



DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Government Response to the House of Lords Science
and Technology Select Committee Report on Science
and Heritage (HL256)

Session 2005-2006

*Presented to Parliament by the
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
by Command of Her Majesty
January 2007*

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Government Response to the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee Report on Science and Heritage, HL256, Session 2005-2006

Introduction

The Government welcomes the publication of the report by the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology on their investigation into ‘Science and Heritage’. The report is a significant piece of work in an area that has not previously been the subject of such an in-depth study by a Parliamentary committee. In relation to moveable heritage it provides a useful counterpart to the current House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee investigation into ‘Caring for Our Collections’. But the focus on the science behind the care and conservation of cultural heritage means that the report offers vital new insights into an area that does not always receive the highest level of public attention.

This response sets out the Government’s official views on the key recommendations contained within the report. It has been compiled with the assistance of many of the UK non-departmental public bodies that originally submitted evidence to the Committee, but it should not be taken as necessarily representing their positions in full.

The original call for evidence suggested that the purpose of the investigation was to examine ‘the role of science, engineering and technology in the conservation of the United Kingdom’s cultural heritage’. This is a broad field, which encompasses conservation (of both moveable and immovable heritage), conservation science (the application of scientific techniques to the process of conservation), and conservation science research (original new research into the conservation of heritage and the science and technology available to pursue this). The report addresses all of these domains under the general heading of ‘heritage science’. This response sets out the views of Government on each of the recommendations in turn.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- **(1) Under the current governance and funding structure the maintenance of the science base for conservation, and thus the long-term preservation of the United Kingdom’s cultural heritage, are severely under threat. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has hitherto failed to grasp the scale of this threat – indeed, probably does not know it exists. This must be put right. (3.46)**

As the evidence originally submitted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) made clear, Government delegates responsibility for conservation of cultural heritage to the public bodies that have been established for this purpose. English Heritage, Historic Scotland, Cadw, the sponsored museums, The National Archives, the British Library and a host of other publicly funded bodies, are provided with annual grants to fulfil certain statutory (and, in some cases, charitable) aims relating to the ongoing conservation of cultural heritage, whether moveable or immovable. The Government does not believe that the governance and funding structure that is implied in such an arrangement necessarily imperils the maintenance of the science base for conservation, or indeed the long-term preservation of cultural heritage. On the contrary, this structure ensures that decisions about the conservation of cultural heritage can be taken by trained professionals working at arm’s length from Ministerial departments, in organisations that are directly accountable to Parliament for their activities.

Nor does the Government believe that these organisations have insufficient resources to ensure the long-term preservation of the UK's cultural heritage. In England, the sponsored museums and British Library enjoyed an above-inflation settlement under the last Comprehensive Spending Review, which saw over £1.3 billion allocated to them in grant in aid over the three years 2005/06 – 2007/08. English Heritage currently receives £132 million in grant in aid per year, and has been able to allocate £9 million of this towards all kinds of research including conservation research. These are not inconsiderable sums. DCMS in fact assigns around half of its overall Departmental Expenditure Limit to bodies with responsibilities for cultural heritage (museums, libraries, archives and historic environment), suggesting a strong level of commitment to the ongoing care and maintenance of heritage of all kinds.

As DCMS's evidence to the Committee made clear, it is not for Government Ministers to determine how the specific funds allocated to their sponsored bodies are to be spent. Indeed, in the case of the sponsored museums, there are sound legal reasons why this should not be so: as well as being public bodies, these museums are independent charities, whose trustees are obliged to act in pursuit of their charitable purposes, as set out in statute, rather than solely in pursuit of Government policy. Insofar as these charitable purposes pertain to the conservation of collections, it is clear that the museums have duties to make sufficient investment in conservation to ensure the best possible provision is made for the protection of valued cultural heritage.

