A global community of proactive problem solvers.

## **About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

**U**sing money raised by the National Lottery, we inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. [www.heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk).

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**The Heritage Index** is the perfect place to start to understand local areas, include people and imagine how funding opportunities might benefit your place. Heritage has a vital part to play in helping people and places thrive beyond the pandemic and the Fund will be making sure that it plays a key role in catalysing a green and inclusive recovery.

**Foreword by Ros Kerlake, Chief Executive  
National Lottery Heritage Fund**

**T**he National Lottery Heritage Fund is delighted to partner once again with the RSA to produce the Heritage Index 2020.

This Heritage Index 2020 is our third collaboration with the RSA; our work together began in 2014, when we set out to investigate a series of important questions about the relationship between heritage and place - what role could heritage play in successful place shaping, what role does it currently play and how could we close the gap between potential and reality? From that work emerged a strong idea: that “some kind of typology mapping the local approach to heritage” would be useful in helping heritage to play a more central role in place shaping. This was the origin of the Heritage Index.

Why do we feel this ‘mapping’ is so important? Defining heritage is always a contested topic; the very idea of what counts as heritage needs to be an ongoing one, remaining open to changing ideas about how we view the past. The Fund has always believed that heritage is whatever people value from the past and want to hand on to the future. We continue to hold the position that it is not for us to define heritage but for people to tell us what matters to them and why.

And yet, heritage needs to be heard. Without a description of local heritage assets and how they are used, enjoyed and shared, this is practically impossible. Heritage needs a voice, to exclaim its existence and importance, at a national, regional and local level.

With places looking to see how they can recover and ‘build back better’ from the colossal scale of social and economic shock of the present crisis, people and communities must be involved in the debate about how this can be achieved. But those conversations need a starting point. And heritage provides that point of departure – what is our past, how did it shape our present and how can it be used to create a thriving future?

The Heritage Index is the tool for setting out and asking these questions. We know this from seeing the Index in action. It has spurred thinking and created new heritage ventures – in Barrow, in South Tyneside, in Worcester, in Warrington, in the South Downs, all places that have successfully used the Index.

The events of this year have brought home forcefully the importance of ‘local’: the sanctuary of the local park, the familiarity of landmarks and buildings, the chance to return to nearby museums and heritage attractions, whilst more distant travel was impossible.

As it becomes clear that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic will have longer-term consequences for the UK heritage sector, our focus as a UK-wide funder is shifting away from the immediate emergency support and crisis management of the past few months, towards sector recovery and resilience, ensuring our efforts support the wider economic recovery from the pandemic.

The Heritage Index is the perfect place to start understanding local areas, bringing more people into the conversation, and imagining how these funding opportunities might benefit your place.

Over the next 18 months, we will invest our National Lottery funding for heritage to support skills and jobs, make organisations more resilient and forward looking, boost the economy, and deliver strongly on inclusion and environmental sustainability.

We will build on the spirit that has brought communities together to regenerate and rediscover in the face of this crisis by funding more local, place-based initiatives. Collaboration will be key and cultural, community and civic organisations will need to work together, with heritage at the centre of their strategic thinking, to ensure intelligent investment in their recovery. The Heritage Index provides an excellent resource for those conversations to begin.

# HERITAGE IN 2020

**National Lottery Heritage Fund research revealed that 98 percent of heritage organisations reported having been affected in the first weeks of the pandemic.**

## 1 Heritage in 2020

**W**hen we began collecting data for this latest version of the Heritage Index in late 2019 it would have been impossible to predict the events that would come to shape the heritage sector over the next 12 months. A global pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement and increasing attention on climate change and sustainable practices have changed the lens through which we view heritage in the UK, and indeed globally.

Over the course of this project, we have seen the impact of Covid-19 leading to a national lockdown and a closure of many heritage locations, in some cases permanently. Museums, galleries and historic buildings have had to close their doors and have seen a stark decrease in participation and, consequently, revenue. National Lottery Heritage Fund research revealed that 98 percent of heritage organisations reported having been affected in the first weeks of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, the nature of the pandemic has shown the importance of outside parks and open spaces in local areas. Preference for travel within the UK has overtaken international travel in the context of Covid-19 and places that can offer natural landscapes, beaches and the like have benefitted from this. Data from the Office for National Statistics on the social impact of Covid-19 show that 25 percent of UK citizens say they are likely to holiday in the UK this autumn, compared to 5 percent who are likely to holiday abroad.<sup>2</sup>

The picture of the heritage sector as we publish this report in Autumn 2020 is therefore very different to that when we began this work a year ago. Having mostly wound up data collection in March 2020, the Heritage Index offers a timely snapshot of the UK's heritage before this pandemic hit. As such, it is an important

tool in facilitating recovery and, in time, it will allow us to understand which areas – and aspects of heritage – have been hardest hit.

In the short term, it identifies areas with strong but untapped heritage assets via our 'heritage potential' measure; an articulation of areas which rank more highly when looking at their heritage assets than their activities. In the longer term, future iterations of the Heritage Index will allow us to understand which areas have been hardest hit, using this data as a baseline.

As we consider how to use the Heritage Index to support recovery, we must also consider how we do so with inclusivity in mind. Heritage is part of local and individual identity, and if we are to 'build back better' we must reflect on how we can make sure the sector supports equity, diversity and inclusivity.

Such questions have also been brought to the fore with the Black Lives Matter movement. Critical reflection on whose heritage is sustained has become louder, in particular as we question the survival of statues such as that of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol and others.<sup>3</sup>

This particular statue is a listed monument, and as it was standing when data was collected for this iteration of the Heritage Index, is included in our dataset. The Heritage Index, in this way, is a mirror to the complexity of whose histories have survived. But to move towards quantifying who heritage assets

<sup>1</sup> Walters, T. (2020) How the coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting the heritage sector. [online]. Available at: [www.heritagefund.org.uk/blogs/how-coronavirus-covid-19-affecting-heritage-sector](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk/blogs/how-coronavirus-covid-19-affecting-heritage-sector) [accessed 1 October 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (2020) Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain. [online]. Available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata) [accessed 1 October 2020].

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics (2020) Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain. [online]. Available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata) [accessed 1 October 2020].

represent, the sector needs to consider a more nuanced approach to capturing data.

Finally, underpinning our outlook to the future of the heritage sector is the pressing question of sustainability. Again, the breadth of heritage is affected differently. Some heritage assets are directly at risk from the climate emergency, in particular from rising sea levels, extreme weather conditions and rising temperatures. Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), for example, outlines that the impact of climate change will result in 'altering the landscape of the AONB, the lifestyles of its residents, and the habitats of its wildlife'.<sup>4</sup>

For others, there is a question about how to positively contribute to improved sustainability and lower carbon emissions. There is increasing momentum around this conversation, for instance Historic England's most recent Heritage Counts report asks how a re-use approach towards our historic built environment can contribute to reducing carbon emissions.<sup>5</sup>

Our heritage is, in short, at a critical junction; how we respond to the many challenges it faces will ultimately determine the sustainability and inclusivity of our heritage, and the extent to which it benefits us all.

The RSA's framing of heritage for inclusive growth, and the ecosystem that accompanies this work, offers a case study lens on how heritage institutions and local authorities are taking an inclusive approach, placing livelihoods, wealth, future sustainability, voice and participation, and wellbeing and esteem at its centre.<sup>6</sup> The Heritage Index is another tool in this response, allowing us to understand what local heritage looks like, how it compares to the national picture and to identify areas to explore further.

