EVALUATION OF

THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND'S DEVELOPMENT WORK

FINAL REPORT

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Shared Practice

7. CONCLUSIONS

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Annexes

I.   INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) made some important changes to the way it delivered services to applicants and potential applicants, guided by the aims of HLF's Strategic Plan 2002-2007 (SP2). This evaluation focuses on the programme of development work launched as part of these changes in 2002.

HLF's Strategic Plan 2 has four aims:
*   to encourage more people to be involved in and make decisions about their heritage,
*   to conserve and enhance the UK's diverse heritage,
*   to ensure that everyone can learn about, have access to and enjoy their heritage,
*   to bring about a more equitable spread of our grants across the UK.

SP2 clearly outlined the role of HLF's development work in helping to deliver these aims. It states:

*   "We will prioritise our development resources in favour of those communities which have to date received least funding and fewest grants from us, and which are in areas of high social and economic deprivation. Our country and regional committees will each identify five local authority areas to be targeted for this support. We will use our powers of solicitation as necessary" (4.4.6), and

*   "In order to deliver this improved service to applicants and potential applicants we have to enhance our own capacity. We are therefore in the process of establishing:
    *   Regional offices in England as bases for assessment and monitoring in order that we can operate closer to applicants and grantees. Offices will be open in May 2002 and the transfer of staff completed by April 2005.
    *   Development teams in those offices to work with a wider range of partners and encourage more applications. These will be set up by October 2002." (4.4.7).

In April 2004, HLF commissioned an evaluation of this development work, to assess the effectiveness of the contribution of the development programme, to identify significant gaps in provision, and to identify the specific contribution of HLF in the context of other development provision.

The evaluation was not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to be a 'snapshot' of activity after about 18 months of development activity, with the potential to identify some key issues at this stage.

The evaluation has been carried out by Diane Warburton, Shared Practice, under the guidance of an Advisory Group chaired by HLF Trustee Catherine Graham-Harrison and including HLF Adviser Alison Millward and HLF lead officer for the study Helen Palmer.

The evaluation has involved a mix of statistical analysis, interviews with staff in four HLF regions, and interviews with a small selection of grantees who had direct experience of HLF's development work. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that have contributed to this evaluation process, and provided such useful information and guidance.

This report therefore briefly describes how HLF development work currently operates in practice across the UK (with specific examples from the four regions / countries examined in detail). These activities are then evaluated against the SP2 targets for development work, characteristics of 'good' development work, and the programme's specific objectives. The report concludes that HLF's development work is currently meeting some targets and making progress towards others, is becoming highly effective in delivering on its own objectives, is exhibiting many of the characteristics of good development work, and is helping HLF meet its wider aims.

2.   THE EVALUATION STUDY

2.1   Introduction

The evaluation of HLF's development work was launched in April 2004, when HLF commissioned Diane Warburton, Shared Practice, to undertake the study. This section of the report outlines the aims and objectives of the evaluation, the overall approach taken, and discusses the methodology used.

2.2   Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The brief identified two **aims** for the evaluation research:
*   To evaluate the impact of the development programme in contributing to the delivery of key Strategic Plan 2 (SP2) objectives, in particular:
    *   to encourage people to be involved and make decisions about their heritage, and
    *   to bring about a more equitable spread of grants across the UK.
*   To evaluate the effectiveness of the development programme in meeting the relevant SP2 targets.

The evaluation research therefore needed to focus on both the outcomes of the programme ('what impacts?') and how it has worked in practice ('what works?'). However, as HLF's development work had only been fully operational for about 18 months (since September / October 2002) when the evaluation started, it was agreed that the report of the evaluation should aim to provide a 'snapshot' of activities and progress to date rather than a definitive judgement of the performance of the development work in relation to the SP2 targets. It was also agreed that the evaluation should therefore focus on the development activities rather than the projects that had resulted, as it was still much too early for many such projects to have been funded and completed.

The brief also identified three **objectives**, which were to:
*   Create a robust methodology for collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data on the outcomes of the development programme; incorporate the views of potential applicants to HLF who have had direct contact with the development programme.

*   Evaluate the effectiveness of the contribution of the development programme; identify significant gaps in provision that should properly be incorporated into HLF's service delivery.

- Identify the specific contribution of HLF's development programme, set in the context of other development provision including that of other lottery distributors, country/regional heritage support agencies and community sector capacity building organisations.

The required **outcomes** were to have improved understanding:
- of the contribution of the development programme to engaging more people with their heritage
- about the scope of the development programme including its contribution to managing expectations from potential applicants and partners
- of the distinctive role for HLF's development programme (compared to the activities of other organisations)
- of the contribution of the development programme to delivering Customer Care targets.

Therefore, the findings of the evaluation were expected to provide **conclusions** which:
- Demonstrated the contribution of the development programme in helping to meet SP2 aims
- Clarified the specific contribution of the HLF development programme, as distinct from other sources of support
- Articulated the views of a small sample of users of the development programme on its effectiveness through the 'life story' of their potential project
- Identified significant gaps in the development programme which may impede delivery
- Made recommendations for improvements where applicable.

The brief for the evaluation also detailed specific tasks under each of these objectives (see Annex 1) which were to form the basis of the detailed planning of the evaluation study.

2.3   Overall approach to the evaluation

Given the objectives outlined above, an evaluation was designed with five main elements:

- **An independent, rigorous process** to ensure robust results.

- **A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods** to cover the different types of data required on development processes and measurable outcomes. Quantitative data (collecting numbers) is about measurement and judgement, whereas qualitative data provides for description and interpretation (Oakley 1991). Direct cause and effect is almost always impossible to prove in assessing developmental work (as so many external factors are in play), but combining quantitative and qualitative data allows a fuller picture to emerge, and for some judgements about effectiveness to be made.

- **A theoretical perspective**, drawing on current best practice in evaluation in social research. The approach to the evaluation drew on three particular theoretical models:

  - 'Fourth generation evaluation' (Guba and Lincoln 1989), in ensuring the involvement of (some) stakeholders in designing the evaluation (e.g. discussions early in the evaluation study with the Development Managers

Forum, who had already input into the brief for the evaluation prior to commissioning).

- The 'theory of change' approach (Connell and Kubish 1996) which provides a framework for 'surfacing assumptions' in advance of collecting data, rather than imposing theory on data once collected. In this evaluation, the explicit and implicit priorities of the development work were discussed and analysed so that interview questions and data analysis could be appropriately structured.

- 'Realistic evaluation' (Pawson and Tilley 1997), which provides theoretical underpinning for basing the evaluation on 'real problems', using the scientific 'realist' philosophy in the research approach (i.e. objectivity and detachment) in order to inform 'realistic developments' in future (in the conclusions and recommendations). In addition, the evaluation has used the 'realistic evaluation' formula of "context + mechanism = outcome" to structure some of the findings.

- **A learning approach**. It is well known that evaluations can be purely 'instrumental' (a means to an end) or 'transformative' (also an end in itself by enabling learning as part of the process as well as from the formal results). Although opportunities for sharing learning throughout the evaluation process were limited, interviewees did stress that they found the process useful, in that it was valuable to be able to take time to reflect on their experience of development work over the first two years of the programme as they start to plan for the future. More instrumentally, the aim throughout the evaluation has been to identify lessons from this experience, particularly 'what works', to feed into HLF's future planning more broadly.

- **A practical approach**, to ensure that the process and products of the evaluation are useful and are not a purely academic exercise, and that the evaluation can be completed within a realistic timescale and a limited budget.

2.4   Methodology used

The methodology used for the evaluation, devised to incorporate all the elements outlined above (2.3) as essential to the process, had five main elements, as follows.

- **Management and guidance**. The detailed planning for the evaluation study was undertaken in consultation with the HLF lead contact (Helen Palmer), and with the Advisory Group chaired by HLF Trustee Catherine Graham-Harrison and including HLF Adviser Alison Millward.

    An initial meeting with the Advisory Group was held on 2 April 2004, on the basis of which detailed plans were developed by Diane Warburton and discussed with Helen Palmer at a subsequent meeting (6 May 2004). Diane Warburton then presented the plan for the evaluation to a meeting of HLF's Development Managers in Nottingham on 12 May.

Two further meetings of the Advisory Group have been held: on 14 October 2004 to discuss initial findings from the research, and on 13 December to discuss the draft final report.

- **Data collection**. The study required the collation of HLF statistical data and the generation of new data on country and regional development activities from interviews with key individuals. In practice this involved:

  - Detailed review of existing statistical data and identification of additional data needed, including devising formats for the data to be provided from HLF databases in order to meet the specific objectives of the evaluation, particularly in relation to SP2 targets.

  - Visits to four country and regional offices for face to face interviews as follows:
    - Scotland (Edinburgh)
      - Development team (Diane Forsythe, acting Development Manager; plus Siobhan Dougherty and Annabel Bath, Development Officers)
      - Country Manager (Colin McLean)
    - West Midlands (Birmingham)
      - Development staff (Chris Tomlin, Development Manager; and Liz Woodhall, Development Officer)
      - Regional Manager (Anne Jenkins)*
    - South West (Exeter)
      - Development Manager (Carol Procter)
      - Regional Manager (Nerys Watts)
    - North West (Manchester)
      - Development Manager (Karen May)
      - Regional Manager (Tony Jones)*

    Interviews took approx 1.5 to 2 hours with Development Managers and Development Officers; and approx 0.5 hours with Regional and Country Managers. Those interviews marked * were conducted separately, by phone, as the staff concerned were not available at the time of the visit. Most Development Managers and Development Officers also provided additional information before and after interviews.

    In addition, the evaluator was able to attend a regular monthly workshop held for potential applicants at the Birmingham (West Midlands) office, which allowed for informal discussions about the development approach with potential applicants and with the HLF Grants Officers present.

  - Telephone conversations with the relevant HLF development and grants staff, and with a representative of the applicant group, for the four life stories to provide the required views of applicants.

- **Developing analytical frameworks** against which to assess and use the data collected. Four main frameworks have been used:
  - the SP2 aims and targets (see section 5)
  - the characteristics of good development work (see section 6.2)

- • the objectives of the development programme (see section 6.4)
- • the objectives of the evaluation (see section 2.2).

- • **Communications**. It was agreed with the Advisory Group that the final report of the evaluation would be presented in two forms:
  - • The main final report, which would contain all the details of the evaluation study and its findings, conclusions and recommendations.
  - • A 4-page summary report, covering the main points of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

  The brief identified the key audiences for the evaluation overall as:
  - • The HLF Board of Trustees and staff
  - • Relevant government departments
  - • Regional and local development agencies and support services for the community sector
  - • The heritage sector (e.g. English Heritage, Countryside Agency, National Trust, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council)
  - • Non-heritage applicants or organisations currently engaged in heritage projects.

3. HLF DEVELOPMENT WORK IN PRACTICE

3.1 Introduction

Development work in HLF was established to help deliver the new priorities for HLF identified in the Strategic Plan 2002 - 2007 (SP2). This section of the evaluation report describes the aims and objectives of the development work, and the main activities undertaken by development staff. The impacts of the development work are described separately, in sections 4 and 5. See also section 6 for four detailed examples of how HLF development staff worked on specific projects.

The material in this section draws particularly on detailed research in four HLF countries / regions (North West and South West England, the West Midlands and Scotland), although the general trends and activities are broadly common across HLF's development work.

3.2 Aims and objectives of the development programme

HLF's development work was established in 2002 to help meet the new priorities of HLF's Strategic Plan (2002 - 2007). HLF had previously undertaken initiatives to enhance the accessibility of its funds to community and other commonly excluded groups. Examples include the Cash for Coventry project which ran from 2001-2002, joint funding fairs with other Lottery Distributors (e.g. in Great Yarmouth in 2000), and the Spotlight on St Helens project, a joint outreach initiative with other Lottery Distributors over six weeks in mid-2002. Recognising that a piecemeal approach would not be effective in the long term, HLF decided to create a dedicated development function to expand this work and deliver a more sustained and coherent approach.

The four broad aims of HLF's Strategic Plan (SP2) are:
- to encourage more people to be involved in and make decisions about their heritage
- to conserve and enhance the UK's diverse heritage
- to ensure that everyone can learn about, have access to and enjoy their heritage
- to bring about a more equitable spread of our grants across the UK.

The development staff were expected to be of particular value in enabling HLF to achieve the fourth aim, and to play a role in assisting the delivery of the other aims.

SP2 outlines the role of HLF's development work in helping to achieve these aims:

- "We will prioritise our development resources in favour of those communities which have to date received least funding and fewest grants from us, and which are in areas of high social and economic deprivation. Our country and regional committees will each identify five local authority areas to be targeted for this support. We will use our powers of solicitation as necessary" (4.4.6), and

- "In order to deliver this improved service to applicants and potential applicants we have to enhance our own capacity. We are therefore in the process of establishing:
  - Regional offices in England as bases for assessment and monitoring in order that we can operate closer to applicants and grantees. Offices will be open in May 2002 and the transfer of staff completed by April 2005.
  - Development teams in those offices to work with a wider range of partners and encourage more applications. These will be set up by October 2002." (4.4.7).

SP2 also states (para 4.4.9) that "Marketing the availability of funds and helping to raise the capacity of potential applicants are important areas where the different distributors of Lottery money can work together. Much is already happening on the ground, but *our new development staff and a regional presence in England will add significantly to our ability to work in this way*." (emphasis added).

Within these broad aims and initial priorities, six objectives were identified for HLF's development work (Report on the Development Function to the NHMF Board, 15 October 2002):
- to raise the profile in the territory and to promote awareness of HLF grant programmes and activities
- to reach new audiences and generate interest in heritage
- to increase the number of applications from profile raising areas
- to encourage first time applicants
- to promote good practice and improve the quality of applications
- to develop opportunities for joint working with other lottery distributors and heritage partners.

HLF English Regional Committees were established in 2001, and offices and staff were in place early in 2002. In 1999, offices were opened in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some regions and countries started some outreach work, but the first major development activity was the creation of the initial Development Plans, which had been completed for all regions and countries by October 2002. Plans for development work have since been incorporated into the general country and regional Operating Plans.

By October 2002, most of the development staff were in post. The core development staff comprise one development manager and one or two development officers. In the four regions examined in detail for this evaluation, there were variations to this basic team structure:

- **Young Roots**. Young Roots co-ordinators (usually part-time) are sometimes formally part of the development team, and line-managed by the development manager, and sometimes not. Either way, the working relationship between Young Roots programmes and the development staff is close. This evaluation has not examined the Young Roots work as it is being evaluated separately.

- **Highlands and Islands Development Officer**. In Scotland, a third development officer has been employed to cover the Highlands and Islands, and is based in Inverness (the rest of the team is based in Edinburgh). This post is 50% funded by HLF and 50% by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and the development officer's time is split between these different responsibilities. Highland and Island Arts is also a partner in this initiative. A separate evaluation of this post has been undertaken recently.

- **Secondments**. In the North West there have been various secondments since the development work began. At present (November 2004) there are two staff, based in the priority areas, seconded to HLF development work: one provides one day a week to HLF, and is based in Halton Borough Council; the other provides 1.5 days a week and is based in Knowsley Council for Voluntary Service. The secondments started in March 2004 and are due to continue until March 2005.

Development staff come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some come with experience of grant assessment and administration, from within and outside HLF. Other staff come from voluntary and community organisations, have experience of community development and of working with disadvantaged communities. There is also a wide range of technical heritage knowledge among development staff including land management, museum and gallery collections, archives and arts. In interviews for this study, staff have welcomed the value HLF places on the experience and knowledge of the staff, and the calibre of staff is clearly very high.

3.3   Special development areas (SDAs)

Each country and region has a limited number of special development areas, also known as priority areas and 'cold spots'. The focus on these areas reflects the aim in SP2 to prioritise HLF development resources in favour of "those communities which have to date received least funding and fewest grants from us, and which are in the areas of high social and economic deprivation".

There are on average five to six SDAs per territory (except for the East Midlands, which has eight), with a total of 72 across the UK (see Annex 2 for a full list of SDAs). Each SDA covers a single local authority area, including some which are county-wide.

The SDAs were agreed by country or regional committees and are typically areas with historically low investment from HLF and suffering from social and economic deprivation (as proposed in SP2). In some regions, an SDA may have been chosen to reflect other regional priorities. For example, Herefordshire has been declared a special development area in West Midlands region because, although not having a below average per capita spend overall, the pattern of spend has been very narrow. Here, the aim was to use SDA status to widen the scope and number of contacts, applicants and grantees from across the county.

In many regions, the focus of work in SDAs is very much on working in partnership with the local authorities (especially departments such as the museums service, heritage, education and health), and with the main umbrella bodies for voluntary and community groups: the council for voluntary service (CVS) or the rural community council (RCC). These bodies already have contacts with the local groups which can be new audiences for heritage.

Some development staff take a very focused approach to work in the SDAs. For example:

- In North West region each member of the development staff takes responsibility for one SDA, and works one day a week from an office based in the locality, either in the local authority or in the CVS. From this local base, HLF development staff run advice surgeries, workshops to explain and promote Your Heritage grants, offer one-to-one pre-application advice, and follow up with telephone calls to check progress.

- In Scotland, HLF development staff produced a special factsheet on HLF funding for Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs), including six relevant case studies. There are 48 SIPS designated in Scotland, covering neighbourhoods suffering from multiple deprivation and benefiting from special government funding programmes designed to support regeneration. SIPs areas do not match local authority boundaries: only 34 of the 48 are geographical, the others being themed, and all are within 18 local authority areas.

    The factsheet was circulated to all relevant contacts in the SIPs and followed up with letters, phone calls and briefings. An independent evaluation of HLF involvement in SIPs (completed June 2004) provided some baseline data, including that SIPs were producing fewer applications than other areas, investment was low, and success rates were lower than other areas (36% compared to 46%). However, the study concluded that, in spite of the difficulties, there were examples of very successful projects in these areas, "proving that heritage can be a vital tool in urban regeneration" (Elliker 2004).