The governance and financial structures in place ensure that there are specific organisations with responsibilities for the conservation of cultural heritage, that substantial resources are made available by Government to pursue these responsibilities, and that decisions about how these resources are to be allocated are made by trained professionals operating according to clear organisational objectives that relate to the care and conservation of heritage. While there remain uncertainties about the outcome of the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review for DCMS and other government departments with responsibilities for cultural heritage, it is difficult to see how the current arrangements necessarily pose a threat to heritage science or even the wider cultural heritage itself.

However, it is doubtless the case that the available resources could be spent more strategically and efficiently in pursuit of the valuable work of heritage science. For this reason Government is pleased to endorse a number of the recommendations of the report, including making moves towards the appointment of a Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) to DCMS, appointing the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as the research council with formal responsibility for heritage science (to be supported by the appointment of a Director for Heritage Research), and the development of a UK-wide strategy for heritage science.

- **(2) We recommend that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport review its departmental objectives in light of the Government's policy on sustainability. We recommend in particular that the Department add to its objectives an explicit reference to the need to conserve our cultural heritage for the benefit of future as well as existing communities. (2.23)**

As with other departments, DCMS's future objectives and priorities will be under consideration as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. However, the Committee may wish to be aware that DCMS's existing departmental objectives already reflect the importance of sustainability. For example, one of them is to 'increase and broaden the impact of culture and sport, to enrich individuals' lives, strengthen communities and improve the places where people live, now and *for future generations*' (Objective 2: Communities; emphasis added).

Moreover, DCMS's Sustainable Development Action Plan sets out the Department's contribution, and that of its sponsored bodies, to government policy on sustainability. Its high-level objective is to 'integrate social, economic and environmental factors into all DCMS policy development'. As a contribution to the Action Plan English Heritage will shortly publish its own sustainable development strategy and is, for example, developing a website to advise the public how to combat the effects of climate change without damaging heritage buildings.

Nor would it be accurate to suggest that DCMS is interested only in arrangements for promoting access to heritage by present-day users to the exclusion of its longer-term conservation. The funding agreements for the museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS, for example, include a section on Stewardship which provides detail on collections care and management. Moreover, as noted in the report of the seminar held at Hampton Court Palace on 6 March 2006 (p.87), DCMS has been active in encouraging English Heritage to improve the delivery of research into the conservation of the historic environment, not least to support the wider objectives of the Heritage Protection Review.

- **(3) We recommend that the DCMS move rapidly towards the appointment of a permanent Chief Scientific Adviser, as recommended in 2004 by the Office of Science and Technology. (6.24)**
- **(4) DCMS does not currently possess the scientific expertise to act as an intelligent customer of science. This has prevented the Department from recognising the importance of heritage science to the preservation of our cultural heritage. It has also inhibited the Department from arguing effectively for the allocation of funds to the heritage sector from the European Union Framework Programmes for Research. We therefore recommend that the terms of reference for the new Chief Scientific Adviser make it clear that the appointee should have primary skills in the natural or physical sciences. (6.25)**
- **(5) Once appointed, we recommend that the DCMS Chief Scientific Adviser act as a "champion" at departmental level for heritage science. This is an essential prerequisite if an understanding of the value of science is to cascade down to the heritage sector as a whole, and the downgrading of conservation and heritage science within the sector is to be reversed. (6.26)**

The sectors for which DCMS is responsible include areas of significant scientific research and investigation, not least in the field of heritage science. As set out in the evidence presented to the Committee, DCMS's sponsored bodies directly employ professional scientists working on aspects of heritage science, whether at the British Library, the national museums, or for English Heritage. Similar teams of experts are employed in the cultural institutions funded by the administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This represents a sizeable community of professionals within the UK developing the field of knowledge of heritage science, and contributing to the conservation of cultural heritage.

DCMS has already indicated the intention to appoint a CSA. Such an appointment is by no means straightforward, if it is to do justice to all of the different areas for which DCMS is responsible (which include, in addition to heritage, sport, broadcasting, tourism, the arts and the creative industries). DCMS has therefore appointed Dr Michael Dixon, Director of the Natural History Museum as an interim CSA. He has been asked to undertake a review of the role and to report his recommendations to DCMS by March 2007. Dr Dixon's report will include recommendations on how the CSA role should be advanced on a permanent basis, including the specification for the role and the type of scientific advice that will be of most benefit to the Department. Dr Dixon's report will take into account the views of the Committee as expressed in the report. There are no plans to make any further moves towards an appointment ahead of Dr Dixon's report.