### Box 1: Spotlight on heritage and inclusive growth

The RSA's Heritage for inclusive growth ecosystem, supported by the British Council, explores the relationships between places, heritage assets and inclusive growth. This model provides the basis from which to test the hypothesis that heritage offers a largely untapped opportunity for inclusive, sustainable and equitable growth and is aligned with the mandatory funding outcome established by the National Lottery Heritage Fund that 'a wider range of people will be involved in heritage'. ([www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/outcomes#outcome-1](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/outcomes#outcome-1))

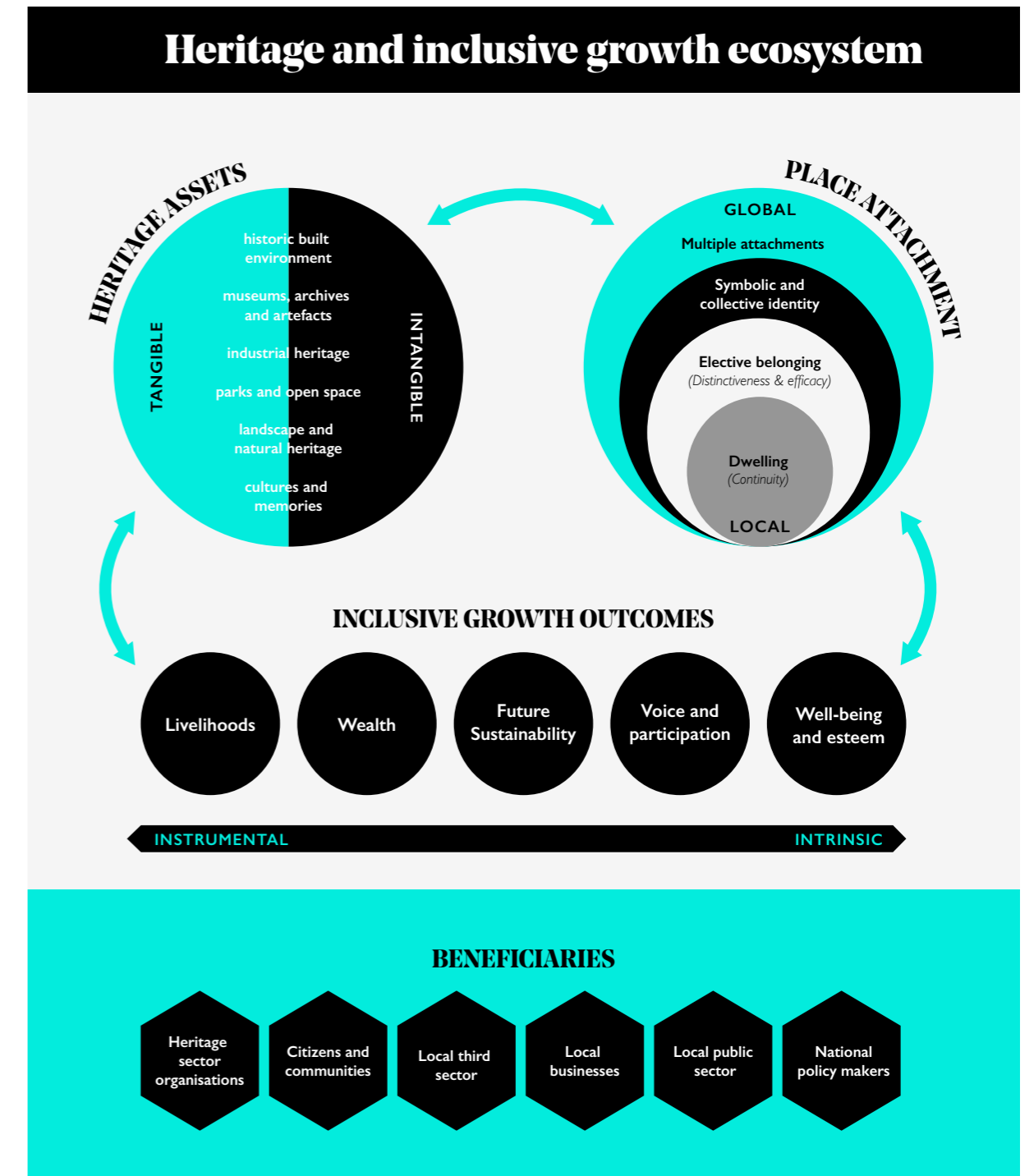
Collaboration across the identified beneficiaries is critical to grounding heritage for inclusive growth practice in local context and needs. Place, identity and attachment are similarly important to understanding how to leverage assets in a way that contributes to esteem and belonging. The Heritage Index domains are included with the hope that the Heritage Index can be a useful and complementary tool to exploring these themes in local areas.

4 Kent Downs (2020) Climate Change and the Kent Downs. [online]. Available at: [www.kentdowns.org.uk/climate-change-and-the-kent-downs-aonb](http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/climate-change-and-the-kent-downs-aonb) [accessed 1 October 2020].

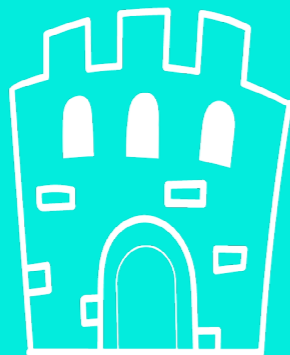
5 Historic England (2019) There's no place like old homes. [online] London: Historic England. Available at: [www.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2019/hc2019-re-use-recycle-to-reduce-carbon](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2019/hc2019-re-use-recycle-to-reduce-carbon) [accessed 1 October 2020].

6 Antink, B. (2020) Heritage for Inclusive Growth. [online] London: the RSA. Available at: [www.thersa.org/reports/heritage-inclusive-growth](http://www.thersa.org/reports/heritage-inclusive-growth) [accessed 1 October 2020].

Figure 1: The RSA's heritage and inclusive growth ecosystem



**The Heritage Index** is a unique tool, designed to support data led decision making on heritage at the local level. This year, the Heritage Index collates data on heritage across the UK from over 120 measures.



# Introduction to the Heritage Index



In this third iteration of the Heritage Index the RSA, in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, have compiled data from over 100 sources on the heritage assets and activities taking place at the local authority level in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The culmination of this work is a Heritage Index for each of the four nations; a ranking of local authorities according to the heritage assets and activities captured in the data. The Heritage Index is an attempt to capture the breadth of heritage. It champions local areas, each of which has a rich, and unique, tapestry of history, collectively contributing to local and individual identity. The data is split into six heritage 'domains' to capture this breadth, as well as one general domain. These span historic built environment, industrial heritage, landscape and natural heritage and more.

The Heritage Index is a unique tool for understanding both the absolute and relative activities and assets across local areas, with data sources ranging from listed buildings, to funding streams, to participation in heritage and more. This is an attempt to reflect the wealth of heritage all local areas possess and the knowledge that, as the National Lottery Heritage Fund articulate, 'heritage can mean different things to different people'. This breadth is supported by the inclusion of heritage activities, making up around half of all data collected. These activities, including participation, funding, businesses, self-organising heritage groups and more, show the many ways in which heritage can be used to the benefit of local areas and residents.

All areas across the UK have areas of strength in the Heritage Index. We see this in areas such as Portsmouth which excels in making the most of its industrial and maritime heritage, or Havant where it's Ramsar Wetlands areas give it strength in the landscapes and natural

environment domain. Aside from ranking local authorities, therefore, the Heritage Index quantifies part of the local identity, providing detailed data on assets and activities in the area.

The Heritage Index also includes a measure of heritage potential which identifies local areas which have a higher heritage assets ranking than activities, suggesting there is potential for more activity in the area.

This supports the RSA's belief that heritage offers an important, but often untapped, opportunity for inclusive growth. To this end, our heritage potential ranking highlights areas where there might be scope for increased activity and heritage support, whilst data on heritage businesses across the domains will help us to understand which areas are likely to experience a long term impact on their local economies.

This year's Heritage Index offers a snapshot of the heritage sector in the months leading up to the Covid-19 crisis and the subsequent UK lockdown. Since this time, the heritage sector has experienced a period of upheaval, threatening many of the assets and organisations accounted for in the Heritage Index. This year's data and measure of heritage potential, therefore, is a critical data point for this recovery.