In addition to these geographical priority areas, HLF development staff work extensively with first time applicants (FTAs). SP2 identifies "encouraging applications from new applicants" as an important part of the programme of change (para 7.3), and sets targets for applications from FTAs, and their success rates (see section 5 for progress on meeting these targets). The geographical SDAs and focus on FTAs together form a key element of HLF's programme of development work designed to meet the aim of bringing about a more equitable spread of HLF grants across the UK.

Several regions and countries have targeted certain categories of first time applicants by focusing on particular social groups, and geographical areas, from which few applications to HLF have been made. All regions and countries target young people through the Young Roots programme. In addition, some regions have focused on black and minority ethnic (BME) communities (including London, North West, South West and West Midlands). Some have focused on rural areas (e.g. West Midlands special development area, and North West region), some on former coalfield areas and some on other specially designated areas of deprivation (e.g. SIPs in Scotland). Examples of some of the approaches adopted include:

- In the West Midlands, HLF Policy staff worked with the regional development team to develop a pilot research project as a result of concern about low numbers of applications from BME communities, and the limited subject, scope and scale of the applications that were received. The project includes an audit (with Birmingham University) of the heritage that is significant to BME communities, working in partnership with English Heritage, the Countryside Agency, the National Trust, Black History Foundation, Black Environment Network, and others. HLF Policy staff have also worked with several other development teams on activities to increase the involvement of BME communities.

- In the North West:

  - Independent research was commissioned on how best to support rural applications from the North West region, and recommendations were presented to the North West Committee in June 2003. It was agreed that priority would be given to one-to-one pre-application advice to applicants from rural areas, rural applications would be promoted at all development events, strategic forums and 'training the trainer' events set up. A part-time secondee was in post by December 2003 to support potential applicants from rural areas at the pre-application stage. Priority was also given to developing relationships with rural regeneration partnerships and agencies at regional and sub-regional levels.

  - Development staff reviewed grants to BME groups in the North West region between October 2002 to May 2004, undertook research on the BME population of the region and their heritage interests, and held consultations with BME organisations across the region. A detailed strategy for development activity with BME communities in 2004-5 has been developed on the basis of that research, including identifying clear performance measures.

- In the South West region an initial meeting between the development manager and the Bristol-based Black Development Agency (BDA) led to HLF being invited to BDA's funding fair in October 2003. This led to HLF developing a series of four 'training the trainer' workshops in association with BDA, aimed at enabling BME community group leaders to advise their members about HLF funding. As well as detailed information on HLF grants criteria and processes, the training sessions also covered presentation skills and financial management, which helped build the personal skills of those attending and thus provided an added incentive for attendance which was highly valued by participants. Although the sessions were held in Bristol, they also attracted participants from Bath and South Gloucestershire.

The workshops were followed by more detailed sessions with potential applicants and, by March 2004, four Your Heritage and two Young Roots applications were in progress. Two further BME groups from South Gloucestershire, who heard about HLF as a result of the training sessions, were also in the process of submitting applications.

The training sessions were designed for HLF by consultant Clifford Hinkson, who also prepared detailed guidance notes for use during the events and which are still being used. HLF staff were then able to run these sessions for BME groups themselves, using the guidance material, so the experience has also developed HLF staff skills. A further event was then run in South Gloucestershire at the invitation of a BME group who heard about the Bristol sessions and wanted something similar. South Gloucestershire has a large number of heritage and community organisations, and good support networks, and HLF regional staff see this area has having good potential for high quality Your Heritage projects.

Development work in special development areas and with first time applicants inevitably takes some considerable time to have measurable impacts, as the groups in these categories are likely to be the least experienced and least confident in undertaking heritage projects. However, some trends are beginning to emerge:

- Some SDAs are responding well to the development activities undertaken, and numbers of pre-application inquiries and actual applications are starting to grow. However, some SDAs have still shown little or no interest in heritage projects in spite of intensive work by development staff (see 5.5 and 5.6 for details of progress towards SP2 targets).

  Development staff are now considering future priorities given these variable and changing circumstances, including further investigation of why some localities have not responded and how to tackle these problems, diverting resources from those SDAs which are no longer below average in terms of per capita applications or spend, and identifying other priority areas, within the framework of SP2 and the existing country and regional operating plans.

- Progress is also being made in reaching first time applicants, and in increasing interest and successful applications (see section 5.3 and 5.4 for details of progress towards SP2 targets). Innovative approaches targeting specific sectors of society (especially black and minority ethnic groups) appear to be particularly effective, and development staff plan to continue and extend these activities, including by identifying and working with new 'hard to reach' and 'under represented' sectors who are new to heritage activities (e.g. people with disabilities).

  However, the focus on first time applicants does raise issues for future strategic decisions, including whether it is most effective in meeting HLF's aims to continually seek 'new' audiences rather than concentrating on some of those groups now beginning to work effectively with heritage, but still at relatively small scale and on projects with limited scope.

3.4 Development activities

The main activities undertaken by development staff can be divided into six main strands of work, each of which is described below in detail:

- Publicity and promotion of HLF's grants and activities
- Outreach work to generate new interest in heritage, and grant applications
- Pre-application advice and other advice and support
- Networking and partnership activities
- Input to assessment processes
- Research and development initiatives.

The West Midlands development manager produced a rough diagram for the evaluation interview (see Annex 3), which usefully summarises the range of activities in that region (and gives a good sense of development activities across the organisation). In Scotland, the development staff made a presentation of their work to Scotland Committee members in May 2003, and summarised "a week in the life of the development team", which provides another useful glimpse of how development work operates in practice (see Annex 4).

3.4.1 Publicity and promotion

When HLF's regional and country development staff were appointed, protocols were established to guide the communications activities locally and to shape the relationship with the corporate Communications department. A CD Rom-based package provided tailored presentation materials, supported by case study material.

For the first twelve to 18 months of operation, most development staff organised 'roadshows' around their territory (especially in the SDAs), often using these corporate tools. These events were essentially to let people know that HLF now had regional offices, what grants were available, how to apply, and the new priorities of HLF (following SP2). As general awareness of HLF has grown in the regions since 2002, few regions or countries continue to run these general workshops, preferring instead to use much more targeted events and presentation methods (see section 3.4.2 for examples).

In addition, the key messages promoted through these events have changed since development work was launched in 2002. As funding budgets have become more limited, a careful balance now has to be struck between encouraging groups to apply for funding for good projects, and ensuring groups have realistic expectations of their chances of success given the much more competitive environment for HLF funding, and thus the need for high quality applications.

Development staff in all regions continue to develop and maintain contacts databases, produce and circulate publicity materials and mailshots to support their work to raise HLF's profile and promote its grants and activities. Examples include:

- Each region has a colour leaflet on its development work, identifying the SDAs and the help available to potential applicants, and including some short case study examples of projects funded to illustrate the range of activities which may be eligible.

- Articles are placed in regional and local magazines and newsletters, targeted at general voluntary and community sector audiences (e.g. through CVS and RCC newsletters), and at specific target groups (e.g. BTCV, Social Inclusion Partnerships). These do reach small local groups and also help keep the umbrella bodies publishing the newsletters in touch with HLF developments. Standard articles are often used for this purpose, simply tailored for the different target audiences (e.g. with different case studies) for a particular locality.

- In the West Midlands, an Asian languages leaflet was produced in 2003, and was widely distributed and well-received. The region plans to turn the leaflet into a poster, so it can be kept permanently on view.

- Email lists are used to publicise events, new initiatives etc. In Scotland, an email bulletin is sent monthly to the Lottery officers group and other partners to publicise new grants given.

3.4.2 Outreach work

All countries and regions have activities aimed at reaching new audiences (including first time applicants), and to generate interest in heritage. Much of this work focuses on the SDAs (see section 3.3) but will also be done elsewhere in the region as appropriate. For example, in the North West region, 92 events were held between 2002 and 2004. Examples of outreach work include:

- **In-house workshops**. The West Midlands region runs a monthly workshop at their offices in Birmingham, on the last Thursday of each month from 11am to 1pm. This central location works well in this region, where there is a strong regional sense of identity around Birmingham as a hub. The workshop is publicised through CVS and local authority contacts, and attracts potential applicants and advisers who can pass information on to others.

  As an example, at the event in August 2004 (attended by the evaluator), there were 40 minutes of presentations from HLF staff on HLF generally (with regional examples), and then 40 minutes on what makes a good application to HLF. The workshop then split into small groups, led by development staff or the senior grants officer (who attended) so more detailed (and one-to-one) advice could be given. This session was attended by eight people:
  - YHA head of fundraising; YHA had received HLF funding before
  - Stratford on Avon council community grants advice officer
  - Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO), which has development teams based in coalfield areas
  - The Black History Working Group, Telford
  - A local church restoration committee (which had previously had a grant, and now wanted to restore the bells)
  - Playtrain, a children's arts organisation which was also involved in getting 8 - 12 year olds more involved in museums and galleries
  - Chrysalis Club 2000, a club for disaffected youth which was interested in doing a project on travellers
  - Birmingham Institute for the Deaf, which had a potential archive project.

The feedback from the meeting was positive, and those attending found it valuable in gaining more information about HLF, its priorities and how it works. A workshop of this sort can be a more efficient way of transmitting this information than one-to-one communications, as people learn as much from the questions and interests of other participants as they do from the presentations.

- **Exhibitions**. The North West region developed a general exhibition which was used at various events. For example, the team took a stand in the Blackpool Winter Gardens for two months to generate interest in heritage in an area which had produced very few applications or inquiries. While the stand was up, the staff themselves did a basic oral history project, interviewing passers by about what they considered to be Blackpool's heritage. The information collected was then used to produce a heritage quiz for a Blackpool heritage day entitled 'Heritage beyond the Golden Mile'.

- **Materials**. The North West region also developed a series of materials designed to prompt discussion about 'what is heritage?'. They designed and produced:
  - a card game, which encourages one participant in turn to act out what is on the card (a range of heritage activities), without saying the word on the card, so others will guess what it is
  - a board game, based on Monopoly, which can be customised for Your Heritage or Heritage Grants workshops
  - a set of large picture postcards which can be spread out on a table so people at a meeting can see at a glance what heritage can mean.

  These materials were all designed so that they can either be used by staff at an HLF workshop, or in an HLF slot at a meeting run by another organisation, or they can simply be sent to an event and used by someone else. They can also be customised for the Young Roots and Project Planning Grant programmes.

- **Follow-up of pre-applications**. In Scotland, one outreach initiative during 2003 was to follow-up (by telephone) all pre-applications which had not turned into full applications, and offer support and help if groups needed it. Although staff felt this was a useful exercise, they have not found time to repeat the exercise.

- **Coalfield community events**. Events in England (held in the West Midlands in October 2003) and Scotland (in May 2003) were held to launch HLF's response to *Something to be Proud of,* the report to HLF from the Coalfield Communities Campaign, the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT) in July 2002. New guidelines from HLF were launched at the same time.

  In Scotland, the event attracted 60 participants including representatives from all the major Scottish coalfield areas (so it was successful in reaching its target audience). Presentations were made by HLF, CISWO and the CRT, and by two people whose groups had received HLF funding for projects in coalfield areas. HLF had no special grants programme to announce, as some attendees had hoped, so there could have been a hostile reception but feedback showed the response to the event was positive.

Two groups that attended the event went on to get Your Heritage awards. In both cases, HLF development staff worked with CISWO at the pre-application stage, and had regular contact with the groups themselves. Both needed support from the Scottish Museums Council, so HLF were able to give them appropriate contacts. As a result, in July 2004, Croy Historical Society, North Lanarkshire, was awarded £32,700, and the Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society, South Lanarkshire, was awarded £23,800 for a village archive project.

- **Heritage survey**. The Scotland development staff did a postal questionnaire survey of 'What is Heritage?' among 150 community groups in East Ayrshire (an SDA) from January to March 2003. The survey was designed to raise interest in local heritage in an area with very few previous applications to HLF. The survey found that:

    - most groups already knew about HLF
    - they had a broad understanding of what heritage is
    - most people thought that heritage was about:
        - allowing people to learn about the past
        - creating a sense of place / value
        - linking people to their community.

    The Scotland development staff felt they had obtained useful data on levels of understanding of HLF and perceptions of heritage in the locality, and that the survey had been a good way of making new contacts (about 30 groups responded). The development staff followed up by providing information on HLF funding to interested groups, and advice / surgeries for groups with project ideas.

- **Developing heritage event**. The Highlands and Islands development officer, in Scotland, co-ordinated the 'Developing Heritage in the Highlands and Islands' event in September 2003 to increase interest in heritage activities among FTAs. There were some formal presentation, but most of the day was spent in small workshops, each with a 'grantee ambassador' and a speaker from a formal heritage or support organisations. The workshops were on:

    - Archives / roots, run by Highland Council Archive Service and Scottish Museums Service
    - Heritage and the local economy, run by Highlands and Islands Enterprise
    - Culture in the Highlands and Islands, Highland 2007 team
    - Access to natural heritage, Scottish Natural Heritage
    - Involving young people in heritage, Youthlink Scotland
    - Setting up a new heritage projects, Scottish Museums Service.

There were 120 participants, over half of whom were potential FTAs to HLF. The feedback from participants on what they planned to do next showed a great willingness to develop ideas for projects and to apply for HLF funding, and to pass on information to relevant groups and colleagues. HLF's role in the event was particularly appreciated by participants, most of whom said they had a better understanding of heritage as a result.

3.4.3 Pre-application advice and other advice and support

Development staff spend the bulk of their time giving pre-application advice to individuals and groups on their specific projects. This generally takes 50-60% of development staff time, sometimes up to 80%, so it is a major part of development activity. The allocation of responsibility for dealing with pre-application inquiries varies between regions and countries. For example:

- In Scotland, the development team do all pre-application inquiries on Awards for All, Your Heritage and Heritage Grants; other staff deal with pre-application inquiries to the specialist programmes (parks, places of worship, Townscape Heritage Initiative and Landscape Partnerships), and major repeat applicants.

- In the South West region, development staff give all pre-application advice. Groups are offered one hour advice as a standard service, once they have submitted a pre-application form.

- In the North West, development staff sift all pre-applications, and deal with all those under £1 million (the vast majority); those over £1 million are passed to other staff with the particular expertise necessary for that inquiry.

- In the West Midlands, the development staff deal with all pre-application inquiries. The regional manager is involved with some of the largest potential schemes and, wherever possible, members of the grants team with relevant experience are involved.

The development advice given may be by email, phone, letter or in a face to face meeting, and is likely to cover advice on:

- HLF process, criteria, funding streams etc, especially around the priorities launched in SP2 around the importance of learning, access and involvement being included to as high a professional standard as the physical heritage aspects of the project.
- Detailed project planning, including timing and budgets.
- The importance of a good quality application, and how to achieve that, especially in the light of increased competition due to a high volume of applications.
- Where to get specialist advice, and specific contacts.
- Examples of similar projects.
- The limits to the advice that can be given, and that working with development staff cannot guarantee success as the decisions are made by others.
- The importance of checking back with HLF if the application is delayed for any reason, as things can change as budget limits change (e.g. whether a building has to be designated or not to qualify for a grant).

The aim of this advice is to increase the quality of good applications, which helps create better quality projects, and to reduce the number of ineligible and poor applications made to HLF. The advice is also designed to support groups, especially first time applicants and those from special development areas, who are inexperienced in raising funds, to enable them to develop the best quality application they can.

HLF development advice focuses on the actual application process, and does not tell people what they should do in their projects. Help with the application process is not just about filling in the application form, it is about helping the applicant think through what they want to do with HLF funding and what they want the money for. It is precisely this focus on the application (which is HLF's business) and not the project (which is not) that gives HLF development work such clarity and enables the ownership of the project to stay with the applicant.

Although the Your Heritage programme processes have been designed to be simple and easy to use, many groups still find the process difficult and resource intensive. However, with development staff support, even very inexperienced groups have successfully completed and submitted applications, and been awarded funding for their projects. The help with the detailed planning needed to complete the application can become a learning process for the groups, enabling them to tackle their project itself more effectively.

The use of the pre-application form has increased dramatically since it was introduced in April 2002. Although comprehensive data is not available, it is clear that the use of the pre-application form and process has become a key element in the HLF development process. In their report on progress on development work between 2002-4, the North West region concluded that there was a 500% increase in the use of the pre-application form in their region during that time.

It is clear from HLF's Customer Care Monitor (see section 5.8) that applicants appreciate and value the pre-application advice they receive. It may be useful, at some point in the future when sufficient data is available, to undertake an analysis of the longer term impacts of pre-application advice to further the test the value of the process to HLF and to applicants (e.g. on the success rate of applications overall, which can be affected by withdrawals of applications that are likely to be unsuccessful, as well as applications which become successful with advice). Although the success of an application clearly depends on many factors, of which development advice is only one, such an assessment could give useful feedback on the development process.

The North West region has recently undertaken a pilot evaluation of the impact of pre-application advice in their region (interim report December 2004). This pilot undertook a detailed examination of 60 pre-applications received between October 2002 and June 2004, and found that:

• The time taken between initial contact and formal application was between 18 months and two years on average.

• The success rate for projects with pre-application advice was 71%, compared to an overall regional average of 62%.

• 106 out of 600 initial pre-application inquiries for the region decided not to proceed with an application, saving an estimated £94,000 in assessment time and expert advice.

• There was extremely positive feedback about the quality of the pre-application service (a finding confirmed by the much larger national HLF Customer Care Monitor survey, see section 5.8).

Although the use of the pre-application form is not compulsory, anecdotal evidence suggests that many groups are now using it. In the West Midlands, there is a sense among development staff that very few applications are now submitted from first time applicants without discussions with development staff, so for that target audience, the process is becoming well-known and well-used.

Other Lottery distributors (e.g. the Big Lottery Fund) have introduced a similar pre-application form, but have made it a compulsory step in the application process. This approach does have some significant drawbacks, especially by increasing the number of pre-application forms that need to be dealt with. With HLF's approach, only those who need or want pre-application advice complete the form and get advice so development staff time is not spent simply processing unnecessary forms from organisations which neither want nor need advice. It would therefore appear that, at present, HLF's voluntary approach to pre-application forms and advice is the most effective and efficient model.