- **(6) We recommend that for the avoidance of doubt the Office of Science and Innovation should formally appoint the AHRC as the Research Council responsible for heritage science, and that at the same time it review the funding available to the AHRC from within the overall budget of the Research Councils so as to reflect the higher cost of scientific research. We further recommend that the OSI review the performance of the AHRC in this regard before the end of 2008. (6.43)**

The Office of Science and Innovation (OSI) welcomes Research Councils UK's (RCUK) agreement that AHRC should lead amongst the Councils for heritage science (see Appendix One below for RCUK's response to this recommendation). The OSI will consider carefully the relative priority that AHRC gives to heritage science in its submission for the CSR allocation. However, OSI shares RCUK's reservations about the timing of the proposed review of AHRC's performance in funding heritage science. It is likely to be some time before the impact of any changes in AHRC's priorities becomes evident and a review in 2008 could be premature.

- **(7) As champion for heritage, one of the key tasks of the Arts and Humanities Research Council will be to deliver an increase in Research Council funding for heritage science. In the absence of reliable data, it is currently impossible to measure success or failure in this task. We therefore recommend that the AHRC commission an analysis of current levels of Research Council funding for heritage science, and that it publish the results and update them annually from now on. (6.44)**
- **(8) We recommend that the AHRC take steps to ensure that its responsibility for scientific research in the field of cultural heritage is reflected in the appointment of an appropriate "champion" at Council level, supported by qualified staff. (6.45)**
- **(9) We recommend that the AHRC, in conjunction with the other Research Councils and the heritage sector, bring forward proposals for a time-limited directed programme of research in heritage science, with the aim both of re-generating this area of research and of attracting younger scientists to enter it. (6.46)**
- **(10) We recommend that AHRC and the Office of Science and Innovation make a formal commitment to recognise the full cost of science-based research in field of cultural heritage. This commitment should be reflected in the size of individual awards and in the AHRC's acceptance of full economic costs. (6.47)**

The Government has already made a formal commitment in the 'Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004 – 2014', published July 2004, that research councils funding will move close to 100% FEC (paragraph 3.18). The present level of funding from the research councils, including AHRC, is set at 80% of full economic costs (FEC). Science-based research in the field of cultural heritage should be treated on the same basis as other research.

Please also see the detailed comments by RCUK on these recommendations in Appendix One, below.

- **(11) We welcome the decision of the Arts and Humanities Research Council to invite applications from the National Museums and Galleries for academic analogue status. However, in order to promote collaboration with university based scientists we recommend that:**
 - **All National Museums and Galleries seek academic analogue status with the appropriate science-based Research Councils, in addition to the AHRC;**
 - **That those Councils encourage and facilitate applications from the National Museums and Galleries in the same way that the AHRC has done. (4.26)**

Please see the detailed comments by RCUK on these recommendations in Appendix One, below.

- **(12) Despite the outstanding quality of individual publications, the dissemination of up-to-date results of heritage science to practitioners in the United Kingdom is patchy and poorly co-ordinated, particularly in the field of moveable heritage. We therefore recommend that the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, in consultation with the National Museums and Galleries and Icon, review and consolidate the sources of scientific guidance available for collections-based conservators, with a view to providing a regular, central source of up-to-date advice. (5.29)**

It is not the role of the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA) or its parallel bodies in the devolved territories to disseminate best practice in conservation techniques. Rather, this function falls to the professional body for conservators, the Institute of Conservation (Icon), which is the lead body for the conservation of cultural heritage across all disciplines in the UK. Icon, rather than MLA, may be seen as a central point of contact for information in the conservation and conservation science community in the UK (and beyond).