In this report we present headline findings from this year's Heritage Index, explore what can learn from this year's data and outline how this data might be used to support local policymakers, heritage practitioners, economists and others in this inclusive recovery. Our ambition is to contribute towards a heritage economy that is inclusive and progressive.

In our concluding remarks we make a series of recommendations to improve the access to, and quality of, information on the heritage sector and offer reflections on how this data might be effectively and equitably utilised.

### Note on data and methodology

**M**uch of the data collected for the Heritage Index is disparate, collected independently and hosted on different organisational websites. Whilst all of this data is publicly available, either already published or accessible by request, its original presentation offers little opportunity to analyse data from multiple sources together or to support collaboration.

The Heritage Index does the heavy lifting on this data, with the RSA downloading, cleaning, collating and updating a range of data points from national datasets, large and small heritage organisations and from advocates of different areas of the sector.

Data is collected at a local authority level, from all four nations, and organised into assets and activities across seven heritage domains:<sup>7</sup>

- Historic built environment
- Landscape and natural environment
- Parks and open spaces
- Museums, archives and artefacts
- Industrial heritage
- Cultural and memories
- General

Data is weighted and a score is calculated for each local authority within each domain. A final score is calculated by weighting domain level scores. The final Heritage Index rank is a ranking of these scores at the local authority level.

Additionally, a heritage potential score is calculated by comparing a weighted total of all assets and activities within each local authority. Areas which rank more highly

across assets than activities have a higher heritage opportunity ranking.

This report predominately features commentary and analysis on data from the Heritage Index for England, though reference is made to relevant data from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. The data in each of the four nations does differ and so comparison between them should not be made.

The full Heritage Index ranking and raw data for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is available for download from the RSA website, alongside a 'how to guide' for using the Heritage Index.

### Using the Heritage Index

An index is not an exact science and instead is an attempt to make a best assessment of some otherwise immeasurable concept. In the case of the Heritage Index, a number of quantifiable aspects of heritage are combined to create a single summary score. The ranking of these scores is the final Heritage Index ranking.

It is not possible to count all aspects of heritage and so the Heritage Index calculation process requires decisions to be made about the data – what variables and factors should be included, and how should they be weighted are just some of the considerations that are made.

The Heritage Index ranking is most useful as a relative measure; how does one local area compare to another, or how does the performance of one local authority in one domain compare to its performance in another domain?

<sup>7</sup> These domains are aligned with the National Lottery Heritage Fund priority areas. More information can be found at: [www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk).

#### 1 Interpreting heritage potential

The measure of heritage potential identifies areas where their heritage assets ranking outpaces their activities ranking. **That is, that there is a gap between the assets and activities.** It is these areas where they might be greater potential to engage with local assets, and by looking to areas that have a high heritage potential ranking we can understand where there might be scope for greater heritage activity.

Activities counted within the Heritage Index include funding streams – both from heritage funder organisations and local authorities – data on visitation to heritage sites and holiday nights spent in local authorities, participation in local decision-making (including neighbourhood plans), participation in heritage, archaeology and conservation clubs and volunteer groups, and more. Not all activity will be captured in the Heritage Index due to the need for national coverage, but it does represent a number of formal and informal organised activities.

Not all local authorities will have heritage potential. Those areas where heritage activities rank more highly than their assets are making the most of their heritage assets according to this measure and their ranking reflects this.

In the heritage potential ranking, unlike the overall Heritage Index ranking, a higher ranking represents a local authority that is less efficiently using its assets. So, the highest-ranking local authority on this measure has the most potential.

#### 2 Data coverage and limitations

The Heritage Index collates data already in the public domain; no new data is captured by the RSA. Therefore, the process is limited by the availability of suitable data at the local authority level. In particular, data on local identity and

citizen perceptions of heritage are rarely available at the local authority level as this would require national survey data with large base sizes, and so this data is limited.

Furthermore, data can only be included if comparable data collection or reporting is available nationally. This means that data specific to a single local authority or individual institutions – such as reporting on their staff, finances or visitor numbers – cannot be included. Significantly, this means that it has not been possible to collate data on sustainability, diversity or inclusion of heritage activities as there is, as yet, no national effort to collate this data.

The number of variables in each of the seven heritage domains and in each of the four nations is impacted by the breadth of available data. Whilst data in domains such as historic built environment and in landscapes and natural heritage is more plentiful, existing data on industrial heritage can be limited and often focused on maritime industries. This year new data from Ordnance Survey on public spaces has supported the growth of the parks and open spaces domain in England, Wales and Scotland.

#### 3 Methodological changes

Since the last iteration of the Heritage Index (published in 2016) there have been some methodological changes both from data providers and by the RSA. These are noted in full in the technical appendix. The most significant changes include:

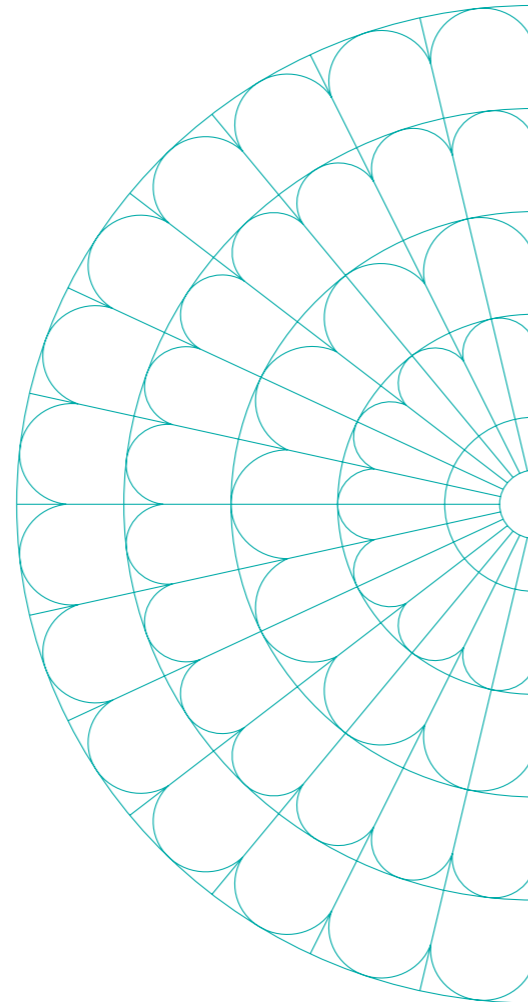
- Local authority boundaries in some areas changed in April 2019, meaning that the total number of local authorities decreased from 327 to 316 as some local authorities merged. This means that for the affected local authorities there is no comparable data for previous years.
- The RSA has included two new variables – Historic England data on



