



APSE briefing 19/26: Heritage Horizon Awards – Providing funding of £5 million and over for major heritage projects

Key Issues:

- June 2019 saw the launch of the National Lottery Heritage Fund (formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund HLF), which will allocate awards for major heritage projects seeking funding of £5 million and above.
- The fund has a simplified application process which includes an expression of interest stage which will give applicants an early steer on whether their project is likely to be successful, thus saving weeks of unnecessary work before finding a scheme has been unsuccessful as in the past.
- Projects will need to be *transformative, innovative and collaborative* and focus on The National Lottery Heritage Fund's current strategic priorities of **landscape and nature** and **heritage at risk**
- Included within these priorities is a section on designed landscapes which includes; *'conserving historic landscapes such as public parks, historic gardens and botanical garden's.*
- With the loss of the HLF parks specific grant 'Parks For People' , this new grant seems an ideal opportunity for Parks Managers to bid for the type of grant which will make transformational and innovational improvements to those parks which they manage.

Background

Utilising money raised through the National Lottery, the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) gives grants to sustain and transform the UK's heritage. Museums, parks, historic places, archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions all receive investment.

The fund has a particular emphasis on addressing the urgent need to aid nature's recovery. That is why funding landscapes and nature is one of its key strategic funding priorities until 2024. The NLHF expect all the projects they support to do their best to:

- reduce nature's loss
- maintain the beauty and quality of urban and rural landscapes
- help people to reconnect with wildlife

Even if a project is not solely focused on landscapes or nature, NLHF expect **all** projects to improve their environmental sustainability and particularly to create positive benefits for nature.

This could include:

- creating new bat roosts or nesting boxes
- including green roofs and permeable hard surfaces
- providing ponds and swales for natural drainage
- creating wildflower areas rather than close-mown grass
- increasing tree planting and native hedgerows
- using native and bee-friendly plants
- not using peat

Although NLHF no longer has a dedicated programme for the regeneration of parks, there are still a number of funding sources which will help all historic public parks, squares, urban nature sites and country parks obtain funding through the HLHF open programmes which offer grants from £3,000 upwards. These have included: Rethinking Parks, Future Parks and Pocket Parks Plus.

Detail

The minimum amount of grant via the Heritage Horizon Awards is **£5million**. There is no upper limit on how much you can apply for.

NLHF have a total of £50m available in the first year (2020-2021).

The application process is now open to the following organisations:

- not-for-profit organisation
- partnership led by a not-for-profit organisation

NLHF want applicants to show clear and ambitious plans for how the project will bring about positive changes and benefits to people, places and wider heritage. They expect applicants to have plans as to how they will share their learning from the project widely across the sector.

For the Heritage Horizon Awards, HLF are using the Application guidance: £250,000-£5m. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/application-guidance-ps250000-ps5million>

In order to apply applicants will need to review the key documents at the following link https://forms.hlf.org.uk/officeforms/HLF_Projects.ofml, and then submit an **Expression of Interest** form by **11 October 2019**.

If your Expression of Interest shows strong potential, you will be invited to present your proposal to a panel of NLHF decision makers.

Following panel presentations NLHF will then decide on a shortlist. Applicants will then be told whether or not they have been shortlisted by **December 2019**.

If an applicant is shortlisted, they will be invited to submit a development phase application through the online application portal https://forms.hlf.org.uk/officeforms/HLF_Projects.ofml by: **31 August 2020** to receive a development phase decision by **31 December 2020**

NLHF ask that applicants make sure that the start date of their project is later than the date of decision.

Key dates

The programme is in two phases:

- development phase: up to two years
- delivery phase: up to five years

For grants above £5m, application deadlines are set in advance to clarify when funding decisions will be made.

- 11 October 2019: Expressions of Interest deadline
- December 2019: shortlisted projects notified
- 31 August 2020: deadline for development application
- By 31 December 2020: development decisions are made
- Up to 2022: projects will have up to two years to submit their delivery proposals. Delivery decisions will be made by the Board.

What you need to contribute financially

Applicants must contribute at least **10% of the costs of your development phase** and **10% of the costs of their delivery phase**.

NLHF describe applicants contributions as "partnership funding" and it can be made up of cash, non-cash contributions, volunteer time or a combination of all of these.

Assistance in helping to complete funding applications

Further details can be found in the guidance notes set up to help applicants.

https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/attachments/HF%20Application%20Help_Notes_C_LARGE_0.pdf

There is a preview of the questions contained within the Expression of Interest - this is the form used for HLHF £250,000-£5m grants. It also applies to grants over £5m.

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/expression-interest-above-250k>

Good practice guidance <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/hub/good-practice-guidance>

Management and maintenance plans for landscapes, parks and gardens

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/management-and-maintenance-plan-guidance-landscapes-parks-and-gardens>

APSE Comment

Whilst acknowledging that the loss of the Parks for People programme has been a major blow to parks managers and local authorities, having provided funding of over £950 million to 900 parks over the past 25 years, Government and bodies such as the NLHF are still making funding available, albeit very much on a bidding basis.

APSE obviously welcomes any additional funding, but such a piecemeal approach will not resolve the continuous loss of parks funding which local authorities have suffered over the past decade through Government austerity measures.

As part of its role in the Parks Action Group, APSE will continue to press Government to provide adequate funding to support local authority parks and greenspaces whilst also highlighting the incredible work parks professionals have done in generating additional income, to the point that almost half of all parks budgets are now being supplemented by this entrepreneurial approach to income generation being adopted throughout the sector.

Our parks and greenspaces are now more critical than they have ever been through the support they give to climate change mitigation and helping improve the mental health and well-being of the UK's residents. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan emphasises the role the natural environment has to play in the UK's ongoing sustainability and it is hoped that as part of delivering that plan, Government begins to appreciate the role our parks and greenspaces have in delivering the plan's aims and objectives and begins to support financially the future of these national assets.

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