Notwithstanding this, MLA already works closely with Icon, as well as with other organisations that work in the professional interests of individuals and the cultural heritage sector such as the Museums Association, the Museum Documentation Association (MDA), and the National Preservation Office (NPO), to develop specific projects that contribute to promote best practice in conservation. For example:

- Using MLA's Collections Link investment, MDA are taking forward the development of the 'Standards in the Museum Care of Collections...' series, so that the standards will be updated and better-embedded within museum practice.
- Renaissance in the Regions has invested £31 million in collections care over the period 2002-2008, of which £17 million has gone directly into collections. This investment has enabled the creation of 188 new curatorial posts, 18.5 of which are conservation posts.
- Through the Designation Challenge Fund £3.5 million will have been invested by 2008 in conservation projects, equating to 28% of the total funds awarded for the period through the Fund.
- Conservation is one element of collections care which is benchmarked within Accreditation, which encourages and enables museums to move towards and attain best practice. This is achieved via the Benchmarks in Collections Care toolkit and via the regional MLAs which have staff with collection care responsibilities giving advice, information and training.
- Under the MLA-funded Collections Link website (www.collectionslink.org.uk), MDA has recently signed a formal partnership agreement with Icon which will ensure that conservation and conservation research are better-represented within the service.
- The Cultural Property Advice website was commissioned by the MLA in July 2005 and is due to be launched soon via Collections Link in partnership with the MDA. It will be a comprehensive on-line advisory service to help individuals to collect, buy and sell art, antiques and antiquities legitimately and with confidence, providing a reliable, accurate and practical source of information and guidance on cultural property including: exporting and importing cultural objects; current legislation; news on stolen and illicitly traded objects; and lots of checklists and factsheets to support activities.
- **(13) We recommend that the Office of Science and Innovation undertake to provide the necessary resources to enable the Institute of Conservation to become the focus for the use of heritage science projects to promote public engagement with SET as a whole. (5.37)**

The Office of Science and Innovation's policy is to provide funds for promoting public engagement with science through grant support to key delivery bodies: the Research Councils, the Royal Society, Royal Academy of Engineering, British Academy and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The Institute should seek to work with them.

- **(14) In 2004 the National Audit Office highlighted the lack of a national framework for the digitisation of records across museums, libraries and archives. Little progress has since been made. We recommend that the Government, through the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and in consultation with the devolved administrations, make every effort to facilitate the development of such a framework for the sector. (7.39)**

Digitisation is an important issue for Government and the devolved administrations because of the significant opportunities presented by the collections held by museums, libraries, archives, film and broadcasting collections and arts organisations across the UK. This applies not only to DCMS, in relation to the many institutions that it sponsors but also to the Department for Education and Skills (in relation to the creation of educational resources) and the Department for Trade and Industry (in relation to industries that are built on the availability of digital content). The demand for digital content is rising all the time and the development of 'digital libraries' is one way of meeting this demand. There is also a strong EU agenda for the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and MLA are involved in and leading this debate within Europe for the UK.

There are currently many disparate approaches to digitisation within the sector, arising not least from the very different roles that digitisation plays. In libraries and archives digitisation of records implies digitisation of the objects themselves, while in museums and galleries digitisation is often of records of the object rather than of the object itself. Working with the MLA and the devolved administrations, DCMS therefore wants to look at the most effective way of creating a national digital framework for the main national cultural institutions.

At the European Culture Ministers meeting in November 2006, Shaun Woodward, the Broadcasting Minister agreed, along with his EU counterparts, to support the EU Digital Library. This included a commitment to draw up national strategies for digitisation of cultural material (2007) and to establish national strategies for long-term preservation of digital content (2008), as well as to reinforce co-ordination within and between Member States by setting up national coordination mechanisms for digitisation activities in the field of cultural content, including at regional and local levels. MLA has been supporting DCMS in the work on the European Digital Library and on the implementation of these recommendations.