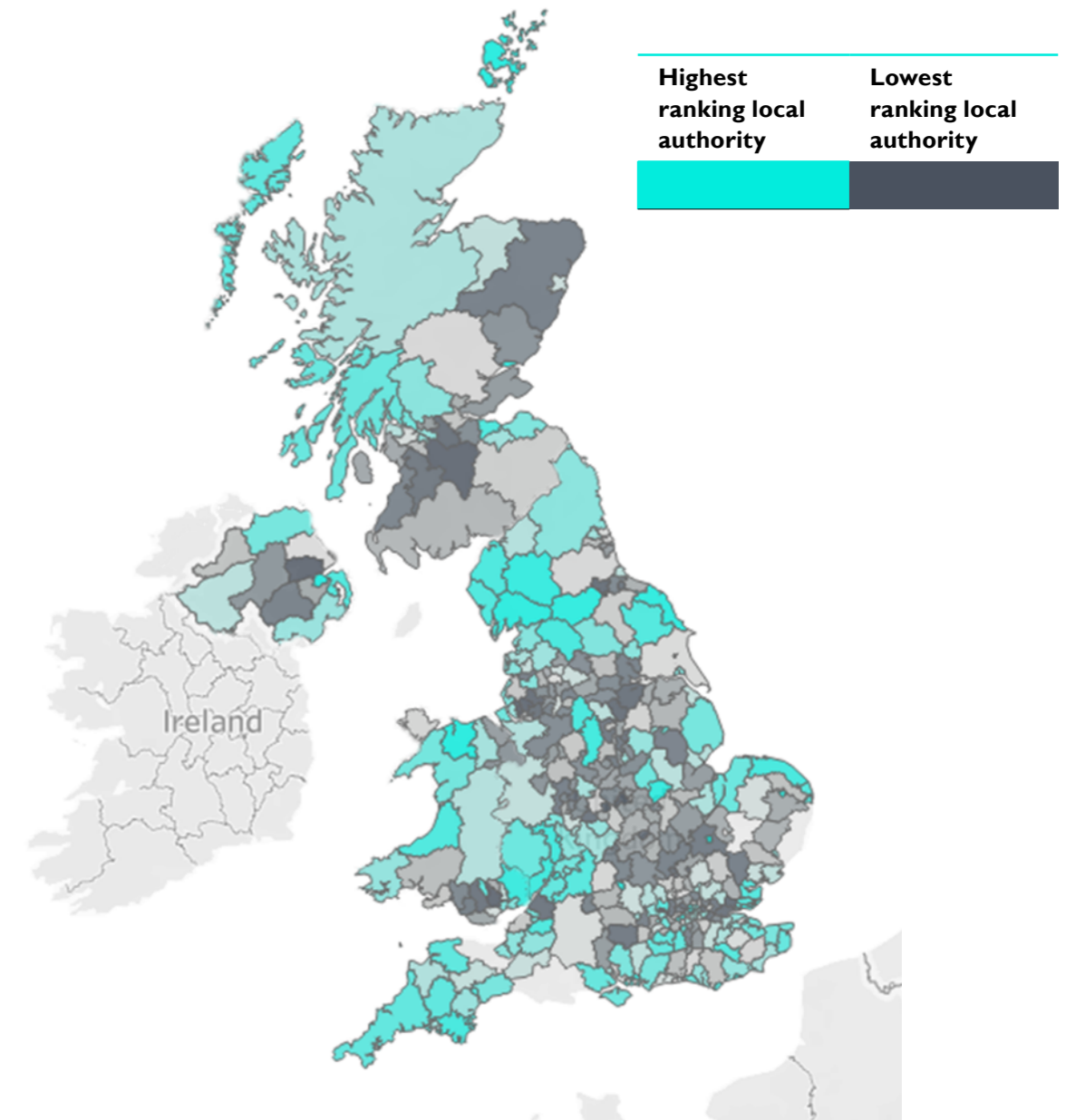
creative businesses in conservation areas (in England), and Ordnance Survey data on open spaces (in England and Wales).

- Three variables have also been removed from the Heritage Index as they were either deemed to no longer be appropriate, or as they reflect activities that are no longer maintained. These include the measure of resident continuity (across the UK), Arts Council Funding (England) and Historypins (across the UK). Weighting within domains has been amended to account for these removals and the introduction of the two new variables.
- Much of the participation data for England is based on data from the Taking Part survey. This is a national survey which is one of very few sources that allows for comparable local authority level data. To ensure a minimum base size, we combine three successive years of data and take an average. Since the last iteration of the Heritage Index, this data has been discontinued at the local authority level. For this reason, the data included in this years' Heritage Index from Taking Part covers only until 2016/17.

**The Technical appendix is a complete guide to the data collection, analysis decisions made and important points of note.**



**Figure 2: Overall Heritage Index ranking, by nation, 2020**



**INSIGHTS**

**DATA**

**Goal:**

**Across the UK, the Heritage Index paints a diverse picture of heritage assets and activities. Whilst some local authorities thrive in one domain and others have strengths across the board, all have a unique identity within the data. In this chapter we explore some of the local authorities that make up the highest ranking areas and have the highest potential.**

**Data insights**

England

**F**or the third time, the City of London is the highest-ranking local authority in the Heritage Index. Here, the strength of their traditional built environment assets and museums sector supports its position at the top of the Heritage Index, despite ranking less highly in the landscape and natural environment domain.

Amongst the top 10 ranking local authorities there are a breadth of characteristics with rural and urban areas, seaside and landlocked and different regions of England all represented. Richmondshire joins the top 10, gaining 20 positions to reach the 8th spot in the Heritage Index, whilst Westminster, previously in 3rd position, falls out of the top 10 into the 11th position.

Hastings, Cambridge and Richmondshire all move into the top 10 and each for different strengths. In Richmondshire, new funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund alongside an increase in the number of assets of community value – both within the historic built environment domain – have helped to move the area up 20 places. In general, local authorities tend to only move a few places, but there are some that experience greater movement with 111 local authorities moving over 20 places and 27 of these over 50 places.<sup>8</sup>

Those that have experienced the biggest positive moves since the last iteration of the Heritage Index are geographically dispersed and span urban (Lewisham has moved from 203rd to 133rd) and rural (Ribble Valley moving from 174th to 99th) local authorities. Often those that experienced improvement have done so

along the same measures, with assets of community value, neighbourhood plans and new funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund commonly part of this change.

**Heritage Index ranking: top 10**

1	City of London	-
2	Kensington and Chelsea	-
3	Norwich	+6
4	Oxford	+4
5	Gosport	+2
6	South Lakeland	-
7	Scarborough	-3
8	Richmondshire	+20
9	Cambridge	+3
10	Hastings	+1

<sup>8</sup> In some instances, this is related to a methodological change, such as the introduction of a new variable where they perform better than their previous score may suggest. In others, newly designated or established assets might drive this change and in others increased activities improve both the overall heritage ranking and the heritage potential of a local area.

### Box 2: Spotlight on Hastings

Hastings has consistently performed well in the Heritage Index, this year ranking 10th (up from 11th in the last iteration). The local authority area ranks highly across all domains, ranging from ranking 2nd in the parks and open spaces domain to 55th in the historic built environment domain.

In recent years Hastings has had a growing profile around culture-led regeneration. The local authority's own Culture-Led Regeneration Strategy aims to '[develop] and promote a refreshed identity for Hastings which brings contemporary culture and heritage together in a coherent and marketable brand'.

This is in combination with Hastings' Heritage Strategy ([www.hastings.gov.uk/content/my\\_council/decisions\\_how/policies\\_strategies/pdfs/A4\\_Hastings\\_Culture-Led\\_Regen\\_Strategy\\_2016-21.pdf](http://www.hastings.gov.uk/content/my_council/decisions_how/policies_strategies/pdfs/A4_Hastings_Culture-Led_Regen_Strategy_2016-21.pdf)) which includes a commitment to partnership working, including 'private and community partners' to sustainably manage heritage assets, as well as funders and sector organisations. The strategy portrays a local authority acutely aware of its historical heritage and identity which, in combination with this approach, is reflected in the breadth of assets and activities Hastings displays in the Heritage Index.

Within the Heritage Index, the natural landscape offers a heritage asset in its own right – with designations of areas of natural beauty, special areas of conservation and special protection areas higher than the national average as well as two blue flag beaches.

Hastings' ranking in the Heritage Index shows the potential for the sector to contribute to areas that might otherwise be considered to have been left behind. The Centre for Thriving Places' Thriving Places Index gives Hastings a score of 3.4/10 for its local conditions – based on a number of factors including education, work and community ([www.thrivingplacesindex.org/candidates/E07000062](http://www.thrivingplacesindex.org/candidates/E07000062)). Within this, its strongest component is culture, scoring 5.4/10, whilst the lowest, children's education, scores just 1.4/10. It is clear that the heritage and cultural sector in Hastings is a huge asset.

