



HARLOW
CONSULTING

Review of the Governance and Management of World Heritage in Scotland

For Historic
Environment Scotland

April 2025

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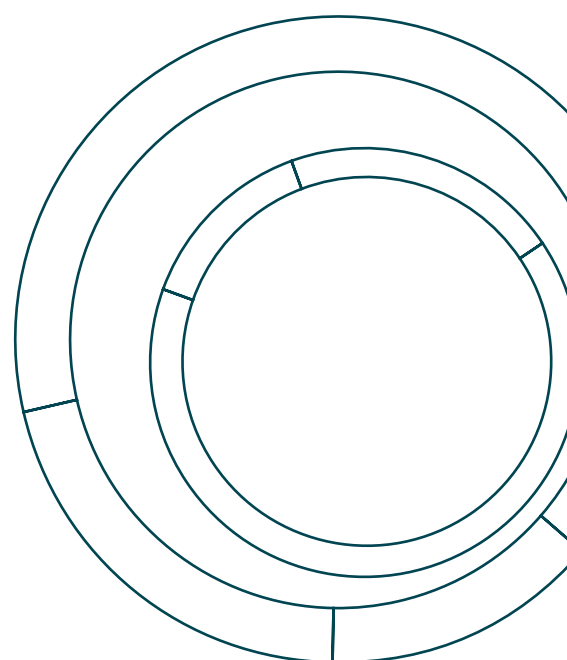


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Forth Bridge from North Queensferry, evening.

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South-west view of Village Bay from the Island of Hirta, St Kilda.

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Skara Brae Neolithic village and the Bay of Skaill, Orkney.

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The Flow Country near Altnabreac.

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Figure 1

1

Executive summary

Executive Summary

1.1 Background and research aims

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has commissioned Harlow Consulting to undertake a review of the governance and management of World Heritage in Scotland.

World Heritage is cultural or natural (or mixed cultural and natural) heritage that possesses ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV), that is to say permanent value for all humanity. The recognition and protection of World Heritage is governed by an international treaty, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972. A World Heritage Site (WHS) is a heritage property that UNESCO has acknowledged to possess OUV and subsequently inscribed on its World Heritage List.

There are seven World Heritage Sites wholly or partly located in Scotland:

- 1 The St Kilda (1986, natural; extended 2004; recognised as mixed cultural and natural, 2005)
- 2 The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh (1995, cultural)
- 3 The Heart of Neolithic Orkney (1999, cultural);
- 4 New Lanark (2001, cultural)
- 5 The Antonine Wall (2008, cultural)
- 6 The Forth Bridge (2015, cultural)
- 7 The Flow Country (2024, natural)

These together represent nearly a quarter of all WHSs in the mainland UK.

HES takes an important role in supporting these sites. As the Scottish Government’s lead body for the historic environment, it has a major advisory role in all matters within Scotland relating to World Heritage. This includes providing prospective sites with support for going through the nomination process, as well as being the statutory advisor on planning decisions relating to development affecting designated heritage assets, including World Heritage Sites. As the body that directly manages Scotland’s national collection of cultural heritage sites on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, it is directly responsible for properties within three World Heritage Sites. It is also an important provider of grant funding for World

Heritage, supporting both day-to-day and wider strategic management of sites, as well as specific conservation, interpretation, education and outreach projects and initiatives.

- The main aims of this review are to:
- A Understand the current advisory, governance and management arrangements, and financing of Scotland’s World Heritage, with special reference to the role of HES.
 - B Consider how well these meet the needs and reap the potential benefits of World Heritage status.
 - C Make evidence-based recommendations on how the governance, management and support of World Heritage in Scotland, and HES’s role within them, can best be developed for the future.

1.2 Methodology

The research drew together findings from a combination of desk research into documentary evidence related to World Heritage (including official documents, academic research, and grey literature), analysis of HES and public domain financial data, and forty interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders, including staff at HES, Scotland’s World Heritage sites, local authorities, and those involved in the wider World Heritage context across the UK.

Analysis of the World Heritage Convention and associated guidelines and documentation led to the identification of 8 key UNESCO requirements for the governance management of World Heritage. These can be summarised under the following headings:

- 1 Identification
- 2 Protection
- 3 Conservation
- 4 Presenting and communicating
- 5 Capacity-building
- 6 Resourcing
- 7 Sustainable development;
- 8 Monitoring and reporting.

The findings from the research are analysed and reported in relation to these eight themes, which then form the basis for a set of recommendations grouped under five key themes.