Early in 2007, DCMS will be holding a workshop to consider these commitments and how to take these ideas forward. We shall invite all the key stakeholders and we will work out the respective roles of Government, strategic organizations (such as MLA, JISC, Becta), content-holders (museums, libraries, archives, film and broadcasting collections) and commercial organisations (such as publishers).

- **(15) The Museum Documentation Association (MDA) is working hard to promote best practice and common standards in the use of ICT in museums, libraries and archives. However, it lacks teeth, and we therefore recommend that its parent body, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, incorporate MDA approved standards for the use of ICT as part of the museum accreditation scheme. (7.40)**

The Committee may wish to note that the MDA does not in fact develop standards for ICT. Rather, MLA mandates the use of a set of Technical Standards and best practice guidance, developed and maintained by UKOLN (www.ukoln.ac.uk) which is funded by MLA and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). The Technical Standards are based on those used for the £50 million-New Opportunities Fund Digitisation programme, and have been widely adopted both in the UK and across Europe in the cultural sector.

MLA is currently piloting approved standards for ICT in Local Authority Comprehensive Performance Assessment Level 3 indicators for two ICT areas:

- User services – Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) and either European Cultural Website Quality Principles or Guidelines for UK Government websites: Framework for Local Government
- Collections management – SPECTRUM for museum documentation, which was developed by MDA
- **(16) We further recommend that the MDA and National Archives formalise their relationship, with a view to clarifying their different areas of responsibility, as a matter of urgency. (7.41)**

The respective remits of these organisations are already clearly defined, but Government agrees that there is value in greater partnership working. Both MDA and The National Archives (TNA) provide generic, and specific, advice and guidance on collections. Museums traditionally go to MDA for advice on their collections including their archives, and this is recognised within museums accreditation. Archives work with TNA standards for archives. Through Collections Link, MDA have already met with the Advisory Services Team at TNA and are in discussion with them about establishing a formal partnership. MLA are working with TNA to agree spheres of influence and this will help streamline sector support.

- **(17) In order to keep abreast of progress in technology, the heritage sector needs to develop closer partnerships with industry, exploiting and marketing new commercial opportunities as they arise – although such partnerships should not replace long term core public funding to support investment in conservation and heritage science. We therefore recommend that the National Museums and Galleries, along with the MLA, drawing on experience in the universities and Research Councils, explore ways to provide a central source of information and support for the development of commercial partnerships. (7.42)**

The Government endorses the need for the heritage sector to pursue closer partnerships with industry, and to exploit the commercial opportunities that arise from engagement in conservation science. There are already some good examples of these sorts of partnerships in action, not least the British Library's strategic partnership with Microsoft. The AHRC will work with museums, galleries and other heritage bodies to consider whether existing knowledge transfer funding opportunities need to be developed to facilitate greater participation by this sector.

- **(18) Collaboration is crucial to heritage science. There needs to be good communication between university and museum-based scientists in order to draw effectively on the resources of both communities. But at the moment, despite isolated successes, collaboration remains largely ad hoc. There is no-one within the sector to promote information exchange and support the development of collaborative research projects. In particular, we deplore the fact that there is no body within the United Kingdom taking a strategic overview of research priorities across the field of heritage science. We therefore make the following recommendations. (4.39)**
- **(19) We recommend the development of a comprehensive national strategy for heritage science, embracing both the immovable and moveable heritage, and covering the United Kingdom as a whole. We do not recommend the establishment of a National Conservation Centre at this stage, though this might be needed in the longer term if the sector does not come together as we have recommended. (8.46)**
- **(20) We recommend that English Heritage provide the secretariat to support the development of this national strategy for heritage science. We call on the major heritage organisations in England, and their counterparts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, along with the universities and the Research Councils, to come together in establishing a steering group to take forward the implementation of this recommendation. (8.47)**

- **(21) We recommend that the newly appointed Chief Scientific Adviser of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport chair and oversee the development of this strategy. (8.48)**

The Government notes the Committee has not recommended the establishment of a National Conservation Centre. Such a Centre would duplicate work that is already being carried out in cultural heritage organisations across the UK, and would create an unnecessary layer of additional bureaucracy that would require significant levels of annual funding. The Government agrees that it is better, instead, to build on the resources that are already available in publicly funded bodies, the higher education sector, and the commercial sector.