### Heritage potential

This year 157 local authorities in England have heritage potential in the Heritage Index; that is that they rank more highly across their assets than their activities.

The heritage potential measurement is a key area of change between iterations of the Heritage Index. Neighbouring Surrey local authorities Runnymede and Surrey Heath have, since the last iteration of the Heritage Index, moved out of the top 20 ranking for heritage potential. Both have benefitted from substantial investment from National Lottery Heritage Fund. In Runnymede, for example, a substantial funding award for the Runnymede Explored project aims to restore the site of the sealing of the Magna Carta, a significant local asset.

#### Heritage potential ranking: top 10

1	Castle Point
2	Chorley
3	Redditch
4	Gravesham
5	Rochford
6	Tower Hamlets
7	Broxbourne
8	Eastleigh
9	Medway
10	Oadby and Wigston

### Box 3: Spotlight on the Thames Estuary

Castle Point continues to hold the most untapped heritage potential. The coastal local authority benefits from strong industrial heritage, parks and open spaces, and landscape and natural heritage, but does not translate this into activity as well as other areas. Neighbouring local authorities Southend-on-Sea and Rochford also rank within the top 20 for heritage potential (19th and 5th respectively) as well as Medway (9th) and Gravesham (4th) making the Thames Estuary a critical area for this measure.

The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission aims to utilise local opportunities in existing sectors, environmental assets and planned development to create a 'tapestry of 'productive places' along a global river'. These heritage potential scores suggest that local heritage is a further asset for consideration to reach this goal.

continues to hold the top spot, ranking highest across all but two domains (industrial heritage and landscape and natural heritage, in both of which Belfast ranks 2nd).

#### Heritage potential ranking: top 5

1	Ards and North Down
2	Mid and East Antrim
3	Mid Ulster
4	Lisburn and Castlereagh
5	Antrim and Newtownabbey

Five local authorities in Northern Ireland have heritage potential in the Heritage Index and have a higher ranking for assets than activities. Whilst Ards and North Downs continues to hold the highest heritage potential, Lisburn and Castlereagh and Mid Ulster have moved into the heritage potential ranking this year.

### Scotland

#### Heritage Index ranking: top 10

1	Orkney Islands	-
2	Dundee City	-
3	Shetland Islands	+1
4	City of Edinburgh	+1
5	Eilean Siar	-2
6	Argyll and Bute	-
7	West Dunbartonshire	+1
8	East Lothian	-1
9	Stirling	-
10	Glasgow City	+1

### Northern Ireland

#### Heritage Index ranking: top 5

1	Belfast	-
2	Ards and North Down	-
3	Causeway Coast and Glens	+1
4	Newry, Mourne and Down	-1
5	Fermanagh and Omagh	-

In Northern Ireland, much of the overall Heritage Index ranking remains unchanged, though in part this comes with having the fewest number of local authorities of all the four nations. Belfast

Scotland's Heritage Index also displays consistency from the last iteration, with Glasgow City the only new entry to the top 10, moving up one position from 11th to 10th. East Ayrshire has experienced the biggest change moving

**Box 4: Spotlight on Dundee City**

Dundee City occupies an interesting space in the Heritage Index, ranking 2nd both in the overall index and in terms of heritage potential. This means that despite the area's high ranking for heritage, there is even further potential in the assets within the city. Whilst Dundee City ranks first across three domains; historic built environment, museums, archives and artefacts, and parks and open spaces, low engagement and participation hold the area back on its potential.

For example, Dundee City has a low heritage participation rate with 24 percent visiting heritage sites compared to the average 34 percent across Scotland. Dundee City also has lower engagement in Doors Open Days – a series of free to access events across Scotland hosted by heritage locations – compared to other urban local authorities. The equivalent of 3 percent of the Dundee City population attended a Doors Open Day in 2019, compared with an equivalent of 10 percent of the population in City of Edinburgh.

Dundee City was featured as a case study in the RSA's report Heritage for inclusive growth where it's whole place approach to regeneration was examined with an inclusive growth lens. Here, it's connected approach to heritage, building collaboration across venues to increase tourism, was noted. Dundee City is still on this journey, providing timely opportunity to continue to realise its potential.

down seven positions to rank 30th in this year's Heritage Index. Seventeen local authorities in Scotland have heritage potential according to the data. Clackmannanshire has seen the greatest increase in heritage potential since the last iteration of the Heritage Index, moving from 20th position to 5th.

**Heritage potential ranking: top 10**

1	Inverclyde
2	Dundee City
3	Midlothian
4	East Renfrewshire
5	Clackmannanshire
6	West Lothian
7	Falkirk
8	Aberdeen City
9	North Ayrshire
10	East Lothian

**Wales**

**Heritage Index ranking: top 10**

1	Conwy	+5
2	Monmouthshire	-
3	Ceredigion	+1
4	Merthyr Tydfil	+5
5	Gwynedd	-4
6	Newport	+5
7	Pembrokeshire	-
8	Denbighshire	-
9	Powys	-6
10	Torfaen	+4

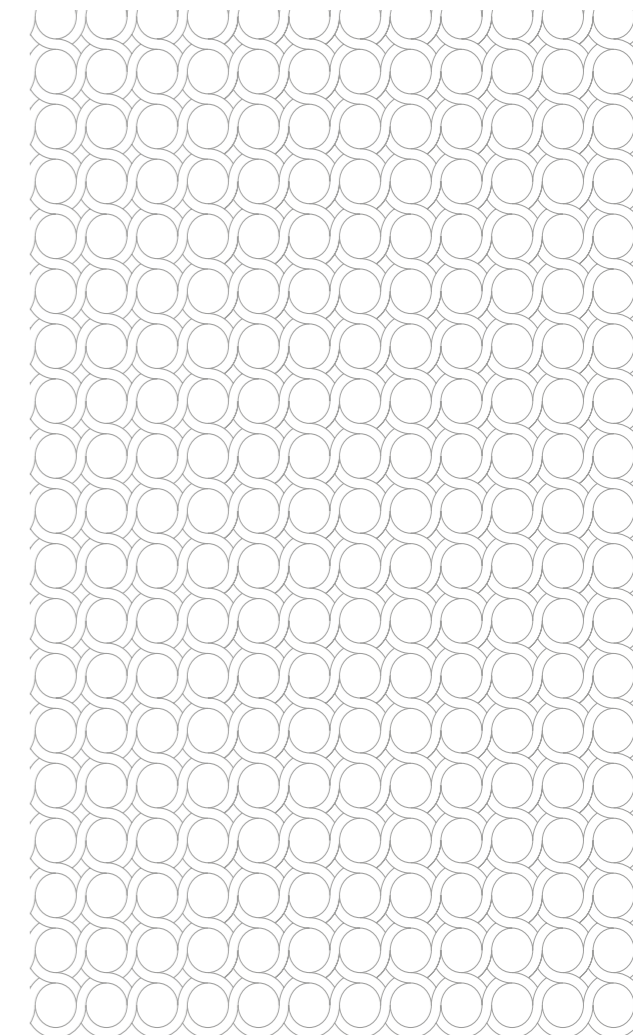
This year Conwy moves to the top position in the Heritage Index, up from 6th in the last iteration, whilst Gwynedd moves from 1st to 5th. Conwy's rise is closely related to their performance

in the landscape and natural heritage domain, where the local authority has moved from 11th to 3rd. related to local authority investment in it's 73km coastline.

Twelve Welsh local authorities have heritage potential in the Heritage Index. Whilst Torfaen continues to hold the most heritage potential, two of the top three local authorities for heritage potential have moved up the rankings on this measure; Blaenau Gwent this year has seen a growth in its heritage potential as a result of increased assets but decreased activities in the local area.