Two final general points can be made about HLF's approach to pre-application advice:

- Some applicants are not <u>willing</u> (and sometimes not <u>able</u>) to take the advice given, even when it is asked for.

- Saying 'no' is a core element of the advice role. Although development staff are always as supportive and positive as possible, it is as important to development staff to let an applicant know, at as early a stage as possible, if their application is unlikely to be successful (for whatever reason e.g. ineligibility, capacity of the group, low heritage value), as it is to help the group improve the application so it stands a greater chance of being successful. This is part of the value of the development activity, as it saves the applicant time and resources on an application that is likely to fail, it saves development staff time later trying to provide advice on a poor project, and saves grants officer time by reducing the number of ineligible or weak projects that have to be formally assessed (see above). Clearly, however, this is exactly the sort of advice potential applicants find most difficult to accept.

In addition to one-to-one pre-application advice, development staff undertake advice work in a number of other ways. Advice is given at the surgeries and outreach events already described above (see sections 3.3. on special development areas, and 3.4.2 on outreach work). Examples of other innovative approaches to advice work include:

- **Strategic guidance on prioritising bids**. Although much of the work of development staff has to date been with groups new to heritage, first time applicants and socially excluded communities, they are increasingly working with 'serial' applicants which have in the past submitted multiple bids (sometimes consecutively, sometimes at the same time). This can include local authorities and major conservation organisations which have received significant funding in the past. For example:

    - In the South West, HLF development staff facilitated Cornwall County Council, and the district councils within the county, to work together to prioritise their bids. The HLF intervention succeeded in enabling all these bodies to develop a prioritised set of bids.

The South West have taken a similar, and similarly successful, approach to working with Dorset County Council (see section 4.3), Torbay District Council, Somerset County Council, the wildlife trusts, the National Trust and the YHA in the region.

- The West Midlands have facilitated bid prioritisation with Birmingham City Council and Sandwell and Walsall borough councils, as well as with the wildlife trusts and the National Trust.

Strategic interventions of this kind are time-consuming, and can be difficult to make successful, but they do enable applicants to have more realistic expectations of the scale of funding that may be available for a limited number of applications.

- **Grantee ambassadors**. Building on the case study approach, several countries and regions have identified a number of grantee ambassadors, who are individuals from successful projects who can tell their stories to inspire and help potential applicants. It does take work to identify not just a successful project, but an individual within the group who can communicate well to a range of audiences. However, this has proved to be time well spent, and is always very well received by new audiences to heritage. Some regions (e.g. Scotland) are now considering developing the role of these individuals so they can more formally 'mentor' new grantees and applicants.

- **'What makes a good application?' workshops** have been run in several places. However, feedback suggests that this is not necessarily the most effective approach for applicants, who really want advice specific to their project. The West Midlands approach of incorporating this into a workshop which includes one-to-one advice may be a good compromise in getting this information out to applicants without having individual meetings.

- **Information materials**. The development staff in Scotland have produced a series of leaflets to provide basic information on the application process and on certain projects. They have produced leaflets for external audiences on the following (the last three are also used in specific pre-application responses):
  - HLF grants in Social Inclusion Partnership areas
  - What makes a good application?
  - Planning an oral history project
  - Restoration of church organs
  - Archives.

3.4.4 Networking and partnership activities

HLF's Strategic Plan 2 always envisaged that development work would involve new partnerships with a whole range of heritage and non-heritage organisations. For development staff, networking and partnership activities have become a core element of their work in a number of ways, not least as the most effective way of reaching new audiences and first time applicants, including in the special development areas. This work can involve the relevant specialist Policy officer from HLF's Policy Department. Initiatives developed in the four regions examined in detail in this study include:

- **Themed events**. Several regions have run events to bring potential applicants, and potential funding partners, together around a specific theme. The work on black and minority ethnic (BME) communities has already been outlined (see section 3.3), and others include:

    - **Parks**. In South West region, an event was held in January 2004 on parks, to which all local authorities in the region were invited. There were 40 participants, and speakers included parks advisers from HLF and English Heritage. Following these short presentations, HLF staff (including grants staff) gave one-to-one advice to potential applicants and partners.

    - **Aviation**. Also in the South West, an event is planned on aviation, jointly with SWMLAC, as there are several major aviation heritage projects planned in the region in the near future. The aim, as with the parks event, is to bring together potential applicants, funding partners and advisers from appropriate bodies.

    - **Biodiversity**. In the North West region, an event was held in January 2004 with all wildlife trusts, RSPB, English Nature and the Countryside Agency to discuss biodiversity. Participants agreed to work together and to hold a joint Biodiversity and Education training event.

- **Joint events with local organisations**. The most common partnership activity for HLF development staff is to hold an outreach meeting to raise awareness of HLF and understanding of heritage in partnership with a local organisation (usually a local authority or a council for voluntary service; see section 3.4.2 for some examples). Such partnerships can provide HLF with a partner with local knowledge and local contacts. In addition, while HLF can provide advice on HLF procedures, and technical heritage issues, they do not have the resources to provide in depth training and capacity building for new and inexperienced groups. By working with these local partners, HLF can reach the new audiences prioritised in SP2, while linking them directly into additional capacity building support from other local bodies if they need it.

- **'Training the trainer' events**. Several regions are now holding events to provide staff in other organisations, who give grants advice to their members or to others, with up to date information about HLF grants and activities. These might be staff in local authorities, councils for voluntary service or other community support organisations, who can advise community groups and other potential applicants, and reduce the level of inappropriate inquiries and pre-applications received by HLF. The South West region's training the trainer events for black and minority ethnic community leaders have already been described (see section 3.3), and other initiatives include:

    - In the North West, five sub-regional 'training the trainer' events were held, attracting 360 delegates from 230 organisations. In the feedback received, 88% said their understanding of HLF grants programmes increased as a result.

- In Scotland, their 'training the trainer' events is aimed at local authority, CVS and SIP staff (including SIP Kickstart community development workers), and other voluntary and community sector staff. These have proved very popular with participants, and always get very positive feedback in post-event evaluations, but development staff in Scotland feel that they are unlikely to raise the quality of applications on their own.

- **Links with other Lottery Distributors, and other funding networks**. Joint working with other Lottery distributors is clearly increasing. While all regions now have a regional Joint Lottery Distributors Forum meeting, usually attended by HLF Regional Managers, some regions are also now developing a regional forum for Lottery development staff (these have begun in the South West, West Midlands and North West).

  HLF has already been involved in a range of cross-Lottery distributor initiatives, including the Brunel 2000 initiative in the South West, the Spotlight on St Helens joint outreach project in the North West in 2002, and plans for an outreach initiative in Telford in the West Midlands. In addition, the North West Joint Distributors Development Forum has recently carried out a small evaluation (based on case studies) on the effectiveness of joint pre-application work.

  Several regions work with forums at various levels which bring together local authority external funding officers / Lottery officers, who are often a primary contact for disseminating information on Lottery funding within the local authority and to other groups in the area. In Scotland, the development team send regular electronic mailings to these officers across Scotland. In the South East and East of England regions there are regional Lottery forums which bring together the county council external funding officers. HLF staff have found these groups useful for disseminating information and news (e.g. about new grant schemes), consulting on specific Lottery initiatives as these officers see themselves as part of the Lottery 'helper' system, and advocacy on policy developments.

  In South East region, HLF also attends a South East Voluntary Sector Funders Forum which meets quarterly and aims to enable funders in the region to be more effective in tackling social exclusion through their collective and individual funding of voluntary and community organisations. Engagement in these networks not only helps in disseminating information, and consolidates HLF's role in providing support to voluntary and community groups, but also ensures that HLF's unique role (and the role of heritage funding generally) is better and more widely understood.

- **Strategic regional approaches to partnership**. Some regions and countries have made partnerships with other bodies a key part of their development work:

  - In the North West, development staff have taken a planned approach to its relationships with other regional bodies. During 2004, the development team identified all the strategic bodies in the region relevant to heritage, and allocated responsibility for contact with each organisation to a member of staff. Plans for 2005-6 are taking this work further by working more proactively with a number of these bodies.

- In Scotland, where the country office has been established for longer than in the English regions, HLF has become better known and is possibly more embedded in the national scene, with close contacts with the Scottish Executive and with Ministers in the Scottish Parliament. The development staff also have relationships with a number of other bodies, including participating in joint away-days with Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Museums Service and Historic Scotland. They have also participated in joint training with community sector partners such as Youthlink Scotland, and are involved in new partnerships with Greenspace Scotland, Capability Scotland and Heritage Futures.

- **Briefings and other informal contacts**. Other regions and countries also have a wide range of regular partnerships contacts including in the West Midlands and South West with regional groupings of officers working in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and most regions with the regional development agency, and statutory and voluntary regeneration bodies. New partnerships at local level include links to Local Strategic Partnerships (in England) and Community Planning Partnerships (in Scotland), as these are increasingly taking responsibility for service co-ordination at local authority level.

3.4.5 Input to grant assessment processes

There is no formal mechanism in HLF's grant assessment procedures for taking account of the pre-application advice and support provided by development staff. However, development staff, and the Country and Regional Managers, are powerfully aware of the benefits of integrating the development and assessment functions at regional level, not least in maintaining and improving the reputation of HLF as having efficient and effective internal communications. It has therefore been a priority for regional development staff to ensure effective integration with grant assessment processes.

All regions have joint staff meetings, and various other approaches have been found to enable development staff to contribute effectively to the grant assessment process:

- **Formal briefing for grants officers**. All development staff keep detailed records of the pre-application advice they give, and these are passed to the grants officers when the application is formally received. These records can provide details of the advice given, so the grants officer can see whether it has been followed, and give some indication of the effort the group has made to improve the quality of the application as a result.

- **Informal briefing for grants officers**. Development staff can talk informally to the grants officer to provide valuable intelligence on the context around the application (e.g. the likely social impact given its location), and also on the capacity of the group to deliver the project, as they will have more in depth knowledge of the applicant at that stage. These working relationships can also be useful in rejection communications with groups, as development staff sometimes have a more personal relationship with the group and can therefore help manage these difficult situations more easily and effectively.

- **Involvement of grants officers in development activity**. Several regions encourage grants officers to get involved in some pre-application inquiries, including visiting groups with development staff, partly to provide continuing direct personal experience of the problems the groups are grappling with, and partly to use any specialist knowledge the grants officer has to benefit the group and improve the quality of the application. Grants officers also very often attend larger outreach meetings organised by development staff, for the same reasons (keeping in touch with projects on the ground and giving advice).

- **Better shared knowledge between development and grants staff**. In addition to grants staff participating in development activity, some regions (where development staff do not have direct experience of grant assessment), are training development staff to undertake one or two assessments a year, to build their understanding of the process. Part-time secondments between grants and development staff, 'buddying' arrangements and sharing good practice have also been effective in increasing shared knowledge among staff.

3.4.6 Research and development

Development staff are increasingly seeing their role as taking a more strategic view of development, which requires a greater emphasis on research and development. Several of the research and evaluation projects undertaken by development staff have already been described, including:
- The survey in East Ayrshire, Scotland, of the role of heritage (see section 3.4.2)
- The evaluation of HLF investment in SIPs in Scotland (see section 3.3)
- The evaluation of the role of the development officer in the Highlands and Islands (see section 3.3)
- The research in the North West on working with black and ethnic minority communities (see section 3.3).
- The research into ways of working more effectively with applicants from rural areas in the North West region (see section 3.3)
- The current evaluation of the numbers of awards to first time applicants to Your Heritage in SDAs and SIPs in Scotland, which started in April 2004 and is due for completion in April 2005.

Many development staff are also very interested in increasing their understanding of good practice in development work, within and outside HLF. This happens to some extent in the quarterly meetings of regional development managers within HLF, and there is enthusiasm for more of this.

4.   LIFE STORIES

4.1   Introduction

It was agreed during the planning stages of the evaluation to develop a small number of 'life stories' to illustrate how the development programme operated in practice with some very different projects and groups.

The process for identifying the groups and projects to be covered in the life stories was to ask the regions examined in detail in the evaluation (North West, South West, Scotland and West Midlands) to propose some appropriate examples. These selections were then examined by the evaluator, and discussed with regional staff, to produce a short list of five, which was then discussed with the Advisory Group. A final list of four projects was agreed with the Advisory Group to ensure a reasonable spread (geographical coverage, types of heritage, large and small, illustrating different development approaches etc). as follows:
•   Kilmadock Development Trust, Stirlingshire (Scotland)
•   Durlston World Heritage Gateway Project, Dorset (South West region)
•   There's a Rainbow over Blackpool Tower (North West region)
•   Cradley Village Hall, Herefordshire (West Midlands).

The aim of the life stories was to illustrate:

•   The <u>impact</u> of the development programme on the project - what difference it made, what results it had, what value it added
•   '<u>What worked</u>' in terms of support - what was most valued, most effective, and what was missing.
•   The particular contribution / significance of the HLF development programme, compared to other help available - what other help tried and what was good, what was special about the help from the HLF.

The projects are thus not necessarily typical of development work across the UK, nor of development work in the region in which they are located. They have been chosen simply to illustrate some aspects of HLF development work in more detail than has been possible elsewhere in the evaluation, and to gain some information on the views of the applicants to HLF who have had direct contact with the development programme.

4.2   Kilmadock Community History Project, Stirling, Scotland

4.2.1 Project summary

Kilmadock Development Trust is a local charitable organisation set up in 2000, following extensive community consultations, to make Doune and Deanston a better place to live, work and visit. Doune and Deanston are neighbouring villages sandwiched between Stirling and the new National Park, not overtly deprived but facing both general economic decline and major projected population expansion (30% over the next 10 years) which is driving the extensive development of new suburban housing.

Doune and Deanston both have rich histories. The whole area has monuments dating back to the Neolithic era, with three standing stones on the Hill of Row, and a Roman hospital fort. Doune has a magnificent semi-ruined castle, built by Mary Queen of Scots' half brother and used as a garrison during the Jacobite rebellion and, more recently, as a set for the Monty Python film *The Holy Grail*. It also has a strong social history, with the final livestock market of the year traditionally held there drawing people from all around. Deanston is an early industrial mill village, with the 18th century mill and many workers houses still standing. Deanston is seen as second in heritage importance only to New Lanark. The mill had the first gas lamps in Scotland and was seen by the mill workers as a centre of innovation. At one time employing over 1000 workers, the mill closed in the 1960s but some mill workers still live locally.

The threatened expansion of the area, the need for economic regeneration, the potential to attract visitors and the local interest in the heritage of the villages led to the development of the Community History Project. The Project aimed to ensure that heritage assets (people, buildings and artefacts) could be conserved and made more accessible so that interest in local history could be increased and the social and economic value of this heritage developed with the local community and visitors. The idea was to increase physical access to the heritage and remove cultural barriers for the community.

Kilmadock Development Trust had already been running an information centre, in the old bakery on the high street, for about three years, providing access to the archives and materials they had on local and family history. but they did not have the resources or heritage expertise to develop and make these resources more accessible. The Kilmadock Local History and Heritage Group already had over 70 active members (remarkable in such a small place), but even with this level of activity they were struggling to manage the centre on a completely voluntary basis. The centre was already open seven days a week, with rotas of volunteers, and had received over 18,000 visits by the end of 2003 (less than three years). The Trust board included a great deal of expertise including two history professors (one of whom was co-Director of the Oral History Centre at the University of Strathclyde), an author of a local history guide, a cartographer, someone from the local museum and experts on education, web design etc.

There are four elements to the Kilmadock Community History Project, all designed to create a sustainable community history project recording local experiences and involving local people in its content and character:

- **Oral history**. Work covering the mill history (to document and conserve mill workers' experiences), curling (Doune Curling Club is the second oldest in the world), 12 year olds' memories (those aged 12 now and other local people of various ages remembering being 12 years old), and women's lives in the locality over the past 150 years.

- **The Time Machine**. Six local history workshops and events between Doune and Deanston, bringing people together to share their own and inherited histories using drama, photography, music, cookery, video and crafts.

- **The local history centre**. The aim of the centre is to manage and present the collections of documents and artefacts in very active hands-on and engaging ways, increasing access to the archives including through a web site and CD-ROM to allow remote access as well as by visitors. The centre will also provide training in heritage skills for volunteers, both on the premises and through links to courses in higher and further educational institutions.

- **Local history trail**, linking Doune village with the castle, the two villages and the immediate surrounding area. Billed as '2000 years of history in half an hour's walk', the trail will have displays in local (currently empty) shops, bringing them back into use as well as providing venues for exhibitions. The trail is also part of a much wider strategy by the Trust to promote Kilmadock as a walking destination with a remarkable natural and historic environment.

The project sought Your Heritage funding for a staff member to provide professional heritage support to the volunteers, to develop the role of local people in local history management and to develop heritage skills, and to develop the centre so it can enable people to come together socially and creatively to explore and celebrate local history. Across all these elements, the Trust board has worked to ensure that both long term residents and newcomers are encouraged to participate and understand the history of the place as well as contributing their own personal histories.

4.2.2 History of relationship with HLF

The Trust first made contact with HLF in April 2003, when the first development worker at the Trust sent an email to HLF in Edinburgh with a very basic two-page summary of their ideas. The Trust had previously received both Awards for All and Community Fund funding, so they had some experience of working with Lottery funders. The ideas proposed to HLF, at that time closely linked to a much larger (and eventually successful) LEADER+ bid (European funding), were more ambitious than anything the Trust has done before. HLF's response to the initial contact was seen by the Trust as very helpful in that it identified the strengths of the project but also explained what further work was needed in detailed planning. HLF advised on which elements of the plans were eligible for HLF funding and which were not (e.g. not a <u>new</u> heritage centre, but potential eligibility for oral history, the heritage trail, training for volunteers and archives). More detail was also needed on evidence of need / demand for each activity area proposed, on the experience of committee members to run the project, and how the various activities would be maintained in the long term.