1.3 Main findings

Research evidence was analysed in relation to these key themes and can be summarised as follows.

1.3.1 Identification

This theme relates to identifying, delineating the boundaries, and nominating potential World Heritage Sites.

The continuing inclusion of a high proportion of Scottish applications on the UK Tentative List and in subsequent nominations for World Heritage status show that Scotland is successfully identifying and supporting globally important properties to gain World Heritage status. However, there is evidence that this process could be more socially inclusive and participatory. In particular there is potential for the selection, nomination and post-inscription processes to be more strongly driven by local initiative and engagement.

1.3.2 Protection

This theme relates to the institutional, legal and policy frameworks that protect World Heritage.

Overall, Scotland's heritage protection system is successfully preventing inappropriate development and ensuring the preservation of WHSs and their OUV, especially since planning policy in the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) requires OUV to remain unharmed by development. However, both past and present risks were identified by stakeholders, relating to a need for stronger World Heritage expertise within both local authority planning departments and HES, and a continuing lack of statutory protection for World Heritage in Scottish planning law. There were also concerns that there is a need for strong policy leadership on World Heritage from the Scottish Government and HES. This related to evidence from both interviews and documentary review that there was a current lack of clarity and cohesiveness in relation to roles and responsibilities in World Heritage, with a lack for formal definition of HES's functions in the legislation and framework documents that define its scope of responsibilities.

1.3.3 Conservation and management

This theme relates to the direct care and management of World Heritage Sites, both day-to-day and strategic.

The research found few indications that any individual WHSs are at direct physical risk of damage liable to lead to loss of OUV. There were concerns about the growing challenge posed by climate change, and about how readily these could be addressed, especially for Skara Brae in the Heart of Neolithic Orkney WHS. Formal management structures and processes, with their combination of a Steering Group or other oversight board, World Heritage Coordinator, and regularly redrafted World Heritage Management Plans, consistently meet basic UNESCO requirements for management of World Heritage. Nevertheless, there was evidence of unclear and inconsistent roles and expectations for the different management and advisory groups and for Coordinators. There was broad consensus that the production of management plans was often excessively resource – and labour intensive, and often produced results that either codified existing practice or set out unrealistic aspirations.

1.3.4 Presenting and Communicating

This theme relates to the presentation and interpretation of World Heritage, and to ensuring that local communities and stakeholders are able to contribute to their management and use.

HES's overall presentation of Scotland's World Heritage is highly regarded, but this contrasts with individual sites, which do not consistently signal their exceptional global importance. There were also frequent reports that there are challenges successfully engaging and consulting local communities and local authorities, especially during the production of management plans. There also appear to be issues at some sites with lack of sufficient resource for education, with a related desire for HES to provide relevant expertise.

1.3.5 Capacity Building

This relates to developing the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to manage World Heritage effectively.

Those interviewed consistently reported a need to develop deeper understanding of the nature and implications of World Heritage status, among all stakeholders and at all levels. There was a particular

perception of deficits in fundraising skills, hampering individual sites' ability to become more financially self-sufficient and sustainable.

1.3.6 Resourcing

This theme relates to the human and financial resources allocated to World Heritage.

The financial analysis showed that when all HES funding flows to World Heritage and World Heritage Sites are combined, they can be seen to benefit from flows of public funding totalling around £2.5 million per year. However, the larger part of the funding comes indirectly through HES's main grants schemes or through routine expenditure on HES Properties in Care within WHSs. This means that only a minority of the total flows, amounting to less than £0.5 million per year, directly supports World Heritage. Moreover, the current distribution of grant to individual WHSs appears to have arisen reactively rather than strategically. While there is generally a perceptible rationale for differential allocations, in the absence of a more systematic approach it is difficult to demonstrate that grant is being allocated equitably and optimally.

Individual WHSs and WH management bodies vary widely in their ability to self-generate funding. Some require continuing subsidy from their owners or are managing substantial deficits and liabilities. In spite of this, there are no clear arrangements in place for supporting management bodies of WHSs when these bodies are experiencing significant financial risk.

1.3.7 Sustainable development

This theme relates to the potential of World Heritage to contribute to economic development that has positive or neutral impacts on the environment and local communities.

The research found little evidence that sustainable development is being pursued in a systematic or successful way across Scotland's WHSs. Other parts of the UK, notably Wales, may offer valuable models for integrating this more completely into Scottish approaches to WH management.

1.3.8 Monitoring and reporting

This theme relates to the obligation to undertake both reactive and systematic monitoring at regular intervals of all World Heritage Sites, to identify and report to States Parties and then to UNESCO any threats liable to harm OUV.