**Heritage potential ranking: top 10**

1	Torfaen
2	Blaenau Gwent
3	Merthyr Tydfil
4	Newport
5	Cardiff
6	Vale of Glamorgan
7	Swansea
8	Flintshire
9	Bridgend
10	Caerphilly



# INSIGHTS FROM THE 2020 HERITAGE INDEX

**This year's Heritage Index offers insight into the evolving nature of heritage potential, community engagement, funding and local authority strategy. In combination, these can help us to understand the role the heritage sector has during this current moment, and its potential to contribute to inclusive growth and recovery.**

## 5 Insights from the 2020 Heritage Index

**A**s well as understanding the national picture of heritage assets, activities and potential, the Heritage Index continues to reveal the breadth of heritage and offers insights into how areas are able to utilise their assets.

By design the Heritage Index specifically looks to an expansive definition, and this year the Heritage Index again shows that no local area is devoid of heritage; even those areas that perform less well in the Heritage Index overall tend to have at least one stronger domain.

This means that all local areas are championed in the data, be it with a star domain or by doing well across a number of different areas of heritage. For example, though Knowsley is the lowest ranking local authority in England, it is within the top half of local authorities for museums, archives and artefacts assets and for parks and open spaces assets.

For the third time the City of London ranks highest in the Heritage Index in England, buoyed by the highest levels of listed buildings per square kilometre – by a considerable distance – and ranking in the top five across three of the seven domains. Their strength in these domains means that they are able to retain the top spot despite ranking 315th (of 316) in the landscape and natural environment domain.

This year's Heritage Index data also includes deeper insights, gleaned from specific variables, trends in local authorities over time and by considering how previous iterations of the Heritage Index have been used. Here we explore five key themes in this year's data.

### **1. Citizen led heritage is increasingly providing opportunity for inclusive heritage activities**

Given the nature of the assets included in the Heritage Index – from designated buildings to geographical areas – some

variables remain stable year on year. Change is more likely to happen across activities in local areas. Here council supported initiatives alongside activities which make it easier for citizens to engage with local heritage are areas that tend to experience more change.

In particular, approaches to involving citizens in heritage have grown since the last iteration of the Heritage Index. For example, in England the use of neighbourhood plans has grown in some local authorities, in part thanks to a £30m government grant pot for neighbourhood plans.<sup>9</sup> Neighbourhood plans are a community-led approach to neighbourhood planning and development which bring local development plans to a resident referendum.<sup>10</sup> Cornwall's neighbourhood planning activity, for example, more than doubled since the last iteration of the Heritage Index.

This isn't the only act of redistributing power that has been embraced by local authorities. There has also been a related increase in the number of assets of community value across England, rising from 4,050 across all domains to 7,865. Some of this increase reflects ongoing work from data providers Keep It In The Community to maintain and update this data. However, their analysis also suggests that there are more assets being registered as being assets of community value. These are assets that may not currently be under community ownership, but there is an interest in acquiring them related to some value they currently provide to local residents. It is a signal that they are part of the local social and economic infrastructure.

Here we are able to see how tradi-

<sup>9</sup> Locality (2020) Neighbourhood Planning. [online]. Available at: [www.neighbourhoodplanning.org](http://www.neighbourhoodplanning.org) [accessed 1 October 2020].

<sup>10</sup> Shetwyn, D. (2018) Neighbourhood plans roadmap. [online] London: Locality. Available at: [www.neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/NP\\_Roadmap\\_online\\_full.pdf](http://www.neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/NP_Roadmap_online_full.pdf) [accessed 1 October 2020].

**Box 5: Spotlight on Heritage Open Days**

Heritage Open Days are a data point included in all domains of the Heritage Index in England. Each year thousands of heritage sites open up for free over a week in September as part of Heritage Open Days. This year’s Heritage Index for England includes 5,757 open days, an increase from 5,414 in the last iteration, with Heritage Open Days spanning all domains of the Heritage Index. Heritage Open Days attracted an estimated 576,000 visitors in England in 2019, highlighting the huge impact free to access heritage has for both new and existing assets.

In Scotland, Doors Open Days held events in 1,121 attended by 230,778 visitors, also a rise from 994 Doors Open Days and 192,411 visitors in the last iteration of the Heritage Index.

European Heritage Open Days were also held in Northern Ireland and Wales, though the total number of venues or events in these countries declined since the last iteration of the Heritage Index.

Each of these variants of open days show the scale of public interest in free to access heritage events and activities with hundreds of thousands attending across the UK. The free to access nature ensures that barriers to access on a financial basis are removed and engagement with them is more equitable. Whilst this might not be viable all year round, the week of activity provides an opportunity for heritage locations to open to a wider audience.

tional ownership of heritage assets is being challenged, and assets are being considered for ownership and control from the communities that use them. Creating inclusive models of wealth and participation are two components of the RSA’s definition of inclusive growth practice.<sup>11</sup> This data, therefore, highlights areas with heritage activities that are opportunities for improved inclusive growth. The RSA’s recent report Heritage for inclusive growth explores further how heritage is an untapped opportunity area for improving inclusivity in local economies.<sup>12</sup>

**2. Financial support for heritage is under strain, but is essential to realising potential**

One of the major areas of change between iterations of the Heritage Index exists in the various sources of financial data. These include funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund and local authority revenue and expenditure, as well as funding opportunities local to each nation.

Local authority data on non-capital

expenditure, capital expenditure and revenue from sales, fees and charges is included at a domain level. When looking at data across domains, there is a trend across domains for increased sales and revenue alongside decreased non-capital expenditure. With data for this variable in the Heritage Index reflecting local authority finances before the impact of Covid-19 the ability of local authorities to bring in income from sales, fees and charges related to heritage assets may have come under strain.

Figure 2 shows the national picture, though this can vary hugely across local authorities. This supports research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies in 2019 which found that the average local authority spending on culture and leisure services has fallen by more than 40 percent between 2009/10 and 2017/18.<sup>13</sup>

Balancing this pressure is an increase in local authority revenue from sales, fees

11 Shafiqe, A. (2019) Inclusive Growth in Action. [online] London: the RSA. Available at: [www.thersa.org/reports/inclusive-growth](http://www.thersa.org/reports/inclusive-growth) [accessed 1 October 2020].  
 12 Antink, B. (2020) op cit.  
 13 Amin-Smith, N. and Phillips, D. (2019) English council funding: what’s happened and what’s next?. [online] London: Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available at: [www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN250-English-council-funding-whats-happened-and-whats-next.pdf](http://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN250-English-council-funding-whats-happened-and-whats-next.pdf) [accessed 1 October 2020].

**Figure 3: Local authority heritage income and expenditure**

	Heritage Index 2020	Heritage Index 2016	Difference %
Local authority non-capital expenditure across heritage domains, England	£1,520,528,710	£1,626,288,000	-7
Local authority capital expenditure across heritage domains, England	£608,829,410	£531,251,000	+15
Local authority revenue from sales, fees and charges across heritage domains, England	£493,003,430	£205,404,000	+140

and charges across heritage domains since the last iteration of the Heritage Index. This is largely driven by the parks and open spaces domain, which has seen an increase in revenue of 243 percent. National Lottery Heritage Fund research conducted in 2016 anticipated this trend, with 59 percent of UK local authorities reporting that they were considering disposing of, or transferring, management or ownership of green spaces over the next three years.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, research from the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) in 2018 suggests that this trend may be due to continue, with one in five local authorities surveyed (22 percent) reporting that they intended to increase revenue through the sale of land across their parks and open spaces.<sup>15</sup> This revenue generation can also support increased visitors to sites; the same research also found that a diverse range of sources of income from sales and fees are being explored, with 58 percent of local authorities surveyed intending to increase revenue from festivals, concerts and events, and 52 percent through fairgrounds.

There have been some local areas that have seen an improvement in their heritage potential since the last iteration of the Heritage Index thanks to new funding from major funders.<sup>16</sup> For example, Barrow-in-Furness has seen an improvement in utilising its heritage potential after a new National Lottery Heritage Fund award for Barrow built:

sharing Barrow’s past, present and future shipbuilding. This highlights a key use of the Heritage Index; to support funding applications and decisions by identifying areas with untapped potential.