The Trust sent a draft application to HLF in August 2003 and were given very detailed feedback again. The Trust felt that HLF were very supportive but were asking for much more detail on exactly what was being planned, such as who the project was aimed at, which age groups, how many people were expected to visit, how many events would be held, how the different elements proposed (e.g. centre and trail) would all work together as a package, and what those involved could realistically manage to deliver. The Trust then undertook a lot more work on the application; they estimate spending twice as much time on that second draft.

Throughout the entire process, HLF staff and the Trust staff never met, and HLF never visited the site. All the communications were by phone, email and letter.

After one final email giving advice on budgets, an application was submitted in December 2003 for a Your Heritage grant. After a slight delay, as one of the forms had not been signed correctly, an award of £30,000 was made in April 2004. Permission to start was given in June 2004, and a project officer was employed from July 2004. The total time from first contact to being informed about the grant award was almost exactly one year. Grants staff considered that the Trust "has demonstrated that it has taken time to consider carefully the important resourcing and needs aspects of the project" and officers were "confident that Kilmadock Development Trust possess all the necessary skills and attributes to manage this project successfully".

4.2.3 Value of HLF development advice

Kilmadock Development Trust found the whole application process to HLF one of the least "painful" and "arduous" funding applications they have undertaken. This was not because it was not hard work, because it did require a great deal of effort, but because they were encouraged and helped throughout and felt that their hard work was appreciated (even when it was being suggested they do more).

The most useful single aspect of the advice for the Trust was HLF's early guidance to focus on just a few activities that were achievable, would work and were relevant to the community - not try to work with a wish list of "57 varieties". This focus on requiring the application to be clear and around specific activities was seen as extremely valuable, both to the application and to the project itself. HLF worked by asking very detailed questions, quite "strictly put", so the Trust did not feel pushed in any particular direction but rather helped to think about the project in more practical and concrete ways. The Trust described the approach as "no faffing around". There was support but it was not just about being 'nice'; it was not "over-personal" and the advice was clear, strongly put, "straightforward" and "very professional". At the end of the process, getting the award gave the Trust "a fantastic sense of achievement".

The Trust feel that the advice from HLF made a difference not only to the quality of the application (helping it be successful), and to the quality of the project itself (because it forced them to be clear about the choices the community was making). It is also seen as having helped the group realise the importance of heritage to the social and economic future of the villages. There were still some shops locally but a lot of the identity of the place had gone, and having a strong robust heritage focus rekindled the sense that there was a positive future. HLF's encouragement for promoting the links between heritage and people was crucial for the Trust, and they gained a lot of confidence from HLF's support of that. Ensuring that the reminiscence work drew in newcomers as well as long term residents was an important part of the Trust's strategy to encourage community cohesion and strength. Overall, the Trust feel that heritage has become a lifeline for the villages, especially as a result of work on this project.

4.2.4 Concluding remarks

The Kilmadock Community History Project illustrates the importance of HLF's approach in being encouraging but also very rigorous in demanding specific data for successful applications. In spite of the demands this made on the limited resources of this local organisation, they felt the work they put in was appreciated, which encouraged them to put in even greater effort at the next stage. They felt that HLF's advice helped them be ambitious for the community, by encouraging and pushing them to raise their ability to develop and fund an important local project. The clarity and strength of the advice, always being very specific and practical (even though HLF and Trust staff never met) were seen as particularly helpful.

4.3 Durlston World Heritage Gateway Project, Swanage, Dorset

4.3.1 Project summary

The UNESCO Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site overall plans and current activities are being co-ordinated by a team based in Dorset County Council. This team works with all the 'gateway' town (to the World Heritage Site) local authorities, the 600-strong Friends of Durlston and many other voluntary bodies, all of which are developing projects jointly and separately as part of the overall action plan for the site. There have been two elements to Dorset County Council's relationship with HLF on this work:

- The overall plans for the World Heritage Coast, and other projects Dorset County Council is co-ordinating across the county.

- A specific project, run by Dorset County Council, to restore the Grade II listed Durlston Castle and grounds as a world class gateway facility to the World Heritage Coast, integrated with the surrounding country park.

  The castle will become an interpretation and information centre, provide catering facilities to generate income for the whole site, and offer community and arts facilities. The castle is a Victorian folly, originally designed as refreshment rooms for visitors to the coastline, so the plans restore it to its original purpose as well as providing a focus for 'green tourism' (a key element of local economic development plans). There was support in initial market research for this development as long as it was in keeping with the unique natural and tranquil qualities of the country park setting of the castle.

  This project was identified as Dorset County Council's own top priority project for the World Heritage Coast (see below); they own the freehold and have recently regained the lease for the property (in partnership with the South West Regional Development Agency).

4.3.2 History of relationship with HLF

HLF development staff first made contact with the Dorset County Council (DCC) external funding officer in 2002, identifying the council as one of the key contacts for HLF in the region. The links between DCC and HLF then went through the following stages:

- An initial meeting was held between DCC and HLF in May 2003, at which the Durlston Castle project was identified as one of DCC's top priority projects. The possibility of DCC applying to HLF for a Project Planning Grant was discussed and broad brush information given to DCC on HLF criteria, timing of applications and issues such as match funding.

- An initial site meeting was held between DCC and HLF at Durlston Castle in October 2003. English Heritage attended to give expert advice. Prior to this meeting, DCC had sent HLF draft briefs for access and audience development plans. Advice from HLF at this meeting included providing DCC with HLF's Conservation Management Plan guidance which, at that time, was still in draft form.

- A meeting was held in December 2003 at HLF offices between development staff (the Development Manager and the development officer leading on this project) and DCC to discuss the Durlston project, the World Heritage Coast plans and other plans across the county.

  The meeting was partly to enable HLF to understand DCC priorities more fully, so development staff could help with focusing projects and provide guidance on the scale of projects HLF would be able to consider - there was a wide range of potential projects within the World Heritage Coast area. It was also to inform DCC about HLF's constraints and boundaries. HLF explained the new pressure on HLF's budgets and thus the fiercer competition and need for higher quality applications which met HLF criteria more precisely. Even though the World Heritage Coast was an 'icon' project for the whole of the South West region, HLF stressed that it also had other priorities, and all applications had to be very high quality to be successful.

  DCC agreed to produce a prioritised list of likely projects to provide a basis for further discussion with HLF, possibly alongside discussions with other funders (e.g. the South West Regional Development Agency, the Government Office for the South West, English Heritage, English Nature, the European Regional Development Fund etc). There could then be a rolling programme of projects, not all HLF funded but prioritised in association with HLF. It was also agreed that all larger projects within the World Heritage Coast should be prioritised before being submitted to HLF; this exercise could be led by DCC and the World Heritage Coast Trust could help co-ordinate and advise these projects. This strategic prioritisation is continuing, with a further meeting planned for February 2005.

- In the meantime, detailed planning has continued on the Durlston Castle project, one key site that DCC itself was developing within the World Heritage Coast. At the December 2003 meeting, HLF staff provided detailed feedback on the briefs for commissioning architects and other consultants on Durlston Castle, and on overall planning of the project, including:
  - the timing of submitting a Project Planning Grant application
  - the sequencing of activities, starting with the conservation management plan to provide an overall framework for the whole site, and access barriers, before finalising the audience development plan
  - where additional work was needed on access planning, the audience development plan and interpretation plans
  - how to assess how all the plans impacted on each other, and
  - recommending contacting the South West Museums, Library and Archives Council, English Heritage and others to get advice on likely consultant costs for the application budget.

- DCC sent HLF development staff re-worked project briefs, which reflected the advice given.

- Final advice was given in February 2004, and an application for a Project Planning Grant was made in March 2004, resulting in an award of £50,000 (the full amount requested). DCC expect to make a Stage 1 bid for the full project in July 2005 (currently estimated at around £900,000).

- The grants officer's assessment included comments that "This is a good PPG application with well-prepared briefs and a considered approach to the planning work required based on detailed pre-app advice … from [the development officer] which has been closely followed". The application was considered "well-presented" and in line with HLF advice and requirements.

4.3.3 Value of development advice

DCC particularly valued the following aspects of advice from development staff:

- The two-way relationship between DCC and HLF on prioritising project bids:
    - HLF's formal procedures provided DCC with sets of rules which helped them to prioritise their own applications, and the other applications they co-ordinate through the World Heritage Coast team and other structures.

    - DCC helped HLF by providing detailed contextual background on the relative importance of different projects in the county from their perspective, and by supporting and advising other applicants to HLF from within and outside the World Heritage Coast area, in some cases offering this advice jointly with HLF and sometimes on HLF's behalf.

- The HLF guidance on the Conservation Management Plan. This was made available to DCC prior to formal publication, so DCC could use it immediately. DCC found it very useful as a template for all the briefs for consultants and in identifying gaps in their work to date. However, DCC particularly valued the time given by development staff to work through the guidance with them (to "deliver" the guidance, as they put it), before they went away and used it themselves.

- Access to, and time from, development staff was highly valued, especially their willingness to visit the site which was seen by DCC as vital to understanding the project. DCC particularly valued guidance on the strengths of the project from HLF's perspective, and advice on detailed eligibility criteria such as how important it was that the site was formally designated. DCC found development staff very "approachable" and interested (the development officer attended the launch of the project on a Saturday night).

    DCC also valued the help development staff gave on ensuring a clear 'focus' for the project, what they would actually 'do', which DCC believed helped improve the quality of the project as well as the quality of the application. In this way, DCC felt the rigour of the application process did help strengthen the project, even if it had been turned down for funding in the end.

DCC felt that the gaps in development advice were:

- DCC would have liked to have had more certainty about the likelihood of success for the application, finding development staff quite "guarded" and not able to say a simple 'yes' or 'no'. However, they understood why it was not possible for development staff to give any such assurance prior to the formal grant assessment process. DCC did suggest that it could be useful to clarify the exact limits of the guidance development staff could give to applicants, possibly through some sort of contract or agreement.

- Now that DCC has successfully obtained a Project Planning Grant, they can no longer call on HLF development staff and have been referred to grants staff that DCC do not know and that DCC feel do not know the project. DCC would prefer to maintain and deepen the relationship with development staff for the sake of continuity during the life of the project, and to continue to receive the support and advice from HLF they valued.

4.3.4 Concluding remarks

Some overall points can be drawn from this brief description of the development work on the Durlston Castle and other World Heritage Coast projects, as follows.

- Even an experienced and highly resourced applicant such as Dorset County Council found it very helpful to have personal support in making the application, and even in using the printed guidance materials, which they could then go away and use as a template. This suggests that printed materials may only ever be a supplement to development work, and not a substitute for it.

- The relationship with Dorset County Council is complex and long term, with advice on specific projects as well as on strategically prioritising applications to HLF from DCC themselves and others across the county. DCC also has a role in promoting HLF grants and providing advice for smaller groups in their area. DCC has been keen to have a long term relationship with HLF (up to 15 - 20 years), although they were advised that HLF's own priorities change over time, and they therefore needed to make plans which took possible changes to HLF structure into account.

- The Durlston Castle project took over 18 months from the first contact between HLF and Dorset County Council in 2002 to the award of a project planning grant in March 2004. A Stage 1 bid for the full project is not expected before July 2005, taking the total timescale for a Stage 1 bid up to nearly three years. This is for a project for which planning had already started prior to the first contact with HLF, and being proposed by an experienced and highly resourced applicant. This illustrates the long lead time between initial development work and a successful funding application, let alone project completion, and this needs to be taken into account in assessing the overall achievements of HLF's development work.

4.4 There is a Rainbow Over Blackpool Tower

4.4.1 Project summary

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered (LGBT) community in Blackpool is one of the largest LGBT communities in the UK and the largest minority community in Blackpool. This project aims to develop a lasting social history of the diverse heritage of Blackpool's LGBT community. The project was considered particularly timely as Blackpool is about to go through major changes as a result of the new Master Plan for the town, which includes major physical changes (to buildings etc), all of which will impact on people's memories.

The project involves employing a part-time project co-ordinator and sessional workers to co-ordinate interviews, focus groups, photo collections from community members, oral history, photo and video work to capture Blackpool's LGBT past to create a mobile and permanent exhibition and other materials and outlets including an archive, an interactive website, postcards etc.

The project steering group, led by a local charity and involving a wide range of community and voluntary organisations, has worked to ensure that the process of gathering and creating the materials for the exhibition works well, developing heritage skills and promoting links between isolated groups within the still largely marginalised LGBT community and the rest of Blackpool society, working with community organisations and across generations. At the same time as Blackpool is changing, so the first generation to live with legal homosexuality is reaching retirement and old age and memories of past struggles and everyday life are being lost.

The project takes its name from one mainstream recognition of the LGBT community in Blackpool - when a rainbow flag flew from Blackpool Tower to celebrate the achievements of the Terence Higgins Trust.

4.4.2 History of relationship with HLF

The idea for the project arose when someone from a local health charity attended a Voluntary Sector Forum meeting in Blackpool in May 2003 organised by Blackpool CVS. The event included a session by an HLF development worker who used the card game created by the North West region development team to explore the broad definition of what heritage means, and briefly introduced the Your Heritage and Young Roots programmes.

The presentation stimulated the health charity worker to develop some initial ideas with colleagues before approaching HLF again. At that time, HLF North West development team were based in Blackpool CVS for some time each week, so they were able to have an initial informal meeting locally to discuss the scope of the possible project. At that meeting, the development officer suggested that the applicant complete a pre-application form prior to a full pre-application meeting. However, the applicant sent in the pre-application form with a full Your Heritage application. The assessing Grants Officer responded in writing, in November 2003, setting out the extensive further information needed to allow a full assessment to be done. A further meeting was held, in the North West region's main Manchester office, at which two members of the development team went through these requirements in detail with the applicant. There was then further contact as the full application was developed. All the missing information was then supplied by the applicant, the final application was made in May 2004, and a Your Heritage award of £48,100 was made.

4.4.3 Value of HLF development advice

The project leader felt that HLF were enthusiastic and supportive of the project from the start, recognising the heritage value of the project and offering detailed advice on how to make the full application and project successful. The advice was very practical but also encouraging.

The group feel that HLF advice made the project possible, not just by helping with a successful application for funds. The group had a lot of ideas but HLF asked the right questions which enabled the group to do the right planning, and come up with practical activities.

The group had a lot of experience with major health and social welfare projects, but none at all on heritage. In addition, there was no infrastructure of support for local history in Blackpool they could draw on, so they particularly valued the heritage expertise that HLF could offer. This included practical help on issues such as the need for a release form to be signed if photos were used in an exhibition, how to organise the loan of costumes etc. This heritage expertise also helped the group understand and show the heritage importance of the project, building up the heritage knowledge of the group even at the early planning stages.

The other key valuable element of HLF support was the kudos HLF brought to the work, which helped the group encourage other bodies to take the project seriously and get involved.

This was a potentially difficult subject for HLF as it has been a sensitive issue in Blackpool, although there was no negative local press on the project. The group recognised that HLF was taking a risk, especially as the group was completely new to heritage activity. The support from HLF was therefore even more highly valued, and the whole group found working with HLF a positive experience.

4.4.4 Concluding remarks

This was a sensitive project in Blackpool at a sensitive time of change for the town, but the group - completely new to heritage work - found HLF advice and support very positive. It showed the group (and they suggest it also influenced other local organisations) that HLF could operate effectively on these difficult issues and help inexperienced groups develop a successful heritage project in a locality where heritage itself has in the past been marginalised and poorly supported.

4.5   Cradley Village Hall, Cradley, Malvern, Worcestershire

4.5.1 Project summary

Cradley Village Hall is an unusual 15th century, black and white, timbered Grade II* listed building. It was originally a church dwelling and is still owned by the Herefordshire Diocese; Cradley Village Hall Management Committee, a registered charity, has a 30-year lease.

The hall became a court house and then, from 1667, housed the village school. It became the village hall in 1920, and has since been the main focus of community activity in the village, with activities including art classes, keep fit, musical events, play groups, computer courses, local history seminars and an annual pantomime. However, although popular and well-supported locally, the hall could not be used in winter because it was too cold, and the facilities were poor and cramped.

The Cradley Village Hall Management Committee took on responsibility for the building in 1997, and undertook the urgent repairs needed to the fabric of the building, funded by a local charity (Malvern Millions) and Entrust (landfill tax funding). They also started to make plans for future development. These plans formed the basis for the application to HLF.

The aim was to restore the hall to its full potential, providing a learning centre, heritage centre and archive storage, and to provide the facilities for the social functions that would generate revenue for the long term maintenance of the building. The plans consisted of:

•   A new extension to house an archives / heritage room. This room is designed to accommodate the exhibition and examination of local history archives, which have been growing in recent years thanks partly to growing interest among local residents: local history seminars held in the hall were over-subscribed and had prompted new donations. The collection consists of documents, printed materials, artefacts, photographs, oral history, maps and plans.

    The heritage room is also designed to house a junior library (for young people locally) and provide a space to allow the Committee to extend the heritage seminars that have proved so popular, especially to young people and the village school.

    It will also house a computer information centre for use by the heritage project, and by villagers without their own access to information technology, and allows for the existing computer training courses (currently oversubscribed) to be extended.

•   Insert a new stairway to allow access to the upper gallery, to be replaced to its original position, install new toilets and a new, more efficient, heating system.

The hall is run by an active voluntary management committee including community representatives, and there has always been considerable community involvement in fundraising as well as in activities in the hall. The Committee has been involved in the development of a Parish Plan for the village (as a pilot for the Countryside Agency), including a parish survey which provided good data on local needs and demands in terms of community facilities and possible future activities in the hall, all of which fed into the detailed planning. The Committee is also involved in developing the Village Design Statement. All these activities have helped generate further interest among local people in the history of the village.

The Committee consulted English Heritage and Herefordshire County Council Conservation Officer over planning issues, and planning and listed building permissions were granted in November 2001. Herefordshire Records Office also offered advice and encouragement for the archive centre, as did historians living in the village.

4.5.2 History of relationship with HLF

The Cradley Village Hall initially approached the Community Fund, and had made an unsuccessful application. The Community Fund recommended the Committee contact HLF.