The creation of a national strategy for heritage science, to coordinate the activity that is already underway, is an entirely appropriate response to the Committee's observation that there is no such strategic coordination currently in place. The Government welcomes the suggestion that English Heritage provides the secretariat for a co-ordination/steering group to support the development of a national strategy for heritage science. While we note and applaud English Heritage's willingness to provide such a secretariat, we shall consider the proposal further taking into account the resource implications and whether it has the necessary statutory authority to undertake such a role for both moveable and immovable heritage of all kinds. We would also need to secure the positive support of the national museums and galleries, MLA, NHMF/HLF, and other heritage bodies in the UK, and their agreement to work actively together to develop the strategy. However the British Isles Technical Forum established by English Heritage does provide a useful model.

Given that English Heritage's remit does not cover Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Committee's recommendation for a UK-wide steering group bringing together the major heritage organisations from each of the home countries along with the Universities and the Research Councils is to be welcomed. Such a group would provide a useful forum for debate and for agreeing the adoption of common standards, as well as being a vehicle for more comprehensive dissemination of information.

Similarly, while the DCMS Chief Scientific Adviser could potentially oversee the development of the strategy from an English perspective, the Adviser would not be able to provide the same degree of oversight for the other devolved territories. The role of Chair of the steering group may therefore need to be performed by an objective independent member of the group, possibly drawn from one of the Universities or from the Research Councils, or indeed from Icon. This issue will be considered further by Dr Michael Dixon, in the report he is preparing on the future role of the DCMS CSA.

In overseeing the development of a strategy the co-ordination/steering group might explicitly consider:

- The scope of 'heritage' to be addressed – which is to include moveable and immovable heritage of all kinds, including landscape and archaeological remains below ground and under water.
- The scope of 'heritage science' – which in this context is explicitly extended beyond conservation science (the development of understanding about decay and its prevention and so forth) to include scientific research as a means to understanding and learning about past human activity (subjects such as dating, ancient technology, bioarchaeology, human skeletal studies etc).
- The need to embrace the practice of conservation as well as conservation science, on the basis that scientific developments cannot be implemented without the existence of a proportionate number of conservators.
- As well as research, topics such as: future approaches to capacity building; training; the development of a clear and viable career structure within conservation science; and the greater integration of conservation science, practice and dissemination.

- **(22) We further recommend that the strategy be developed as a “bottom up” strategy, with considerable input from the “users and doers” of heritage science, so that the many institutions that play a part in the heritage sector can share a sense of ownership. (8.49)**

Government agrees that the strategy should be developed in a ‘bottom-up’ fashion, with input from ‘users and doers’ of heritage science. As with the collaborative approach taken by the British Library, TNA and the other five copyright libraries and national archives in producing an internationally peer-agreed strategy for priority areas for applied science for libraries and archives, this sort of approach offers the surest route to securing an agreed strategy that reflects the interests of all parties. Similarly, any national strategy for heritage science will need to be underpinned by a clear assessment of the needs of the heritage sector across the UK. The preparation of such a needs assessment can draw upon much existing work that has been undertaken, for example in the museums, libraries and archives sectors.

- **(23) In parallel, as the strategy develops, and research priorities are identified, we recommend that the Research Councils instigate a time-limited directed programme of research, to encourage collaborative projects and build capacity in heritage science. (8.50)**

See Appendix One for the response by RCUK to the similar recommendation at paragraph 6.46 in the report.