Funding can also have an impact on the overall position of local authorities in the Heritage Index. For example, Hull received almost £15m for the Yorkshire Maritime City project, contributing to a jump from 110th to 72nd rank overall.

Funding data – both local authority expenditure and from national funders – will be a critical data point as we look to how to support recovery in the heritage sector as we emerge from the Covid-19 crisis. National Lottery Heritage Fund have already used data on heritage potential to inform the Culture Recovery Fund for heritage, alongside a view to broadening access and participation across the sector.<sup>17</sup> This exemplifies how a data-led approach to support during, and recovery from, the Covid-19 crisis may be possible.

14 Heritage Lottery Fund (2016) State of UK public parks 2016. [online] London: Heritage Lottery Fund. Available at: [www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/state\\_of\\_uk\\_public\\_parks\\_2016\\_research\\_report.pdf](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/state_of_uk_public_parks_2016_research_report.pdf) [accessed 1 October 2020].  
 15 Priestly, W. (2018) State of the market survey 2018. [online] London: APSE. Available at: [www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/members-area/briefings/2018/18-11-state-of-the-market-2018-local-authority-parks-and-green-spaces-services/](http://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/members-area/briefings/2018/18-11-state-of-the-market-2018-local-authority-parks-and-green-spaces-services/) [accessed 1 October 2020].  
 16 Alongside local authority expenditure, major funders National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England are included in the Heritage Index. Since the last iteration, the Arts Council England resilience fund has come to a close.  
 17 National Lottery Heritage Fund (2020) Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage. [online]. Available at: [www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/culture-recovery-fund-for-heritage-0](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/culture-recovery-fund-for-heritage-0) [accessed 1 October 2020].

### 3. New heritage assets mean heritage potential is continually evolving

Across the UK, the data collated in the Heritage Index represents a dynamic and ever-changing picture of local heritage. Local areas continue to benefit from new official designation, for example areas of outstanding natural beauty, special protection areas and so on. A new designation can positively affect a local area's ranking in the Heritage Index. For example, Chorley has moved from 165th in the last iteration of the Heritage Index to 81st this year, in part related to a new designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for the West Pennine Moors in 2016, part of which falls in this local authority.<sup>18</sup>

However, over the same period, Chorley has moved from 37th to 2nd in terms of heritage potential, in part as this new asset has not been matched with increased activity. Chorley also ranks well on industrial heritage assets, in 4th position in this year's Heritage Index, but ranks just 69th on activities in this domain. This is a key example of where the Heritage Index can be used to identify new and developing assets for local engagement.

The heritage activity variables in the Heritage Index suggest some ways that this might be achieved. Public engagement initiatives such as Heritage Open Days are constantly bringing new people into local heritage. Local participation figures also suggest the extent to which residents are able to engage with local heritage.

Data from the national Taking Part survey is used in the Heritage Index to understand participation in heritage, museums, archives, industrial heritage and park activities in England. However, this data is no longer available at the local authority level and so it has only been possible to include data up to and including 2015/16.

Crucially, this participation considers the engagement of local residents, rather than visitors to a local authority. This allows

us to understand where heritage assets are failing to cut through and where there is potential for greater engagement. Continuing to use Chorley as an example, participation in industrial heritage is 22 percent according to Taking Part data, just the 119th highest participation despite ranking 4th for industrial heritage assets.

Zooming out to look nationally, engagement with a range of heritage locations has increased between 2009/10 and 2016/17.<sup>19</sup> Visitation to historic buildings (non-religious) has increased from 38.5 percent to 42.8 percent, whilst visitation to monuments over the same period has increased from 37.7 percent to 41.4 percent.

However, there are differences in levels of visitation across a number of demographic factors.<sup>20</sup> Across all types of heritage locations (with the exception of sports heritage sites) 45-74 year olds are the most likely to have visited a site in the last 12 months, and Black and Minority Ethnic groups are less likely to visit heritage sites (with the exception of sports heritage sites). Socio-economic status also impacts likelihood to visit heritage sites, with upper socio-economic groups over 20 percent more likely to visit historic buildings, historic parks and gardens and monuments compared with lower socio-economic groups.

Looking to heritage assets to understand how participation may be increased is an important use of the Heritage Index, particularly when new assets are identified. But it is also important to consider how increased participation might be more equitably distributed.

18 Natural England (2016) West Pennine Moors becomes largest protected wildlife site in a decade. [online]. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/news/west-pennine-moors-becomes-largest-protected-wildlife-site-in-a-decade](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/west-pennine-moors-becomes-largest-protected-wildlife-site-in-a-decade) [accessed 1 October 2020]

19 Data from Taking Part survey. Due to a change in published data, it is no longer possible to disaggregate participation from this source to the local authority level. As such, 2016/17 is the most recent data included in the Heritage Index.

20 Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2017) Taking Part focus on : Heritage. [online] London: Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. Available at: [www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/655949/Taking\\_Part\\_Focus\\_on\\_Heritage.pdf](http://www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655949/Taking_Part_Focus_on_Heritage.pdf) [accessed 1 October 2020].

### 4. Parks, open spaces, landscapes and natural environment assets are more important than ever

The parks and open spaces domain offers a balance for some London local authorities which are less likely to perform well within the landscape and natural heritage domain due to their geographical make-up. For example, Kensington and Chelsea is the highest-ranking local authority in England in the parks and open spaces domain but ranks 315th (of 316) in landscapes and natural heritage, whilst Westminster ranks 37th and 314th respectively in the two domains.

Within the Heritage Index, the natural landscape offers a heritage asset in its own right – with designations of areas of natural beauty, special areas of conservation and special protection areas higher than the national average as well as two blue flag beaches. This year, data on open spaces from Ordnance Survey was also included within the parks and open spaces domain. This was a major development for the domain, including all open spaces that make up a local character regardless of official designation. For some local authorities

across the UK this has improved their ranking in this domain, such as North Lanarkshire which has the greatest open space area according to Ordnance Survey data for Scotland.

This is a timely addition to the Heritage Index with the increased use of open spaces during the Covid-19 lockdown. Google mobility data for the UK shows a 97 percent increase in visitation to places like national parks, public beaches and public gardens compared to the baseline.<sup>21</sup> This varies by area, with some areas such as Norfolk experiencing an increase of over 200 percent compared to the baseline.

### 5. The Heritage Index can be a catalyst for change as we look to the future

With this third iteration of the Heritage Index comes the ability to reflect on the rankings of local authority areas that have actively engaged with previous findings. A number of local authorities have used the Heritage Index as part of their evidence in heritage and cultural strategies. The resource has proved valuable in understanding both strengths and weaknesses of local areas. Some local authorities and partners have actively

21 Google (2020) Covid-19 Community Mobility report. [online] London: Google. Available at: [www.gstatic.com/covid19/mobility/2020-09-11\\_GB\\_Mobility\\_Report\\_en-GB.pdf](http://www.gstatic.com/covid19/mobility/2020-09-11_GB_Mobility_Report_en-GB.pdf) [accessed 1 October 2020].

#### Box 6: Spotlight on North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire ranks 31st in the Scottish Heritage Index (of 32 local authorities) and 11th for heritage potential. The area's strongest domain has always been parks and open spaces, and with the introduction of Ordnance Survey data on open spaces, the local authority has moved from 19th in this domain in the last iteration of the Heritage Index to 10th.

North Lanarkshire ranks more highly for its activities within the parks and open spaces domain than its assets; ranking 7th and 11th respectively. The local authority has the highest area of country parks and of Ordnance Survey open spaces, matched with high levels of National Lottery Heritage Fund funding and local authority expenditure. In particular, the area has been awarded a £1.5m grant to the Scottish Wildlife Trust to create natural connections in the town of Cumbernauld.