The Committee first made contact with HLF's newly established West Midlands office by telephone in July 2002, and three HLF staff visited the site for a meeting later that month. By that time, the Committee had already completed an initial business plan for the hall, and several other background documents. At that meeting, HLF staff advised on HLF eligibility criteria in detail, especially the need to meet conservation, public access and learning requirements. They also suggested that the Committee needed to explain in the application why the new extension was needed, describe the capacity and experience of the Committee in running the project, and how the longer term maintenance of the building would be funded. They also ran through the Heritage Grant application form in detail.

Although the Committee were cautious about applying to the Lottery again, after their previous experience, they continued to develop their plans and draft the application.

A further meeting was held in October 2002, at HLF's Birmingham office, to discuss the draft application. The Cradley Village Hall Management Committee had revised the business plan, updated costs and commissioned archaeological investigations etc. HLF continued to confirm that the project was eligible, but stressed that there were still no guarantees that the application would be successful. HLF also suggested further specific improvements to the application including a clearer description of the future community uses of the building, the need for letters of support from other local organisations to demonstrate need and demand further, and the need to firm up partnership funding.

A formal application for a Heritage Grant was made in December 2002, and a grant of £101,700 awarded in July 2003. The grants assessment considered the application contained appropriate policies for the future running of the hall, which gave consideration to all the key issues, as the group had been advised.

4.5.3 Value of HLF development advice

The Committee feel that HLF were very different from other funding bodies they had worked with in the past, being "more approachable and helpful". HLF were seen to have responded quickly from the first contact, and then been helpful all the way through, including visiting the site early on. There had been regular contact with HLF as the application was developed, usually by phone.

The group particularly valued HLF encouragement, especially as they have a relatively small core group and so "really valued their support". Particular advice they found useful was on thinking about future maintenance issues after the improvements were completed, and the expert advice on equipment for the heritage room especially for the storage of maps, deeds etc, including on getting the right conditions in the storage rooms. They found HLF advice very practical and specific, and felt they were "pushed in the right direction". Other organisations offered opinions but had not wanted to get directly involved in the same way.

4.5.4 Concluding remarks

The Cradley Village Hall Management Committee already had a good track record of managing building work on their unique historic building, completing initial repairs within budget and on time. However, in spite of this experience and knowledge, they still highly valued the encouragement, support and expert advice from HLF. They found HLF's approach to giving advice very helpful, as well as the detailed content of the advice, all of which was apparently very different from their experience of other funding and heritage bodies.

5.   CONTRIBUTION TO SP2 AIMS AND TARGETS

5.1   Introduction

This section outlines the contribution of the development work to meeting SP2 aims and targets. The development work is not the only delivery vehicle for these aims and targets, but the capacity building and outreach measures and targets identified in SP2 (see table below) relate closely to the priorities for development activity.

HLF's Strategic Plan (2002 - 2007) has four broad aims: the first three are broad heritage aims and the fourth relates to HLF's role as a Lottery funding body:

* to encourage more people to be involved in and make decisions about their heritage
* to conserve and enhance the UK's diverse heritage
* to ensure that everyone can learn about, have access to and enjoy their heritage
* to bring about a more equitable spread of our grants across the UK.

The development programme was expected to be of particular value in enabling HLF to achieve the fourth aim, and to play a role in assisting the delivery of the other aims (NHMF Board Paper 2002 (9) 11, para 3.2).

Activity	Aims and purposes to which the activity primarily contributions	Measures and target
Capacity-building and outreach	to encourage communities to identify, look after and celebrate their own heritage to bring about a more equitable spread of our grants across the UK	• Between 370 and 430 projects to be supported in 2002-3 • Percentage of applications through small grants programmes from first-time applicants under that programme (Awards for All – 50-70%, Your Heritage – 30-50%) • First time applicants to small grants programmes to be no less successful than other applicants to those programmes, based on the in-year UK-wide success rate • Number of applications from the 5 local authority areas targeted for special development work in each country and region to reach the annual per capita average for the country or region by April 2007 • Applications from the areas targeted for special development work to be no less successful than other applications, based on the in-year UK-wide success rate

Advocacy	to promote a greater appreciation of the value and importance of heritage for our future well-being and sense of identity	• Increased volume of positive media coverage at national and regional levels generated by HLF about heritage issues • Improved awareness of and support for heritage amongst opinion leaders • Deliver three public events a year which facilitate debate on heritage issues

The remainder of this section outlines the extent to which the development programme has contributed to meeting the targets on capacity building and outreach during its first 18 months of operation. The targets on advocacy are not analysed here as these are national targets for communications activity. Although regional communications, promotion and publicity work contribute to these, these issues are outside the scope of this evaluation. The section then considers the contribution of development work to meeting the overall SP2 aims, and reviews customer care performance as assessed in HLF's Customer Care Monitor.

5.2   Numbers of projects supported

The SP2 target calls for between 370 and 430 projects to be supported during 2002-3. This target was **met** overall, with a total of 390 Your Heritage projects alone supported in 2002-3.

It is not possible to calculate how many projects resulted directly from development work, but it is possible to show that 152 projects were funded in 2002-3 in the special development areas (SDAs) alone, compared to an average of 62 per year over the eight years prior to development work starting in 2002 (see Table 1, Annex 5). This total rose to 260 projects funded in the SDAs alone in 2003-4.

The SDAs are historically those areas with the least funding and fewest grants from HLF, often with high levels of social and economic deprivation, and few other support networks (especially for heritage projects). The increase in projects funded in these areas is therefore the more impressive, and a significant contribution to the SP2 target, as well as a considerable achievement for the project groups themselves, and for HLF development staff. See section 3.3 for more on the nature of these SDAs.

5.3   First time applicants to small grants programmes

The target states:

> Percentage of applications through small grants programmes from first-time applicants under that programme (Awards for All – 50-70%, Your Heritage - 30-50%).

From statistics compiled for this evaluation research (see Table 2, Annex 5), it can be seen that this target was **met** (and exceeded) by all regions and countries in both 2002-3 and 2003-4, in relation to First Time Applicants (FTAs) to the Your Heritage (YH) grants programme. Although this target refers to Awards for All (A4A) as well as Your Heritage, figures on A4A are only available for one year (2003-4).

The internal HLF report on corporate performance, covering the two years to 31 March 2004, states that the figures for HLF as a whole show that 87% of applications to YH were from FTAs. No data was available on Awards for All for 2002-3; figures for 2003-4 show 87% of A4A applicants are first time ones.

This target raises a number of issues (some of which are also relevant to other targets), including:

- It is not clear whether the focus on FTAs in this target was designed to show the extent to which new audiences are being engaged on heritage projects (and thus "broadening the heritage constituency" as the Foreword to SP2 phrases it), or whether it was to show a more equitable spread of funding (i.e. to reach those who had not received funding before).

  Whatever purpose lay behind the target, the findings outlined above may be misleading if taken to imply <u>completely</u> new audiences. HLF defines FTAs as first time applicants <u>to that particular grant programme</u> (in this case, Your Heritage). This means that FTAs may (and do) include well-established heritage bodies (e.g. National Trust and wildlife trusts) which have long experience of other HLF grant programmes and heritage activity, but which have not applied to that particular programme before. In addition, when a new grants programme is introduced, as Your Heritage was in 2002, <u>all</u> applicants will initially be FTAs.

  The number of FTAs to small grants programmes could be a useful indicator of groups entering HLF's funding programmes for the first time, if FTAs were thus defined, and this in turn would indicate the extent to which groups new to heritage were being reached (although it would not prove the point conclusively as groups could have been funded from elsewhere for heritage work).

  The focus on first time applicants (FTAs) seems to be based on an assumption that successful groups follow a 'ladder of progression' from small grants (e.g. A4A to Your Heritage) up to larger projects and larger grants. However, this is not necessarily the case. It may be far more valuable to focus development effort where groups have successfully completed one small project, and wish to build on that by doing another relatively small project on another heritage asset or interest (not that up to £50,000 is perceived as 'small' by many community and voluntary groups). It may be that the group does not wish to expand or become more 'professional', but is working very successfully in its current form. This does not mean they no longer need development advice and support, nor that they are not highly successful and effective in what they do. Such groups may benefit enormously from development advice and support which could help them consolidate their achievements, and continue their good work.

- As the spread of HLF funding grows, and the 'easiest to reach' new audiences are contacted, this target will get more difficult to meet over time. HLF recognises this and sees it as the point of the target. However, it is unusual to have an indicator designed to show falling numbers - they usually aim to show improvement by larger numbers (e.g. higher % of FTAs to show success, not lower). It may therefore be useful to think of other practical ways to test whether new audiences are being reached, or if there is a more equitable spread of funding, in future (see 6.4.2 for some initial suggestions on this).

- The target focuses on first time <u>applicants</u>, rather than on numbers of awards made or spend achieved among these new audiences. Although a focus on applications is useful as a guide to interest, it gives little feel for how good the projects were (in heritage or project management terms) or how relevant they were to HLF's priorities. The success rate identified in the next target (see 5.4) gives some indication of the quality of the projects, as it identifies success in gaining funding, but a more detailed analysis of FTA grantees and their projects may provide a complementary qualitative element to this.

  In addition, numbers of applications (and per capita averages of applications) do not show increased HLF investment in areas of previous low spend and few grant-aided projects, which is the rationale for choosing the special development areas outlined in SP2. The problems with counting awards and spend are recognised, especially when 'in year' figures are used, given the inevitable time delays between application and award possibly pushing the result into the next 'year'. However, data on spend and numbers of awards are already collected and are relatively easily accessible and this may be a more effective measure of the more equitable spread of grants. Clearly, as indicated above, it would not be possible to achieve a completely equitable spread across the UK (or necessarily desirable), so creating an aim or target to encourage complete equity would not therefore be helpful.

These observations may seem unnecessarily detailed as the target has been met. However, it is important that targets and indicators are meaningful to the audiences they seek to inform and, at present, the definitions of FTAs used here do not contribute to easy understanding.

5.4   FTAs no less successful than other applicants to small grants programmes

This target states:

> First time applicants to small grants programmes to be no less successful than other applicants to those programmes, based on the in-year UK-wide success rate.

There has been **good progress** towards meeting this target. From statistics compiled for this evaluation research (Table 3, Annex 5), it can be seen that this target was met by **two** regions / countries of the 12 in 2002-3, and by **six** regions / countries in 2003-4, in relation to FTAs to Your Heritage.

The internal HLF report on corporate performance for the two years to 31 March 2004 states that the figure for HLF as a whole is that 83% of FTAs applying to YH were successful, compared to 88% of other applicants, and that therefore the target was not met overall. However, the more detailed statistical data presented here shows that the trend is towards meeting the target, and that progress is therefore being made.

A number of points need to be made about this target and the statistics collected to show performance:
•   As stated above, it has not been possible to collect data on A4A during this study (nor on the Local Heritage Initiative, which is also generally considered to be one of HLF's 'small grants programmes').

•   The points made above about the definitions of FTAs, and the increasing difficulty of meeting targets on FTAs as HLF funding spreads to new audiences (and they are no longer FTAs) also apply to this target.

5.5   Applications from SDAs to reach annual per capita average for country / region by 2007

This target states:

> Number of applications from the five local authority areas targeted for special development work in each country and region to reach the annual per capita average for the country or region by April 2007.

In practice, development work targeted 72 SDAs, rather than the 60 across the 12 regions / countries there would be if there had only been five per region / country. All the data in this evaluation relates to 72 SDAs. This reflects the choices of the region and country committees in 2002, and the additional number does not appear to have put any undue pressure on development staff.

From statistics compiled for this research (Table 4, Annex 5), it can be seen that there has been **very good progress** towards meeting this target:
•   18 SDAs (out of 72) met the target in 2002-3
•   33 SDAs met the target in 2003-4
•   A further 15 SDAs were closer to the target in 2003-4 than in 2002-3.

A number of points need to be made about this target and the statistics collected to show performance:
•   This is a shifting target, as the regional average changes. So, for example, Swansea and Wrexham (in Wales) did not meet the target in 2003-4, but would have done if the annual per capita average had stayed as it was in 2002-3.

•   As the calculation of per capita averages is done by scaling up figures so that comparisons can be made per million of population, the differences between performance and target can seem much larger than they actually are, and the actual number of additional applications needed to reach the target is very small. For example, in Chesterfield, the SDA per capita average is 10.12 compared to the regional average per capita rate of 30.68, but the target would be exceeded with just two more applications in the area.

5.6 Applications from SDAs no less successful than other applications

This target states:

> Applications from the areas targeted for special development work to be no less successful than other applications, based on the in-year UK-wide success rate

From statistics compiled for this evaluation (Table 5, Annex 2), it can be seen that there has been **good progress** towards this target:
- 29 SDAs met the target in 2003-3
- 35 SDAs met the target in 2003-4
- A further 7 SDAs were closer to the target in 2003-4 than in 2002-3.

A number of points need to be made about this target and the statistics collected to show performance:
- The point about the shifting target (5.5) also applies here. Although the target was actually lower in 2003-4 than the previous year, this trend may not continue.

- 'In year' success rates may be contributing to slightly misleading conclusions, as an application given an award the following year would not contribute to the success rate in the year of the application. However, this applies to only very few applications and so is unlikely to greatly affect the statistical conclusion.

5.7 Contribution to SP2 aims

The development programme was expected to be of particular value in enabling HLF to achieve its fourth overall aim (of bringing about a more equitable spread of its grants across the UK). This aim has been addressed primarily by focusing development activity on those areas where there had been least HLF funding and fewest grants in the past, and where there was high social and economic deprivation: the special development areas (SDAs). The focus on first time applicants has also encouraged other types of targeting (e.g. to black and minority ethnic groups; see section 3.4.2).

The statistics in sections 5.4 and 5.5 above show general themes of improvement in the numbers of applications across the declared SDAs. There is also a very obvious growth in numbers of awards and spend in these areas, if the indicative annual average over the eight years prior to the launch of the development programme is used as a comparison (see Table 1, Annex 5). For example, the figures show a total of only an indicative average of 62.1 awards each year in the SDAs prior to 2002, compared to 152 in 2002-3 and 260 in 2003-4. As the time delay between initial development advice and awards being made is often a year or more, these early results are impressive.

Although a few SDAs remain relatively unresponsive, with few funded projects and low levels even of pre-application inquiries, in spite of intensive efforts by development staff, overall development activity is clearly generating interest among new audiences especially in the SDAs and with first time applicants. The work on these priorities can be seen, therefore, as contributing to a more equitable spread of HLF grants as these areas and groups had so few grants in the past.

Creating an 'equitable' spread of grants is not an HLF aim, and it is indeed unlikely that a completely equitable spread of grants across the UK could ever be achieved. Physical heritage assets are not equitably distributed across the UK, nor is local interest in heritage. Although intangible heritage assets (e.g. oral history) may be more widely distributed, the inherent imbalance of assets becomes apparent when considering the other four categories of heritage supported by HLF funding: historic buildings and monuments; industrial, transport and maritime; land and biodiversity; museums, libraries, archives and collections.

In terms of the other three HLF aims in SP2, the development activity has clearly contributed to these. New audiences have been reached, which contributes to more people being involved in their heritage (the first aim). All HLF grants require that people learn about, have access to and enjoy their heritage, and almost all HLF funded projects involve the conservation and enhancement of heritage (the second and third aims); the increase in awards (e.g. in the special development areas) therefore provides evidence of a contribution to meeting these aims.

5.8   Customer care performance

In assessing performance, this evaluation also examined the HLF Customer Care survey (carried out by First Report and published in February 2004) in order to provide some further illumination about the reputation of HLF development work among applicants. The latest edition of the survey was the Customer Care Monitor (9) which covers the period April 2002 - March 2003, as no report was produced for 2003-4.

The Customer Care Monitor 2002-3 found the following (based on interviews with 503 individuals):
- 86% of those making contact about applying for grants under £50,000 made contact with <u>regional</u> HLF staff.

- From the 408 applicants seeking pre-application advice covered in the survey, there was very positive feedback on HLF staff performance:
  - 87% said the information they were given was correct
  - 94% said the HLF officer was interested in their project
  - 93% said they were given adequate time to discuss their project
  - 97% said the HLF officer was courteous, and 90% said the HLF officer was positive
  - Only 9% said it took too long to receive pre-application advice.

- 32% of those interviewed sent in the pre-application form. 81% of those sending in the form said sending in the form helped them decide about submitting a formal bid and 41% said they would not have gone ahead without the pre-application form (although 54% said they would).

- There is no data in this survey about the impact of the pre-application process, and the advice given, on the application (e.g. whether it improved the quality of the project and the bid; whether it was successful or not; whether signposting to other sources of funds led to the project getting those funds). However, the Monitor concluded that "absence of contact with [i.e. advice from] the Fund is still associated to a noticeable extent with application failure". (The North West region has undertaken some pilot research on this; see section 3.4.3).

- The Monitor summary says that unsuccessful applicants had a greater awareness than during the previous year of the potential value of seeking advice by phone or in writing. In addition, unsuccessful applicants had a slightly greater feeling that reasons for rejection had been adequately explained. 75% of the sample were prepared to apply to HLF on another occasion, even if they had been unsuccessful so far, and were prepared to recommend HLF to others.

In terms of how applicants found out about HLF, and gained more detailed information about the process:
- 22% of applicants had attended a presentation by the HLF (rising to 28% if the question includes "or someone else" attending as proxy for the respondent). Attendance at these events was more likely if applying for a larger grant (i.e. over £500,000), with 30% of these attending were potentially applying for these larger grants compared to 19% being potential applicants for smaller grants.

- At the events, 83% found HLF staff helpful, and 81% found the information presented easy to understand.

- 75% sought advice by phone, 46% by letter and 42% by individual meeting. Of these, 64% of those seeking advice by phone, 57% of those seeking advice by letter and 73% of those seeking advice through a meeting, found the advice "very helpful". The highest satisfaction level was therefore from meetings, then phone, then letter.