APPENDIX ONE

House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee Science and Heritage

Research Councils UK (RCUK) response

- **(6) We recommend that for the avoidance of doubt the Office of Science and Innovation should formally appoint the AHRC as the Research Council responsible for heritage science, and that at the same time it review the funding available to the AHRC from within the overall budget of the Research Councils so as to reflect the higher cost of scientific research. We further recommend that the OSI review the performance of the AHRC in this regard before the end of 2008. (6.43)**

RCUK and the AHRC endorse this recommendation. AHRC is prepared to accept formal responsibility for heritage science. It is the intention of the AHRC that such science will be rooted in, and directed by, the needs of end users both within and beyond the AHRC's subject domain. In accepting responsibility for heritage science, the AHRC commits to championing heritage science within the research councils – pushing forward the heritage research agenda where it can and operating in concert with its sister research councils in order to achieve this. AHRC's sister councils undertake to support AHRC in pursuing this championship.

RCUK would note that while some of the recommendations of the Lords' report could be achieved by enhanced cross-council coordination in this area, it is undoubtedly the case that, to deliver the Lords' recommendations in full, additional resource would be required. AHRC has the support of its sister research councils in seeking additional resource (i) commensurate with likely demand and (ii) which would help to achieve success rates equivalent to those across other areas of science. CSR 2007 is the most obvious context within which to discuss the scale and availability of such funding. Consequently AHRC has made Heritage a key theme of its CSR 2007 case, highlighting the need to invest in this area in a cross-council context.

With reference to the proposed performance review in 2008, AHRC welcomes the opportunity to demonstrate what it has achieved in the wake of the Lords' report and hence RCUK supports the recommendation of a review. However, expectations for such a review should be tempered by a realisation that if additional resource is to be allocated to heritage research via CSR 2007, then such monies will not be deployable until financial year 2008/09 at the earliest. Consequently, while by 2008 some additional investment in the area will have occurred (see recommendation 8) and there should be evidence of increased coordination between research council investments in this area, any significant step change in activity is unlikely to have occurred by 2008. Nonetheless, a review in late 2008 should be able to clearly identify changes wrought to date and changes about to occur and thus would be a worthwhile undertaking.

- **(7) As champion for heritage, one of the key tasks of the Arts and Humanities Research Council will be to deliver an increase in Research Council funding for heritage science. In the absence of reliable data, it is currently impossible to measure success or failure in this task. We therefore recommend that the AHRC commission an analysis of current levels of Research Council funding for heritage science, and that it publish the results and update them annually from now on. (6.44)**

As noted in the response to the above recommendation, AHRC welcomes the opportunity to champion heritage science. Its sister councils undertake to support that championship. With regard to the proposed uplift in funding, in addition to the relevant points already made, we note that a baseline needs to be established for current funding in this area before any uplift can be measured. To that extent we acknowledge the need to analyse the current level of research council expenditure on heritage research. However, we also clearly need to set a definition for heritage research in advance of setting such a baseline. Preferably this definition would allow us to identify subparts of any such definition and to establish levels of funding for both the subparts of heritage research and for heritage research as a whole. This would allow us to (i) monitor much more effectively the effects of any additional investment; (ii) prioritise areas experiencing relative underinvestment; (iii) monitor the shift in the funding baseline in a much more finely grained way than would be possible through a single headline figure. Given these slight refinements to the recommendation made, the research councils are content to accept this recommendation and to give all due assistance in the pursuit of the data requested by it.

- **(8) We recommend that the AHRC take steps to ensure that its responsibility for scientific research in the field of cultural heritage is reflected in the appointment of an appropriate “champion” at Council level, supported by qualified staff. (6.45)**

The AHRC, in conjunction with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), is to appoint a Director for Heritage Research in response to this recommendation. Other councils may also contribute to the cost of this position in time. The Director will be an academic with relevant expertise who will receive a 50% buyout from their duties in their employing institution to undertake this rôle. The Director will have a budget that will allow for administrative assistance and for the hosting of workshops etc. The post will be for five years in the first instance. The Director will have a key role to play in (i) coordination between the research councils; (ii) coordination between the research councils and other stakeholders; (iii) undertaking the work to deliver elements of the report’s recommendations; (iv) developing a programme specification in advance of the delivery of recommendation 9. The total investment in the directorship will be around £1 million, which will represent an immediate increase in the level of support provided to heritage research.