The programme intends to engage residents and, in particular, young people, to support greater connections between people and nature. It is an example of how a local area is able to creatively build on its natural assets and greenspace to improve engagement and ultimately esteem.

used the findings to shape their priorities.

Writing for the RSA blog in 2016, leader of South Tyneside Council Iain Malcolm explores how the council intended to improve their Heritage Index ranking.<sup>22</sup> Successful applications to National Heritage Lottery Fund alongside an increase in activities such as Heritage Open Days and new designations in listed buildings and shipwrecks have led to a subsequent improvement in their Heritage Index ranking. South Tyneside ranked 244th in the last iteration of the Heritage Index. Since then, the local authority area has improved its ranking in five of seven domains and now ranks 172nd, 72 positions higher.

Sheffield's co-produced Heritage Strategy makes direct reference to the findings from the RSA's Heritage Index and embeds the recommendations from previous Heritage Index reports to collaborate across local government, public services, heritage institutions and others.<sup>23</sup> Overall, Sheffield has moved from 136th in the Heritage Index in 2016 to 129th in this iteration. However, within domains there has been more movement. The strategy notes Sheffield's 315th position ranking in the historic built environment domain, and the local authority has now moved to 252nd in this domain.

There are also opportunities to use the Heritage Index to engage the sector in national policy initiatives. For example, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places the future of Wales' social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing at the centre of policymaking in the present. It is both responsive to enduring problems today and preventative in nature by considering how these might play out in coming years and decades.

Local authorities, National Park authorities, the Arts Council of Wales, National Museum Wales, National Library of Wales and others are covered by the

Act. A specific component of the Act is to encourage vibrant culture in Wales and a thriving Welsh language. The Act, therefore, brings sustainable and equitable heritage and culture to the fore. The framework for its use asks public bodies to consider 'how outdoor space, heritage sites and cultural activities can provide opportunities for learning and recreation, vibrant and diverse local arts/music/culture'.<sup>24</sup>

The Heritage Index provides data which could support the implementation of this framework in the heritage sector. The data collated for the Heritage Index brings together data on outdoor spaces, heritage sites and activities, and identifies how these areas map onto local authority boundaries. The heritage potential ranking for Wales identifies areas where development of heritage activities might be combined with long-term planning.

Critically, with the framework's consideration of equal access and employment opportunities in the heritage sector, the Heritage Index in combination with the Future Generations Act could support inclusive growth. The Happy Museum Project exemplifies how this approach might be taken by specifically linking the activities of the six museums taking part in the Happy Museum Project with the goals of the Act.<sup>25</sup>

22 Malcolm, I. (2016) Cultural Boost for South Tyneside. [online]. Available at: [www.thersa.org/blog/2016/11/cultural-boost-for-south-tyneside](http://www.thersa.org/blog/2016/11/cultural-boost-for-south-tyneside) [accessed 1 October 2020].

23 Sheffield Council (2017) A framework for Sheffield's heritage strategy: enabling heritage action, shaping heritage policy. [online] Sheffield: Sheffield council. Available at: [www.sheffieldcitypartnership.org/news/2018/11/21/a-framework-for-sheffields-heritage-strategy](http://www.sheffieldcitypartnership.org/news/2018/11/21/a-framework-for-sheffields-heritage-strategy) [accessed 1 October 2020].

24 Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2018) Future Generations framework for projects. [online] Wales: Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. Available at: [www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FGCW-Framework.pdf](http://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FGCW-Framework.pdf) [accessed 1 October 2020].

25 The Happy Museum (2018) Welsh museums and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. [online] Wales: The Happy Museum. Available at: [www.happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HM\\_Welsh\\_report\\_2018\\_WEB\\_4.pdf](http://www.happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HM_Welsh_report_2018_WEB_4.pdf) [accessed 1 October 2020].

## 6 Recommendations

WHAT

TO DO

Goal:

**The Heritage Index is a valuable tool for understanding heritage assets and potential in local areas. In this final chapter we explore how the Heritage Index might be used to support decision making, including in response to the Covid-19 crisis.**



# 1

## Collecting data

The Heritage Index uses existing data to present a holistic view of heritage in local areas. The breadth of data is only as good as the sources that can contribute to it. In order to better understand the inclusivity, accessibility and sustainability of heritage, there are some areas for development. We recommend:

- i. Stakeholders and practitioners across the heritage and economic development sector should collaborate to scope heritage indicators for inclusive growth, spanning diversity, inclusion and sustainability.** Such data points could contribute to the Heritage Index if collected across local authorities nationally. Where data is collected by individual institutions, for example on visitor numbers, staff, trustees and other measures, standardisation should be agreed to allow for benchmarked or comparable data around inclusivity, accessibility and sustainability.
- ii. Taking Part and other national survey data on participation should be made available at the local authority level.** Survey data is critical to our understanding of not only how many people are engaging in local heritage, but also how accessible and inclusive this activity is. Taking

Part asks key questions on heritage participation and a number of variables in the Heritage Index are based on this data, however it is no longer possible to disaggregate data by local authority. The data from this survey included in the Heritage Index is, therefore, correct as of 2016/17 and trails behind much of the assets data included.

# 2

## Using data locally

There is great potential to use the Heritage Index to help articulate heritage assets and activities in local areas, which can be used to greater inform decision making in a number of sectors. We recommend:

- i. The Heritage Index, supported by the RSA's heritage for inclusive growth ecosystem, should be used to support communities and places to map their heritage and to identify opportunities for inclusive growth and heritage potential.** Our examples in this report show how local areas have embedded learnings from previous iterations of the Heritage Index to increase activity in their local areas.
- ii. Heritage funders should use the Heritage Index to support local areas with heritage**

**potential, and particularly in areas where there are untapped domains.**

Data in the Heritage Index highlights local areas where there is heritage potential, either overall or within a specific domain. Funders for the heritage sector should consider this potential when awarding funding to ensure that all local areas are able to make the most of their heritage assets, with the Culture Recovery Fund for heritage offering a blueprint for this approach.

- iii. DCMS should continue to engage with the Heritage Index, following on from the 2016 Cultural White Paper, and explore how areas with improved heritage potential have been able to successfully and inclusively make the most of their heritage assets.<sup>26</sup>**

The RSA's Heritage Index was cited as an indicator of success within DCMS' Cultural White Paper for the ambition to create 'successful communities'. DCMS should look to this iteration of the Heritage Index to identify areas with heritage potential which may be supported to utilise their heritage assets.

# 3

## Using data in recovery

The Heritage Index provides a timely opportunity to embed heritage assets and activities in a recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. We recommend:

- i. Central government, local authorities, heritage funders and economic development strategists should use the Heritage Index to identify**

**heritage opportunity areas to support an inclusive recovery from the Covid-19 crisis.**

The UK government has committed £1.57bn to the heritage, arts and cultural sector to aide its recovery.<sup>27</sup> In the longer term, support for the heritage sector should consider the inclusive growth ecosystem as well as heritage potential areas across the UK.

- ii. More broadly, the heritage sector must be a part of the government's coronavirus recovery agenda.**

The RSA's heritage for inclusive growth ecosystem highlights the potential for the sector to contribute to an inclusive recovery for whole areas. This should be used in combination with the Heritage Index to help to identify local areas with heritage assets and potential for increased activity. This may be to support increased economic activity, employment or to improve wellbeing of residents.

<sup>26</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2016) The Culture White Paper. [online] London: Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. Available at: [www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/510798/DCMS\\_The\\_Culture\\_White\\_Paper\\_3.pdf](http://www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/510798/DCMS_The_Culture_White_Paper_3.pdf) [accessed 1 October 2020].

<sup>27</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, HM Treasury, The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, and The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP (2020) £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's world-class cultural, arts and heritage institutions. [online]. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions) [accessed 1 October 2020].

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ISBN 978-1-911532-75-0