    This is a common finding in assessments of development work: service users almost always prefer individual face-to-face advice. However, this is also the most resource-intensive method of giving advice and cannot be undertaken in all cases. HLF development staff are experimenting with new approaches that marry group events with individual advice, and these are being well-received (see 3.4.2 and 3.4.3).

5.9   Conclusions on meeting SP2 aims and targets

The evidence presented above (and in Annex 2) shows that some SP2 targets have already been met (on numbers of projects supported overall, and on the percentage of first time applicants to HLF's small grants programmes), and there has been some significant progress towards meeting the other SP2 targets (see 5.2 to 5.6).

Development activity has also clearly contributed to meeting the overall SP2 aims, especially the fourth aim relating to bringing about a more equitable spread of HLF grants across the UK (see 5.7). In addition, feedback from the Customer Care Monitor shows a very positive response from those applicants receiving development advice and support, including finding the pre-application process very useful (see 5.8).

This review thus shows considerable achievement for the development programme over the short space of time during which it has been operating (approx 18 months at the time covered by much of the data assessed). The review also raises some specific issues about the targets currently used for capacity building and outreach:

- It is not always clear exactly what the targets are designed to show or encourage. The problems with the focus on first time applicants (FTAs) and on applicants (rather than successful grantees) have already been identified (see 5.3). These detailed concerns illustrate the wider point that targets and indicators are most useful when they communicate meaningful information to target audiences and, at present, not all the targets used work effectively for that purpose. Now that development work is becoming well-established in HLF, it may be appropriate to create new targets for capacity building and outreach as part of the next stages of strategic corporate planning.

- The statistics collected and analysed for this review do show some clear trends, but there is little qualitative evidence on which to draw (prior to this evaluation, which is very much an initial exercise). Continuing qualitative research would be very useful, both in reviewing progress over time and in then identifying where changes in direction need to be made.

  Research could be undertaken at a range of different levels, such as:
  - Examining the impacts of certain elements of development work, such as pre-application advice, on the quality of applications and absolute (rather than comparative) success rates over time. North West Region has undertaken a pilot evaluation of this, see section 3.4.3).
  - To test assumptions about how groups work (e.g. progressions from the smallest grants schemes on to larger and more complex projects), to assess whether and to what extent this happens in practice, and whether this would be a useful target and/or indicator.
  - Through regular detailed case studies of how development work has affected project development in particular instances.

6. QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF HLF DEVELOPMENT WORK

6.1 Introduction

Quality and effectiveness are less easy to assess than the measurement and judgement of performance than can be achieved with quantitative data (numbers), section 3 has described development activities and includes some initial interpretation in relation to the success of the work done, and section 4 outlines detailed examples and feedback from applicants.

This section provides a different analysis based on four of the key questions identified in the evaluation brief:

- The approach to development work in HLF
- Meeting the agreed objectives and criteria
- The specific contribution of HLF's development programme, set in the context of other development provision, and
- Gaps identified.

Before assessing HLF's development work in this way, however, a brief summary of the nature of development work is provided.

6.2   What is development work?

There is no widely agreed formal definition of 'development work', nor of what it should achieve, although many voluntary organisations employ development staff, and have done for decades. The concept of development work can thus be seen to have originated in the voluntary and community sectors, and it is that experience that can be used to identify some generic characteristics.

Development work has traditionally involved activities such as providing information and advice (individual, published, group), training (in all forms), sharing good practice and networking, all with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of all those involved (e.g. in running projects and programmes but also in advocacy and campaigning).

The role of development staff is essentially to reach out to those who are seen as important clients / beneficiaries of the organisation, especially those who may not know how they can use the organisation's services or benefit from them, and thus may not come to the organisation without special efforts on the part of the organisation. Development staff may also be responsible for managing and responding to all requests for assistance that come to the organisation, although this may sometimes be handled by information and other specialist staff. In addition, development staff often have a special role within an organisation as they may have the closest contact with target audiences, and can thus feed back to the organisation the changing priorities and demands on the ground. As a result, they are also often well placed to identify areas where further research, development and innovation are required.

Development staff therefore have to understand which are the important target groups for their work, and ensure that methods are developed to reach and service these groups in the most efficient and effective ways, within the resources of the organisation they represent. This can be a difficult balance to achieve, as demand has to be stimulated and then managed within the limits and boundaries of organisational resources and priorities that may change over time.

It is characteristic of development work that results often take a long time to show and, even when they do, it is often almost impossible to identify a clear chain of cause and effect because target audiences / groups almost always receive assistance from more than one source (e.g. HLF among others).

The term 'capacity building' has become widely used in national government policy in recent years, and is sometimes seen as synonymous with development work. The most recent and authoritative definition has been published by the Home Office (*Firm Foundations*, Home Office, December 2004), which states that capacity building is about "activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities".

Capacity building is most often used to describe detailed work with local communities (e.g. Skinner 1997), but is increasingly also being used to describe training for public bodies (e.g. local authorities) and others who are themselves working with communities (Home Office 2004). In this way, capacity building is understood as increasing the capacity of all parties concerned with community development, so they can work more effectively together.

Capacity building tends to relate to particular learning methods including formal training but more often other approaches such as workshops, study tours and visits, small grants to help groups get started and thus learn from experience (e.g. funding for postage, telephone, copying), distance learning, secondments, internships, mentoring and coaching from experienced people, community service and volunteering (adapted from Deri 2001 and Home Office 2004).

Capacity building in these terms, therefore, goes beyond the purpose and practice of development work in HLF. Capacity building is about in depth work with local communities, with the focus on building stronger communities, while HLF development work focuses very clearly on developing effective project planning, management and delivery in order to improve the quality, range and spread of heritage activities.

Building from this very brief summary, the following generic characteristics of good development work are offered for use within this specific evaluation in HLF:

i)   **Work in new territory - geographical, issues and social groups**. Development work is about reaching out, especially to new audiences beyond the obvious / existing audiences for the organisation, to ensure activities are as inclusive as possible so that no groups are excluded or overlooked.

ii)   **Targeted and focused activities**, which work at the appropriate <u>level</u> for the audiences targeted. This means that development staff must know their target audiences well enough to reach them on their own territory and to present information in terms which they will understand.

        It also means understanding what is specifically needed to develop good quality outcomes in the specific field in which the development work is undertaken. For HLF this means development staff being able to advise on practical project planning and management issues, and also to understand the particular qualities of heritage projects - the focus on valuing the distinctiveness of the histories of specific individuals and communities (rather than aiming for social benefits such as cohesion, health etc).

iii)   **Focus on disadvantaged or excluded** individuals and groups, because others often already have easy access to the support available.

iv)   **Collaboratively working with users** and other partners to help users identify their own needs and develop solutions to meet them, and ensuring that, where other bodies can help, users are signposted to them. Development work is not about marketing or about meeting all users' needs. Nor is it about providing services that are already being provided effectively by others. It has to be a collaborative approach, recognising there can be mutual benefit in joint work with service users and partner organisations.

v)   **Create new links and networks**, to expand from one-to-one services and build a sustainable system of mutual trust between the development organisation and the new audiences, and also between the different groupings in the new audiences. The aim here is to develop systems which enable groups to continue to learn from each other in the long term.

vi)   **Clear criteria for success**, over the short and long term. This is particularly important for development work as achievement can be slow to be manifested, and it can also be very difficult to disentangle the contribution of a single organisation from other related activities.

Criteria in the context of the HLF development work might include numbers of attendees at events, raised levels of pre-application inquiries, % of regional grants made to development work clients, raised success rate of applications from development service users, etc.

vii)   **Awareness of limits and boundaries**, in terms of resources available for development and for meeting needs identified, territory covered (geographical and other), skills available, and in managing demand and expectations.

viii) **Making best use of resources**, maximising benefits from investment of development time and money (e.g. creating written / printed materials to answer common questions or demands, developing events which meet individual and group needs rather than always requiring one-to-one meetings). However, development obviously needs to be adequately resourced with appropriate levels of funding and appropriately skilled staff.

ix)   **Good awareness and understanding of the wider policy context**. For HLF, this means awareness and understanding of national, regional and local heritage activities and policy priorities of other heritage organisations, and of national, regional and local priorities relevant to heritage (e.g. regeneration, economic development, cultural cohesion). Development staff need to understand the importance of proposed [heritage] activities both to those proposing them, and more widely, so they can prioritise their development work accordingly. This is likely to require active engagement with policy activities, at least as observers (although also potentially as active contributors on the basis of knowledge of heritage activities and priorities on the ground).

From the review of activities undertaken through this evaluation, it can be seen that HLF development work is strongest on the following:

•   **Work in new territories** (i). The focus on Special Development Areas, and on some other priority first time applicant groups (e.g. black and minority ethnic groups), have ensured a focus on reaching out to new territories, and these are being extended in some regions as these initial target audiences are reached.

•   **Targeted and focused activities** (ii). Most development staff are working in ways which are very focused on target audiences, and are well-suited to those audiences. Methods are being continuously developed on the basis of detailed feedback on most events held, and on other forms of research to determine what users feel about the services offered.

•   **Focus on disadvantaged and excluded individuals and groups** (iii). The Special Development Areas are almost all disadvantaged areas, and other target audiences (first time applicants) have also almost always been disadvantaged and excluded individuals and groups.

- **Knowing limits and boundaries** (vii). There is admirable clarity among HLF development staff about the existing limits and boundaries of what HLF development work can provide, and in communicating that to potential applicants. There is some potential for actually making these limits available to potential applicants in writing.

Areas where HLF development work is making some progress, and there is evidence of some success, but where more effort could be directed are:

- **Working collaboratively with users** (iv). In HLF terms, development work helps HLF by ensuring that potential applicants understand as much as possible before they make a formal application; and helps users by enabling them to make the best possible application - a collaborative approach for mutual benefit.

    Development staff do respond well to feedback from those who attend events etc, by changing the design of events. In addition, some regions are developing new types of events with particular users in mind, jointly with the agencies already working with those targeted users (e.g. the work in South West region to develop a workshop for black and minority ethnic groups in association with a black support agency). However, more could be done to explicitly discuss new methods directly with potential users (working with past applicants) as well as with the agencies already providing support.

- **Clear criteria for success** (vi). Some regions are developing explicit criteria for success for specific strands of work (e.g. the North West region on work with black and minority ethnic groups). There is also a general understanding of what outcomes are being sought from development work, although this could be made more explicit using criteria developed jointly with the staff that have to apply them. This would allow a more collective sense of achievement to be developed, and a view of whether (and what) progress is being made, even if it takes a long time to show tangible quantitative results (e.g. numbers of applications in Special Development Areas).

- **Making best use of resources** (viii). Some regions are already doing this (e.g. North West with their innovative use of games, postcards etc, and Scotland with their information materials). In addition, there is beginning to be some sharing among development staff of these materials so they can be more widely used, and of events and other activities that work particularly well (e.g. the South West seminars for black and minority ethnic groups which have since also been run in East of England region, with growing interest from other regions). However, these developments are still in their relatively early days, and there could be greater sharing of experience of what works well, and greater use of the resources of other organisations through increased partnership working.

HLF is least strong on two aspects of development work:

- **Creating links and networks** (v). Development staff have established some good partnerships with some other Lottery Distributors and other local agencies. However, these are often ad hoc and bilateral (e.g. between HLF and a single CVS or a specific local authority which may go on to give others advice on HLF funding).

HLF could develop more effective strategic work to link into, and help support, other networks. Stronger networks aid signposting activities (to other information, support and resources for local groups), and thus reduce long term demands on HLF development staff. Such approaches also help contribute to a more sustainable broad support system for local community activities on heritage.

- **Awareness and understanding of the wider policy context** (ix). Some development staff are closely linked to wider policy networks relevant to heritage (e.g. in the South West region), and others are planning to extend their work on this (e.g. North West). However, this is an area where more effective links could support good quality development work by providing background about the heritage priorities regionally and locally, and more evidence about the value of heritage more widely (e.g. to regeneration), both within HLF and for other audiences.

As can be seen from this brief analysis, HLF development staff are making good progress on many aspects of good quality development work, while some aspects would still benefit from greater attention. This is an area of analysis which could provide a useful focus for discussion among development staff and senior HLF managers, both to ensure that these elements are the key ones for HLF development work, and to develop ideas for how to make progress in those areas which are currently least strong.

6.3   Approach to development work in HLF

The approach to development work across HLF (described in section 3) and examined in detail throughout this evaluation report is notable for three key qualities:

- **Clear and coherent approach**. There are three basic elements of development work which are to the fore in many regional approaches and strategies. Slightly different terminology may be used in different regions, but the coherence of approach is striking. These three elements are:

  - **Targeted groups / areas**. A clear priority to focus attention on those communities which had received least funding and fewest grants from HLF, and were in areas of high social and economic deprivation, including:
    - the 72 declared special development areas (SDAs) across the 12 regions / countries
    - first time applicants / new audiences (e.g. black and minority ethnic communities, rural communities)
    - narrow past funding histories (e.g. only churches or wildlife projects funded across a wide rural area).

  - **Quality applications**. There has been considerable emphasis on improving the quality of applications, which in practice has led to:
    - advice on improving the quality of applications which have the potential to be funded
    - advice on withdrawing, or changing, project applications at as early a stage as possible if they are unlikely to be funded.

- **Partnership working**. There is growing emphasis on working in partnership with other bodies, so that there is not duplication of effort, and best use is made of HLF's investment in development work in terms of good quality applications for projects and activities of high heritage merit.

- **Investment of appropriate staff resources**. Successful delivery of the development programme has only been feasible because of the staffing resources dedicated to the programme, which has allowed high calibre specialist staff to be recruited and based at region / country level. As a result, these development staff have been able to focus on advice, outreach and partnership work separately from grant assessment processes.

  Significant advantages to this approach are clear from the data gathered for this study. HLF development staff are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds (see section 3.2) and bring to the work extensive technical heritage knowledge and skills, and experience of working with communities and with the voluntary sector.

  In addition, maintaining a development function separate from grants assessment helps protect the resources needed to deliver development work. Grants staff are under growing time pressure as application numbers increase and it is likely that, if they were also responsible for development work, development work could eventually be squeezed to the extent that it could cease altogether. Given the contribution that the development work makes to HLF aims and targets (see section 5), such pressures could result in a significant loss to the organisation.

- **Diversity of delivery mechanisms in different countries and regions**. Although there is a strong convergence in approach to development work across the four areas examined, the delivery methods (the actual development activities) are very different in different places. This diversity reflects the differences across the UK including, for example:

  - The South West region is a largely rural region, covering a large geographical area. The region includes widely dispersed, hard to reach, rural groups, with a pocket of inner city in Bristol.
  - The North West has a history of heavy industry and urban development, with a strong regional focus on Manchester and Liverpool.
  - The West Midlands has a strong metropolitan hub in Birmingham, but also a large rural area (including Shropshire and Herefordshire).
  - Scotland is a separate country, and HLF is perceived here as a national body interacting with other national institutions. There is a different structure of local government (especially at local level, with community councils), no regional government, and different government funding programmes.

  It is therefore entirely appropriate that development work in HLF should reflect the character of the regions / countries in which it is practised.

It is possible from this brief summary of the approach taken to development work in HLF to see some of the 'qualities' of the work. The 'quality' and effectiveness of the development work can be assessed further by considering the extent to which the work has met the development programme's own objectives.

6.4 Meeting the agreed objectives

Most evaluations base assessment to some degree on the stated objectives of the programme being reviewed, simply to test whether it achieved what it set out to do. In some cases, the objectives for the programme are not explicit and must be articulated; in others the objectives were clear from the outset.

The objectives for HLF's development programme were set out in 2002 as follows:

- to raise the profile in the territory and to promote awareness of HLF grant programmes and activities
- to reach new audiences and generate interest in heritage
- to increase the number of applications from profile raising areas
- to encourage first time applicants
- to promote good practice and improve the quality of applications
- to develop opportunities for joint working with other lottery distributors and heritage partners.

Overall, the development programme is meeting its objectives, as is shown below in detail. It will be crucial to continue monitoring progress over the next few years given the long term nature of development work, and the inevitable delays in showing tangible results.

Two factors need to be taken into account in reviewing the progress of HLF's development work towards its objectives:

- The objectives were set very early in the life of the development programme, and have not been reviewed since. However, they are useful at this stage to test the extent to which the original vision for the development work has been fulfilled.

- The extent to which many of these objectives are met depends largely on internal and external factors which cannot be controlled at local level, such as a higher volume of applications leading to more competition and higher standards for applicants. Such factors will always need to be taken into account in assessing the performance of any development activity.

The remainder of section 6.4 evaluates the development work against each objective in turn.

6.4.1 Objective 1: To raise the profile in the territory and to promote awareness of HLF grant programmes and activities.

Interviews with Country and Regional Managers and development staff were unequivocal in concluding that development activity has raised HLF's profile in their territory, and promoted awareness of HLF's grants and activities. Given the level of publicity and promotional activity by development staff, especially in the first 18 months of operation (see section 3.4.1), this conclusion seems entirely reasonable.

Clearly, HLF development activity will only be one of the contributing factors to the increased general profile of HLF, and awareness of HLF grants and activities. National media coverage (especially major grants, or television programmes such as BBC2's *Restoration*), will also contribute.

The specific contribution of development activity to HLF's profile and general awareness of HLF grants and activities is likely to have had particular impact on their specific audiences:

- Local and regional non-heritage organisations, especially local voluntary and community groups, local authorities and umbrella support bodies for local groups (such as CVSs and RCCs), with which HLF development staff work closely and share information regularly.

- Community groups in deprived areas with other priorities, which are among the first time applicants (FTAs) seeking advice from HLF development staff.

Testing the effectiveness of development work in meeting this objective may not be as crucial as it was at the beginning of the development programme, when it was a high priority. However, work to maintain a high profile for HLF will continue to be a vital element of development work, to ensure messages continue to be disseminated about the availability of funds and the range of heritage work and types of groups that can be supported (so that groups new to heritage work can identify with these examples and feel confident in making contact with HLF).