- **(9) We recommend that the AHRC, in conjunction with the other Research Councils and the heritage sector, bring forward proposals for a time-limited directed programme of research in heritage science, with the aim both of regenerating this area of research and of attracting younger scientists to enter it. (6.46)**

As noted above, AHRC and EPSRC are putting staff in place to begin, amongst other things, to develop a specification for such a cross council programme of research. While the investment for this specification is rooted in AHRC and EPSRC, such a programme will involve and have an impact across a wider range of councils and stakeholders. To that extent the coordination work undertaken by the Director for Heritage Research will be critical. Within the research councils, liaison with Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) at least will be important. During the organisation of the recent joint AHRC – Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils (CCLRC) workshop ‘Looking Forward to the Past: Science and Heritage’ – see also recommendation 6), a scientific advisory panel was put in place which could be drawn upon for advice on the development of a cross-council science strategy in the field of heritage science. Beyond the research councils it will be necessary to consult with organisations funded by DCMS, professional associations and non-public sector organisations such as the National Trust. RCUK is committed both to supporting the Director for Heritage Research in pursuit of their programme of work and in establishing and servicing contacts with stakeholders external to RCUK.

- **(10) We recommend that AHRC and the Office of Science and Innovation make a formal commitment to recognise the full cost of science-based research in field of cultural heritage. This commitment should be reflected in the size of individual awards and in the AHRC’s acceptance of full economic costs. (6.47)**

The AHRC already pays full economic costs for the research grants it funds at the same level (80%) as the other research councils. It is committed to continuing to do so. AHRC notes, however, that its maximum grant ceiling, at £1 million at 80% FEC is lower than other councils. As part of the work of establishing a funding baseline for heritage research, the AHRC/EPSRC will also be tasking the Director for Heritage Research with auditing the individual research projects funded in the area of heritage research by the research councils. Using the evidence base thus established the question of grant sizes will be returned to by AHRC, and other councils, for adjustment if necessary. It is envisaged that these data should be available in time for them to be taken into account in planning any cross council directed programme of research.

- **(11) We welcome the decision of the Arts and Humanities Research Council to invite applications from the National Museums and Galleries for academic analogue status. However, in order to promote collaboration with university based scientists we recommend that:**
 - **All National Museums and Galleries seek academic analogue status with the appropriate science-based Research Councils, in addition to the AHRC;**
 - **That those Councils encourage and facilitate applications from the National Museums and Galleries in the same way that the AHRC has done. (4.26)**

The research councils accept research proposals submitted by Independent Research Organisations (IROs).¹ RCUK has recently clarified the criteria for eligibility of IROs for research council funding. Councils have accepted applications for funding² and facility access for some time from selected museums, galleries and heritage groups which extend and enhance the national research base and already enjoy strong relationships with the sector.

As an example of how AHRC is working with other research councils, a workshop entitled 'Looking forward to the past: Science and Heritage' was held at the Tate Modern on 28 November 2006, jointly organised by the AHRC and CCLRC, and was attended by approximately 200 participants including Baroness Sharp.³ This was a very successful attempt at promoting heritage science work undertaken in the UK and Europe and highlighted the availability of large science facilities and staff expertise to the heritage community.

¹ Since providing evidence to the committee, the status of Academic Analogues has been revised and the research councils, in consultation with OSI, have agreed a new term, Independent Research Organisations, and criteria for their recognition.

² See <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/cmsweb/downloads/rcuk/documents/eligibilitystatement.pdf>.

³ CCLRC produced a dedicated special edition of its Portal magazine for this event, which highlights a small part of the Heritage Science work which is undertaken using CCLRC's facilities and staff expertise. See http://www.cclrc.ac.uk/Activities/Portal/Portal_special06.pdf.

Printed in the UK by The Stationery Office Limited
on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ID5512689 01/07 359197 19585

Printed on Paper containing 75% fibre content minimum.



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ISBN 978-0-10-170312-3



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