In future, assessment of progress against this objective could link more closely with ongoing national HLF Communications reviews, and could possibly focus on how regional media coverage works best to inform local people about the changing nature and priorities of HLF over time, and the extent to which a regional identity is important to the effectiveness of those messages.

6.4.2 Objective 2: To reach new audiences and generate interest in heritage

This is the area which was considered by most Regional Managers interviewed to be where the development work had made most impact in their region.

Although there is no comprehensive quantitative data available to test the extent to which this objective has been met, evidence available includes:

- In the West Midlands, 30% of grant offers (quoted in 2004), are now made to black and minority ethnic groups, compared to 5% in 2002. It is now well understood that black and minority ethnic groups are consistently a low proportion of the heritage audience (English Heritage research cited in *Heritage Counts*, 2004, para 4.5.1).

- "Very good" projects have been funded in the Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) areas in Scotland (Elliker 2004); areas from which almost no applications had been received by HLF in the past.

- Feedback from two outreach events in Scotland (the 'What is Heritage" survey among community groups in East Ayrshire, and the Developing Heritage in the Highlands and Islands event in Inverness - see 3.4.2 for details) was that many participants had become interested in developing heritage activities as a result.

- Themed (e.g. on parks) and joint (e.g. with CVSs) outreach events seem to have been particularly effective both in reaching new audiences and in satisfying participants needs, judging by evaluation feedback on these events.

- Development staff report new and different groups coming to HLF with new and different types of projects. For example:

  - New groups coming to HLF were identified as community groups, miners associations, black and ethnic minority community groups, groups in SIPs, groups with English as a second language, youth groups, tenants associations.

  - New projects included traditional crafts and skills, oral history, festivals, community archives, local heritage trails, story-telling, history of local food production, history of local sectarian divisions.

It may be useful, and relatively easy, to classify some simple types of groups and projects so that data can be collected and the extent to which HLF has reached these new audiences can be monitored more effectively (initial work on this has begun for grantees). For example, groups could be asked, on the pre-application form, to indicate their type themselves from a given list of types of group they are. Examples might include:
- natural environment (e.g. wildlife)
- environmental campaigning (e.g. pollution, energy)
- regeneration
- general geographically-based community group (e.g. tenants association, community association)
- social welfare group (e.g. pensioners rights, equal opportunities)
- youth group
- special interest group (e.g. 'friends' of parks, sport, aviation)
- heritage groups (according to the types of projects classified by HLF at present: historic buildings, industrial transport and maritime, intangible heritage, land, manuscripts and archives, museums and collections).

HLF has already developed 'key words' with which it can interrogate its data and which include most of these categories. Any further development of these categories may also draw on work at England-wide level to develop an indicator (for the Heritage Counts review) for "new users of the historic environment from priority groups". Beyond identifying black and minority groups as a consistently low proportion of the heritage audience, *Heritage Counts 2004* reports that no overall indicator, or definition of priority groups, is yet available, and that data gathering is currently underway. It will be valuable to monitor progress on this exercise to assess its relevance to assessing HLF's development work.

6.4.3 Objective 3: To increase the number of applications from profile raising areas

The basic statistics (see Table 1) show that the special development areas (SDAs) in eight of the twelve regions / countries had an increase in the number of applications between 2002-3 and 2003-4. Tables 4 and 5, and sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 of this report show progress towards SP2 targets on applications from SDAs.

Increasing applications from SDAs is clearly a long term objective given the time lag between initial development work with groups and applications being made. Some informal research undertaken in the South East region in 2004 examined the length of time it took groups receiving pre-application advice to submit an application. This research found that:

- It took an average of six months from starting pre-application advice to application for a Your Heritage grant (the average range was 3 - 8 months, with some taking more than 12 months).

- It took an average of twelve months from pre-application advice to application to Heritage Grants. Some took longer than two years.

More recent research in the North West region (interim report December 2004) found that the average time between initial contact and formal application (for all grant programmes) was between 18 months and two years.

It is likely therefore that application rates are barely beginning to show the impacts of development work at this stage. The timescales identified in the research from the South East and North West regions are likely to be extended in special development areas, especially from the least experienced groups and the most disadvantaged areas. It will therefore be essential to continue monitoring progress on this objective over the coming years, when impacts in terms of numbers of applications will begin to be shown.

Evidence from the interviews for this evaluation study shows that the experience of development staff is that work in some special development areas has been more successful than others. The reasons emerging from research for this evaluation as to why some SDAs have proved less responsive to development work, and may never reach average per capita applications, include:

- Lack of interest in, or knowledge of, heritage or fund raising in the local authority (possibly even antipathy to heritage).

- Weak, new or vulnerable infrastructure of support for heritage projects (e.g. new heritage forums).

- Weak infrastructure of support for voluntary and community activity (e.g. very under-resourced council for voluntary service, no support staff in the local authority).

- No tradition of voluntary or community activity (e.g. when a strong local authority, or a single major industry has been relied upon for all local services, and little voluntary activity has developed).

- Little obvious distinctive heritage, from which a wider interest in heritage could grow.

- Very disadvantaged community with other priorities (e.g. crime, poverty, health).

- Limited repertoire of HLF development activity.

Some regions are developing data on each of their SDAs (Scotland), and tailoring strategies for each of them (North West) to more effectively identify the problems and address any barriers that exist.

Work in the SDAs was part of the strategy for achieving a more equitable spread of HLF grants across the UK, as SDAs were the areas with fewest grants in the past. While the apparently increasing number of pre-applications and (in some regions) applications from SDAs suggests that there is a <u>more</u> equitable spread, no region claims they have (or are able to, or necessarily aim for) a completely equitable spread, given the variable potential for projects of heritage merit, and the variable interest in doing a heritage project.

The outreach work (see 3.4.2) and the continued strategic emphasis on SDAs (see 3.3) by development staff, suggests that SDAs remain a priority and that applications will increase in time, if not from all of them - which is entirely to be expected in this type of work.

6.4.4 Objective 4. To encourage first time applicants

To some extent, this objective overlaps with objective 2, on new audiences, but there is more data available on the growth in interest from first time applicants (FTAs). The data shows that all regions and countries exceeded the SP2 target for between 30 - 50% of applications to Your Heritage to be from FTAs. In fact, most regions and countries achieved well over 80% (see Table 2), and six regions / countries met the target for FTAs to be no less successful than other groups to Your Heritage (see Table 3). The scale and success of the outreach work (3.4.2) and the general publicity work (3.4.1) undertaken by development staff suggests that these trends of reaching numerous first time applicants are likely to continue.

The category of 'first time applicant' is a useful and simple mechanisms for testing the extent to which HLF is reaching new groups, although clearly the focus on FTAs will become less crucial in time, as more groups do apply. It may not be useful to continue pursuing FTAs indefinitely and it may therefore be useful at this early stage to assess progressions from the smaller grants schemes (e.g. Awards for All) to Your Heritage and then onwards to Heritage Grants. Although, as already noted, progression up this 'ladder' is not in itself a sign of a successful group, it would be interesting to see what patterns emerge, and whether this progression is widespread or not.

The extent to which a group makes a progression from small to larger grants and larger project activities may depend to some extent on the level of learning they have gained from the experience of previous work. In depth personal and group capacity building and learning are not objectives of the development work, nor of HLF, but there may be potential in exploring this issue further with a small group of grantees at some point in future.

6.4.5 Objective 5: To promote good practice and improve the quality of applications

This was the other biggest and most important impact of the development work (along with reaching new audiences) identified in interviews with Country and Regional Managers as well as development staff.

Again there is no comprehensive statistical data on this, but interview data suggests that poor applications that are unlikely to succeed are now more often withdrawn before they go through a formal assessment process, which means that the quality of those that are left is likely to be higher. Those that do go through to assessment as full applications are seen to be of higher quality. One Regional Manager pointed out that applications now more often contain 60% of the information needed, whereas in the past it was more like 20%, and that this was due to good pre-application advice. There is room for improvement, but there is also clearly considerable progress already.

The ways in which development advice is seen to improve the quality of applications include:
• help with financial planning
• the value of heritage is better understood
• the group is more realistic about their capacity to deliver the project, and are less likely to put in an application they are not capable of delivering.

It may be useful to undertake further research to test the effectiveness of current approaches to improving the quality of applications, including examining the extent to which pre-application advice (and which particular type or method of advice) has led to successful applications. As in all such research, a successful application will depend on many factors as well as development advice, but it may be a useful exercise to test any emerging trends, based on the activities identified in this evaluation.

6.4.6 Objective 6: To develop opportunities for joint working with other Lottery Distributors and heritage partners

There is an increasing focus on joint work with other Lottery Distributors and heritage partners. For example:

• All HLF regions are involved in the regional Joint Lottery Distributors Forums, and some regions have specific forums for Lottery development staff (South West, West Midlands and North West).

• The North West Joint Lottery Distributors Development Forum recently undertook a small evaluation of the effectiveness of joint pre-application work, focused on specific case studies.

• There have been some cross-Lottery Distributor initiatives including the Spotlight on St Helens joint outreach project in the North West in 2002, and plans for an outreach initiative in Telford, West Midlands. Fewer of these joint initiatives have been developed over the past two years, which may be due to the various structural changes to other Lottery funds implemented during that time.
• In South East and East of England regions, development staff participate in regional Lottery Forums, which bring together local authority Lottery and external funding officers, who are part of the Lottery information dissemination system, as well as being potential applicants. These are useful opportunities for information exchange.

• Several HLF regions work closely with other heritage bodies. For example, in Scotland, HLF development staff participate in joint awaydays with Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Museums Service and Historic Scotland, which allows the development of close working relationships as new initiatives can be jointly

planned. In addition, HLF Scotland development staff are involved in new partnerships with Greenspace Scotland and Heritage Futures.

- The strategic regional prioritisation work pioneered in the South West (see 3.4.3) takes partnership working to a new strategic level, with heritage bodies and with others working together on prioritising heritage projects, with HLF playing a neutral, facilitating role.

In addition, many of the outreach activities undertaken by development staff (see 3.4.2) are run by HLF in partnership with other organisations.

These activities all provide evidence that good progress is being made on this objective, although this is one of the areas in which development staff do intend to invest greater resources in future in order to maximise the benefits of joint working, which all regions see as vital. Plans for the future of development work in various regions include a growing emphasis on joint work with larger, more strategic regional bodies as well as with local and county-based organisations.

6.4.7 Overall progress on objectives

Overall, the development programme has achieved all its objectives, which is an impressive achievement given that the programme has only been operating for about two years overall (since October 2002).

The two areas where development staff and regional / country managers felt most progress has been made were on reaching new audiences for heritage (objective 2), and improving the quality of applications (objective 5). However, excellent progress has also been made on almost all the objectives. As also indicated in the review of development activity against good practice in development work (see 6.2), the areas where there could be greater emphasis in future is in joint working with others (with other Lottery Distributors, heritage partners and others, objective 6). However, this opportunity for future development should be seen within an overall picture of good achievement to date.

6.5   Specific contribution of HLF

HLF development work is undertaken alongside work by a whole range of other bodies, which may also offer grants and/or advice to voluntary and community groups. HLF works extensively with and within these other organisations (see section 3, especially 3.4.4). In order to assess HLF's contribution in these circumstances, the following summarises the roles of some of the other key players locally, regionally and nationally, and identifies HLF's distinct contribution.

- **Heritage and conservation bodies**. These include:

  - **Museums, Libraries and Archives Councils (England), Scottish Museums Council etc**. These organisations give advice to museums (potential applicants to HLF) and provide expert opinion to HLF on applications. Their advice is particularly valuable to smaller independent museums, archives and libraries (e.g. in historic houses) that may not get advice from elsewhere. MLACs are also sometimes applicants themselves.

- **English Heritage, Historic Scotland, CADW**. These are statutory bodies concerned with the protection and ownership / management of historic properties, with a focus on Grade I and Grade II* buildings. English Heritage runs a joint scheme with HLF on Repair of Places of Worship and both also fund historic townscapes. These bodies run small grants scheme (although far less than HLF), may provide expert advice to HLF, and may also be applicants to HLF.

- **Countryside Agency, English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage**. These statutory bodies are responsible for countryside and landscape, recreation and rural communities, and for nature conservation and biodiversity (separate bodies for countryside recreation and nature conservation / biodiversity in England - Countryside Agency and English Nature; in Scotland and Wales these bodies cover all elements). The Countryside Agency runs the Local Heritage Initiative in partnership with HLF, which provides small grants for community projects, with an extensive programme of advice and support (the future of LHI is uncertain, given imminent changes to the structure of the Countryside Agency). English Nature and the Scottish and Welsh bodies run a grants scheme for HLF on heathland restoration, and other grant schemes for local groups.

HLF differs from these bodies in the following ways:

- HLF has a broad heritage focus, covering built and natural, tangible and intangible heritage, allowing for a wider spectrum of heritage activities to be included in any single project they fund. This is crucial for community activities, which often cross professional and disciplinary boundaries.

- HLF is a funding body. As it is outside the statutory duties of heritage lead bodies, it does not have specific statutory duties or policy priorities to pursue and deliver, and it can therefore be more flexible about responding to local priorities and values for heritage.

- **Other Lottery Distributor bodies**. The Big Lottery Fund, Arts Council, Sport England have all had development staff, although Sport England development staff were recently cut, and arts funding is for different types of programmes and thus provides different types of advice. The Big Lottery Fund is currently restructuring its development work, as Community Fund and New Opportunities Fund strands are merged. All these other Lottery Distributors use HLF to advise on the heritage aspects of projects they are considering for funding.

HLF differs from these bodies in the following ways:

- HLF has a specific focus on funding heritage projects, broadly defined. Heritage work at local level, run by heritage and non-heritage bodies, and the support infrastructure to help new projects, is still relatively new, with HLF playing an important role in its development.

- HLF provides specific development advice for heritage and non-heritage groups working on heritage projects. As identified above (5.2), development work needs to be appropriate to the field in which it operates, to ensure quality of content as well as of planning and management ability. HLF's development work provides that expertise, which is not currently available from other Lottery Distributor bodies.

- **Regional and local government bodies**. These include:

  - **Government regional offices (in England)**. These are the regional outposts of central government departments, including DCMS which is responsible for Lottery. These offices provide the main regional links to national government programmes, European funding for regeneration etc.

  - **Regional Development Agencies (in England)**. Set up by government, these regional agencies are statutorily responsible for regional economic regeneration. They provide links to initiatives including Market Towns Forums.

  - **Regional assemblies (in England)**. Set up by government to provide a regional level of democratic government although currently none are directly elected but are run by councillors and other co-opted members. HLF are represented on various forums and initiatives from regional assemblies relevant to heritage.

  - **Local authorities**. Democratically elected local government bodies responsible for providing and/or co-ordinating most local public services. Many provide small grants and support for voluntary and community organisations through various departments and sections including through Lottery Officers (not all local authorities have these, especially in HLF SDAs), external funding officers (responsible for bringing in external funding to the authority and/or the area), museum, heritage and cultural officers (not all authorities have these), youth services (most authorities) and, occasionally, archaeology officers. Local authorities are often applicants to HLF, and may help co-ordinate applications from other local heritage projects.

  - **Community councils** (in Scotland and Wales), and **parish and town councils** (in England) are a more local tier of local government, with some powers relevant to heritage and able to supply some funding, support and advice to local projects.

HLF differs from these bodies in the following ways:

- HLF is not a branch of government, allowing it greater flexibility in responding to local initiatives.

- HLF brings expertise on heritage to potential projects, and is thus able to advise on content as well as on planning and management issues.

- HLF is a funding body. As it is outside the statutory duties of heritage lead bodies, it does not have specific statutory duties or policy priorities to pursue and deliver, and it can therefore be more flexible about responding to local priorities and values for heritage.

- **Voluntary and community organisations.** These are likely to have links to potential HLF applicants and/or be applicants themselves and seeking development advice. There are often hundreds of local organisations within any local authority area, and the most relevant and widely established bodies include:

  - **Conservation and environmental bodies** such as:

    - **Wildlife trusts**, which may advise small community groups on local natural heritage as well as being applicants themselves.

    - **Groundwork**, a regeneration charity working through local trusts across the UK. Groundwork has a strong focus on community involvement, environmental regeneration, providing advice and giving access to funding sources.

    - **BTCV**, conservation volunteer charity which undertakes and advises others on range of practical environmental projects often focused on wildlife and green spaces.

    - **Greenspace trusts**, which provide some development advice.

  - **Umbrella bodies** providing general advice and support to voluntary and community organisations. The two main types of umbrella bodies across the UK are:

    - **Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs)** are umbrella bodies for urban voluntary and community organisations, and are established in most towns and cities in the UK. They are often funded by the local authority and other public and charitable sources.

    - **Rural Community Councils (RCCs)** are umbrella bodies for rural voluntary and community organisations, and are established in every English county. They have Service Level Agreements with the Countryside Agency to provide certain community services, alongside various sources of other funding.

    Both provide advice, networking, training and capacity building for voluntary and community bodies. They range enormously in size, from small organisations with limited resources and few staff through to a few which are major local organisations with large budgets and expert staff.

HLF differs from these bodies in the following ways:
- HLF provides targeted development advice geared to supporting heritage projects (by heritage and non-heritage groups), bringing heritage expertise to these groups.

- HLF is primarily a funder, with advice on accessing that funding and improving the quality of projects funded, rather than providing generic development advice.

As can be seen from this very brief summary, HLF is operating alongside a wide range of other organisations, some of which offer funding and advice, including on heritage. Identifying HLF's unique contribution is complex, given the range of other players and their changing roles.

However, based on the brief summary above, and other evidence identified in this evaluation study, HLF's unique contribution can be summarised as providing the following:

- **A broad heritage focus**. HLF's remit is not limited to any specific types of heritage, and development staff work on developing diverse heritage project applications from a wide range of groups and organisations. HLF's broad view of heritage also allows the development work to engage with innovation in heritage conservation, interpretation, access and participation, rather than having specific priorities to protect only certain types of heritage (e.g. historic buildings, natural heritage). It is this diversity and breadth that makes HLF's approach to heritage unique.

  In addition, local communities often do not use the same distinctions between heritage types as academic disciplines or professional bodies, and are more likely to see across such boundaries into a broader concept of local heritage. By working between traditional heritage priorities and local communities' sense of heritage value, HLF development work can help strengthen the role of heritage in the wider social and economic context by extending understanding of what heritage can be and can do for local communities (e.g. historic identity contributing to social cohesion by developing understanding, distinctiveness to local pride, individual histories to capacity building and confidence of individuals). In spite of the recent broader understanding of the contribution heritage can make to social and economic development, it remains a relatively vulnerable aspect of local community life and thus requires a continuing special focus to ensure the currently emerging value is consolidated into sustainable local action to conserve heritage assets.

- **A flexible and responsive approach**. As a funding body, HLF is outside the statutory duties of heritage lead bodies. Its development work can therefore be more flexible and responsive to applicants' (especially local community) priorities and values for heritage, within the more general aim of conserving diverse heritage assets. HLF development work can thus ensure that good project and financial management is focused on achieving good quality projects - improving the abilities of groups to deliver their planned activities as well as making a contribution to conserving heritage, and ensuring that no sectors of society are excluded from participation.

  HLF also manages to marry overall flexibility and responsiveness with proactive initiatives to ensure it is not only available to those who already have the experience and contacts to undertake heritage activities. By reaching out to under-represented groups and localities, as well as serving mainstream heritage bodies, HLF development work can invest its resources to support a constantly expanding and innovative range of heritage activities.

- **Focus on HLF funding**. The most obvious unique characteristic, but also important. HLF development work focuses on HLF grants and application processes. It does not attempt in depth community capacity building or general advice to potential applicants, but provides links to existing services provided by other local organisations with that remit where deeper and longer term support is needed. This practical, very specific focus is highly valued by potential applicants, and it helps ensure that HLF development work is closely linked to HLF internal grant assessment processes, which is crucial for effective performance by both.

HLF development work clearly makes an important and distinct contribution to support for heritage conservation activities, and it is important that this unique role continues to be recognised and supported.

In future, this unique role may be strengthened by ensuring it is integrated more fully into the wider (and still very informal) system of support and capacity building which can provide more in depth support for those groups with few skills and little experience - those which need the most help and may not yet be at a stage of making a funding application, or who need extensive help to enable them to achieve a successful application.

Development staff already have links with the wider support system (e.g. with councils for voluntary service and rural community councils), and these can be further developed as the overall system is strengthened as a result of current government plans for investment in the capacity building infrastructure (by the Home Office, Treasury etc). Such an approach would help reduce the demands on development staff for one-to-one help, as well as ensure that groups gain access to the long term support they need. HLF's development work has a unique role to play in this strengthened system of support, because of the characteristics outlined above.

6.6   Gaps identified

The brief for the evaluation specified that significant gaps in provision in services, which should be incorporated into provision, should be identified. Such gaps could be identified by reference to failure to meet objectives or targets, but progress on both has been good and there are no significant gaps to report. In addition, development activity is by its nature often flexible and responsive, so it is more a case of where greater effort could be put in future rather than simple gaps in provision.

In re-phrasing the issue, it is therefore easier to point to opportunities which could be interesting and valuable if development work were to pursue them. These include the following.

6.6.1 Research and analysis

More effective continuous research and analysis would be useful to examine easily and simply the value and achievements of development work, and where it was not achieving as much as it could, to aid the development of good development practice. Much of this data is already collected and reported at regional and country levels but there are currently few national standards or models which allow wider use to be made of the data.

The aim of such research and data collection should not be a simplistic comparison between regions and countries, which would be invidious given the different needs, priorities and contexts of each region and country. The aim should be to provide collective data on the activities and achievements of development work so that these can be more effectively assessed, and adjustments made to improve practice over time when something is not working as expected. This evaluation has used whatever data has been available and started to identify the questions that may need to be addressed in future. The development of a nationally consistent set of detailed data would be invaluable to future evaluation exercises of this sort.

Useful new research may include collecting data that would allow HLF staff to:

- Test the effectiveness and 'reach' of outreach events. For example:
  - numbers of events held, where (e.g. which SDAs), numbers attending
  - summary analysis of feedback from participants, framed by the existing priorities (e.g. currently these may be FTAs reached, types of groups attending, types of projects discussed)
  - pre-application advice requested as a result, applications resulting, success rates.

- Monitor the impact of development work on SDAs regularly, e.g. pre-application forms received, applications made, awards made, amounts awarded and success rates.

- Collect data on non-SDA local authority areas to test levels of pre-application forms received, applications made, awards made, amounts awarded and success rates. This would enable a regular review to be made to check if new 'cold spots' are emerging and need development work.

- Review the impact of pre-application advice, building on the North West region's pilot study, perhaps by:
  - examining success rates within HLF of projects receiving pre-application advice (recognising that success depends on a whole range of factors, internal and external to HLF, of which development work is only one)
  - examining numbers of withdrawals of projects as a result of pre-application advice (saving all parties time and money)
  - follow up withdrawals to see which have been funded elsewhere as a result of HLF advice and signposting
  - further test the satisfaction of groups receiving pre-application advice (possibly by extending the Customer Care Monitor, which already does this to some extent).

- Examine the types of projects and types of groups which are coming through the development work. Initially, this could focus on first time applicants, so a better picture could be obtained of what is different about these applicants from conventional HLF applicants. At present, the heritage impact of development work cannot be effectively evaluated because there is no easy way to access data on these issues. A simple classification of groups and projects could be developed and trialled (see 6.4.2 for some initial thoughts) and then detailed data collated on existing and future pre-applications, applications and awards.

Some regions and countries are already planning, and carrying out, research of this sort, and some of these data are already collected in some form at national level. However, it would be very valuable if all regional and national research activities could be developed in consultation between regions and countries to enable new research to be seen as essentially piloting an approach which could then be used nationally to obtain nationally consistent data. Although regional research is clearly valuable for regional purposes, better use of the time and resources taken for this work could be made if the value of such work for HLF development work nationally was taken into account.

6.6.2 Special development areas (SDAs)

There could be a specific re-examination of the purpose and value of special development areas (SDAs) as the most effective approach to getting a more equitable spread of HLF grants and reaching new audiences. At present there is clear value in having these areas, to focus development work. However, there is only anecdotal evidence relating to why some SDAs have responded well, and others have not (see 6.4.3 for some initial possible reasons). More detailed and systematic understanding of the qualities of these areas, what types of development activity have been tried, what has worked and not, and what innovative approached have been tried in other areas that could be used.

Only when greater understanding of these areas has been developed would it be appropriate to consider expanding or reducing the number of areas, changing the areas, investing more resources in the still cold 'cold spots' or abandoning a geographical focus all together (all of which may be options, depending on the findings of detailed analysis). Any such analysis would clearly need to be done in full partnership with the regional and country staff concerned, and in consultation with the support agencies and groups in those areas.

This area of work could be approached by undertaking trials across the UK of innovative approaches in still cold 'cold spots', and sharing the results across the Development Managers Forum. Any such new mechanisms could involve grantees. In these ways, experience can be developed and reflected upon in ways which take the regional / country and local context into account but also identifies the broader factors influencing the success or otherwise of development activity in these areas.

6.6.3 Sharing good practice

There are always benefits in sharing good practice in development work, within HLF, with other Lottery distributors and with other agencies. The Development Managers Forum is a useful mechanism but does not currently involve all development staff. More focused meetings which create an opportunity for staff to work together on an issue affecting various regions (e.g. work with black and minority ethnic groups, or still cold 'cold spots') could be very productive in supporting the continued creative development of development work, and expand the repertoire of methods that development staff can call on.

6.6.4 Proactive strategic work

Stronger priority could be given to proactive strategic work within regions and countries to help serial applicants prioritise their bids, given the more competitive funding environment and the need to work 'upstream' of the application arriving at HLF (always a priority for development work).

There are two strands to this work:
- Helping serial applicants prioritise their bids, and
- Helping groups of applicants work together to prioritise their bids, when they would otherwise be competing, possibly unnecessarily.

Both involve HLF acting as facilitators for potential applicants, as the choice of which actual applications are made, and for what, would always remain the responsibility of the applicants themselves.

Where this work has been done already (e.g. South West and West Midlands), it is highly valued by the applicants and shows considerably initiative on the part of HLF. This is high level strategic work but HLF is uniquely placed to do it as a neutral body concerned with heritage but without its own policy priorities or statutory duties.

6.6.5 Links to capacity building

HLF development staff cannot provide the in depth long term support needed by the least confident and skilled groups. This is not HLF's role, and it does not have the resources to undertake such capacity building.

The UK Government has recently launched a new framework for capacity building (Home Office 2004), which defines capacity building as "activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities". It would be of considerable benefit if HLF development staff could link its activities more closely to this new framework, so that other bodies could take on the capacity building activities, and HLF could continue its focus on helping groups development good quality applications for funding heritage projects.

Such an integrated approach to capacity building could have considerable benefits to all parties concerned. For example, a small local black and minority ethnic group undertaking a local oral history project, funded by HLF and given initial development advice, could be linked into a whole range of other networks (heritage, other specific specialist advice, and generalist advice on finance or management) which would help its long term development. In this way, groups new to heritage could be linked into wider networking, and wider networks would become more familiar with heritage activities as a result, providing another mechanism for reaching new audiences.

Much development work already signposts groups to other advice, and creates some of these links, but a greater emphasis on the value of this work could help strengthen its impact.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

This evaluation has examined the current activities and impacts of HLF's development work since it began in the autumn of 2002. The three objectives of the evaluation were to assess the effectiveness of the contribution of the development programme, identify significant gaps in service provision, and identify HLF's specific contribution in the context of other development provision.

This report details the findings of the research carried out over the past six months, including describing the main development activities across the organisation. It has also analysed the contribution of the development work to meeting HLF's SP2 targets on capacity building and outreach, and to HLF's wider aims, and the extent to which HLF's development work has met its own objectives and conformed to wider characteristics of good practice in development work. From this analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn.

7.2 Effectiveness

HLF development work is meeting its own original objectives, has met and exceeded two of the SP2 targets for capacity building and outreach and made good progress towards the remaining three SP2 targets, and has contributed to SP2 aims especially helping achieve a more equitable spread of HLF funding across the UK. More broadly, HLF's development work has been particularly effective in three areas:

- **Reaching new audiences**. Good outreach work in the special development areas (SDAs) and with first time applicants (FTAs), including targeted social groups such as black and minority ethnic groups, and specific geographical areas such as rural or former coalfield areas, has resulted in a wide range of groups, sectors of society, and localities receiving HLF support, advice and funding for the first time. Anecdotal evidence from interviews and personal observation during the evaluation shows that many of these groups have not been engaged with heritage before. Outreach work which has been particularly effective has been those events which have been themed (e.g. parks), or targeted at particular groups (e.g. FTAs especially black and minority ethnic groups), or undertaken jointly with other agencies (e.g. CVSs).

- **Improved quality of applications**. This has two elements, both achieved by effective pre-application and other advice:
  - reducing the number of ineligible or poor applications which were likely to be unsuccessful, and
  - raising the quality of good applications which were likely to succeed.

  Applicants, development staff, grants staff and HLF generally benefit from the effectiveness of this work. Applicants are helped to develop good projects of real heritage value that are within their capacity to deliver. HLF development and grants staff do not waste time on inappropriate applications, and can deal more easily with groups (and rejections), and HLF's reputation as an organisation benefits as the advice is clearly valued by applicants even if they are unsuccessful in their application.

- **Working in partnership**. Growing networks of contacts and more joint activities with other bodies are reaching a level at which HLF is now actively sought as a partner in various regional and country-wide strategic initiatives. These links enable a voice for heritage to be part of debates about a wide range of social, economic and environmental initiatives (including regeneration). HLF development staff's role in facilitating individuals organisations (serial applicants etc) and groups of organisations to prioritise their bids to HLF and, in the process, communicate more effectively among themselves, is growing.

HLF's effectiveness depends on three particular qualities of its development work:

- **Clear and coherent approach**, with a priority on targeted areas and groups (special development areas and first time applicants), the focus on developing good quality applications (and thus good quality projects) and reducing the number of poor and/or ineligible applications, and working in partnership with existing organisations.

- **Investment of appropriate staff resources**. Successful delivery of the development programme has only been feasible because of the staffing resources dedicated to the programme, which has allowed high calibre specialist staff to be recruited and based at region / country level. As a result, these development staff have been able to focus on advice, outreach and partnership work separately from grant assessment processes.

- **Diversity of methods in different places**. Although there are strong similarities in the approach to HLF development work across the UK, the actual activities and methods are very different in different places, reflecting the characteristics of the regions and countries where it is done.

7.3 Significant gaps in provision

Development work is not an exact science, and no significant gaps in service provision have been identified in assessing progress on either targets or objectives.

However, a range of opportunities for the future has been identified (see section 6.6), particularly around more effective research and analysis, potentially undertaken through innovating and testing new methods of reaching new audiences, rather than traditional research (e.g. reviewing the impact of pre-application advice, and developing new ways of examining the new types of groups and projects supported).

Other opportunities identified here include a more detailed review of the purpose and value of special development areas as the most effective approach to getting a more equitable spread of HLF grants across the UK, increased sharing of good practice in development work among HLF staff (and more widely), a continuing strong focus on proactive strategic work in which HLF facilitates heritage interests to work together, and more effective links to capacity building agencies locally.

There are two further areas where additional investment of development time and resources could increase its overall effectiveness. The first is in helping create stronger networks of support for heritage work (in which HLF would continue to have a key role), so that groups could be signposted elsewhere more effectively for longer term in depth capacity building and support. The second is in developing a greater awareness and understanding of the heritage policy context at local, regional and national levels. This would enable HLF development staff to have a more informed view of the heritage context and thus the heritage value of specific projects. It would also help HLF by enabling development staff to continue their efforts to focus development work on those areas where it can make a unique contribution.

7.4   HLF's special contribution

HLF is providing development advice alongside other heritage bodies and generalist agencies providing support, advice and capacity building. Identifying HLF's unique contribution is complex, given the range of other players and their changing roles. However, there appear to be two characteristics of HLF's development work that are quite distinctive from activities by other agencies:

•   **A broad heritage focus**. HLF's remit is not limited to any particular type of heritage and it can therefore fund projects that work with built and natural, tangible and intangible heritage assets. Development staff work on developing diverse heritage project applications from a wide range of groups. It is this diversity and breadth that makes HLF's approach to heritage unique.

        Such a broad heritage focus has particular benefits in that it helps understanding of how heritage contributes to wider social and economic regeneration (because there are so many points of contact with different heritage assets). It also matches the broad view of heritage often taken by local communities, which are less likely to see heritage as divided along professional and academic disciplinary boundaries. This diversity and breadth allows potential applicants (and others) to easily understand connections into the wider community benefits of heritage (e.g. to regeneration, community cohesion, local pride and confidence).

•   **A flexible and responsive approach**. As a funding body, HLF is outside the statutory duties of heritage lead bodies. HLF development work can therefore be more flexible and responsive to applicants' own interests and values for heritage. Linked to proactive outreach activities, this approach can help ensure that no sectors of society are excluded from participation in heritage activity. It can also support genuinely innovative heritage work without patronising or directing applicants.

•   **A focus on HLF funding**. The most obvious unique characteristic, but also important. HLF development work focuses on HLF grants and application processes. It does not attempt in depth community capacity building or general advice to potential applicants, but provides links to existing services provided by other local organisations with that remit where deeper and longer term support is needed. This practical, very specific focus is highly valued by potential applicants, and it helps ensure that HLF development work is closely linked to HLF internal grant assessment processes, which is crucial for effective performance by both.

A focus on HLF's development work's unique contribution is not intended to suggest that HLF should work in isolation - rather the reverse. By clarifying what is different about HLF, it becomes easier for HLF to see how it fits into wider systems of funding and support for heritage activities, and it can integrate its activities more effectively with others.

7.5   Final conclusions

The statistical analysis for this evaluation has relied largely upon statistics for 2002-3 and 2003-4, during which period development work had been happening for only 18 months. Within that time, the work has made significant progress on SP2 targets on capacity building and outreach, and has made considerable progress in meeting its own objectives. These achievements are all the more impressive given the inevitable time lag between first contact, pre-application advice, application and award decision; especially given the additional time always needed for the most inexperienced and least confident groups - which is often the profile of groups in the special development areas and among priority first time applicant groups with whom development staff often work.

HLF development work, even within this time, has not simply delivered a common approach but has innovated and tested new ideas, within regions and countries, responding flexibly and creatively to new opportunities, and making plans for future development building on that experience. The calibre and, now, experience of all the staff involved, at all levels, is a major factor in the success of the programme.

However, development work has not been without difficulties. The long term nature of the work can be demoralising for staff where immediate tangible results are often difficult to show in spite of hard work. In addition, HLF as an organisation grapples with the different value placed on the often local, often intangible heritage projects that arise as a result of development work, and the conventional high profile heritage assets HLF has funded in the past (e.g. historic buildings, landscapes of particular scientific value, valuable artworks). Such issues will continue to affect HLF's development work into the future, and will continue to be discussed within the organisation.

8.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is not normal practice in evaluations of this sort to make detailed recommendations. Evaluations based on a learning approach work best when they show results which can be quantified, and describe and interpret the quality of work so that lessons can be drawn which can inform future development and strategic decisions. However, there are some basic recommendations that can be proposed at this stage:

•   Development work had only been operational for 18 months when this evaluation started. It is clearly working and developing well, and it would therefore be premature to consider any major changes at this stage, before any longer term impacts could be fully tested. In the meantime, continued investment in dedicated development staff resources based at region / country level is likely to continue to make a significant contribution to HLF aims and targets.

- The full findings of this evaluation should be presented and discussed with HLF staff and others to identify where good practice can be built on, and where further work and investment is needed, as part of future strategic planning. This would enable the evaluation findings to be internalised into future planning processes, and into wider consultation mechanisms.

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