While it poses some burdens on WHSs and their management groups, notably coordinators, in general periodic reporting was not cited as unduly burdensome or problematic. The research found little evidence of systematic reactive monitoring, beyond the statutory planning process; there are, however, close and regular contacts between HES and all the individual WHSs that can be expected to identify and escalate any emerging issues. Climate change represents a particular potential threat for many Scottish WHSs and HES has taken a leading role in assessing climate-related risks to World Heritage. There was nevertheless evidence of a fatalistic attitude to the potential loss of some World Heritage, notably at Skara Brae. While this reflects the magnitude of the threats they face, it also seemed to be discouraging serious consideration of possible remedial strategies.

1.4 Recommendations

The research concludes that in general there are few immediate problems with the governance, management and resourcing of World Heritage that pose direct, current threats to WHSs and their OUV. It nevertheless identifies five broad areas where there is potential for positive change:

1 HES's role

Secure greater clarity around roles and responsibilities in Scottish World Heritage both with regard to the Scottish Government's relationship with HES and also HES's relationship with other World Heritage stakeholders, and formalise agreed roles and responsibilities through documentation. Within HES, develop a stronger role for the HES World Heritage Team in building awareness and understanding of World Heritage, its meaning, implications, and potential benefits, across all stakeholder groups.

2 Strategic oversight

Focus the HES WH team on providing national leadership and capacity-building for World Heritage, with a strong focus on strategic issues for World Heritage both nationally and at the level of individual sites; on leading policy formation; and on building individual capability through support and training to individuals, institutions and networks involved in Scottish World Heritage.

3 Management and governance of World Heritage Sites

HES is a large and complex organisation, with work on World Heritage being undertaken as a small component of many teams' workloads. Within HES, develop stronger patterns of cross-team communication and working for World Heritage. At individual WHSs, promote simpler, more consistent and more empowered World Heritage governance and management structures. Explore the potential for a single basic model that can be adapted where appropriate to meet local needs. Where a site is preparing an application for inclusion on the tentative list or a nomination for WH status, use a localised coordinator role as the basis for building deeper engagement and securing a stronger voice for local communities and local authorities. For established WHSs, ensure consistency in the role, remuneration and conditions for World Heritage coordinators. Ensure that the focus for coordinators is on coordination of stakeholders and initiatives, rather than on executing projects. Consider moving toward consistent placement of WHS Coordinators within Local Authorities, to enable them to act as locally accessible advocates for and sources of expertise on World Heritage, but with appropriate measures and financial support in place to ensure that the role is well-defined, properly focused on World Heritage, and allows for close liaison with HES and with the wider World Heritage community. At the same time, work towards building staffing and capacity within individual WHSs to ensure that individual coordinators do not represent 'single points of failure'. There is also potential to rethink the approach to WH Management Plans, to ensure that they are means to good management rather than ends in themselves. This is likely to involve replacing five-yearly rewriting with review, making them more concise and focused, and separating overall strategic aims from specific actions, with the latter being shorter-term, assigned to specific responsible organisations or individuals, and regularly updated. At the same time, management plans should be recognised as one part of an effective broader documented system of management. Good management may involve producing a more comprehensive baseline system of documented information than the management plan alone – potentially embracing, for example, historical, archaeological, architectural and ecological analyses, formal conservation planning, and business information.

4 Protecting and recognising WHSs and OUV

Arguably, there is a need for a stronger statutory framework for protecting World Heritage, so that the legislation more clearly articulates the primacy of World Heritage. Within HES and local authorities there is a need to ensure that planning and development advice are consistently informed by a sound understanding of the special requirements of World Heritage, and this is likely to require increased capability for handling WH-related planning applications, underpinned by regular and ongoing training targeted at understanding how potential development might impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Sites. A critical supporting factor will be to ensure that attributes and elements of attributes of OUV are consistently and effectively defined for all Scotland's WHSs.

5 The funding and financing of World Heritage

HES should continue to provide consistent funding contributions towards the cost of all WHS coordinators. However, allocations should be made more equitable and transparent, and used as a lever for securing consistent standards of coordination, formalised in Memoranda of Understanding. The research suggests that grant funding that HES directs towards individual WHSs is much needed but the rationale for allocations is not always transparent. There would therefore be benefit in ensuring that current funding is maintained or enhanced, but that funding mechanisms provide grants in a way that is transparent, accountable and appropriately allocated.



Figure 2

2

Introduction



Figure 3

Introduction

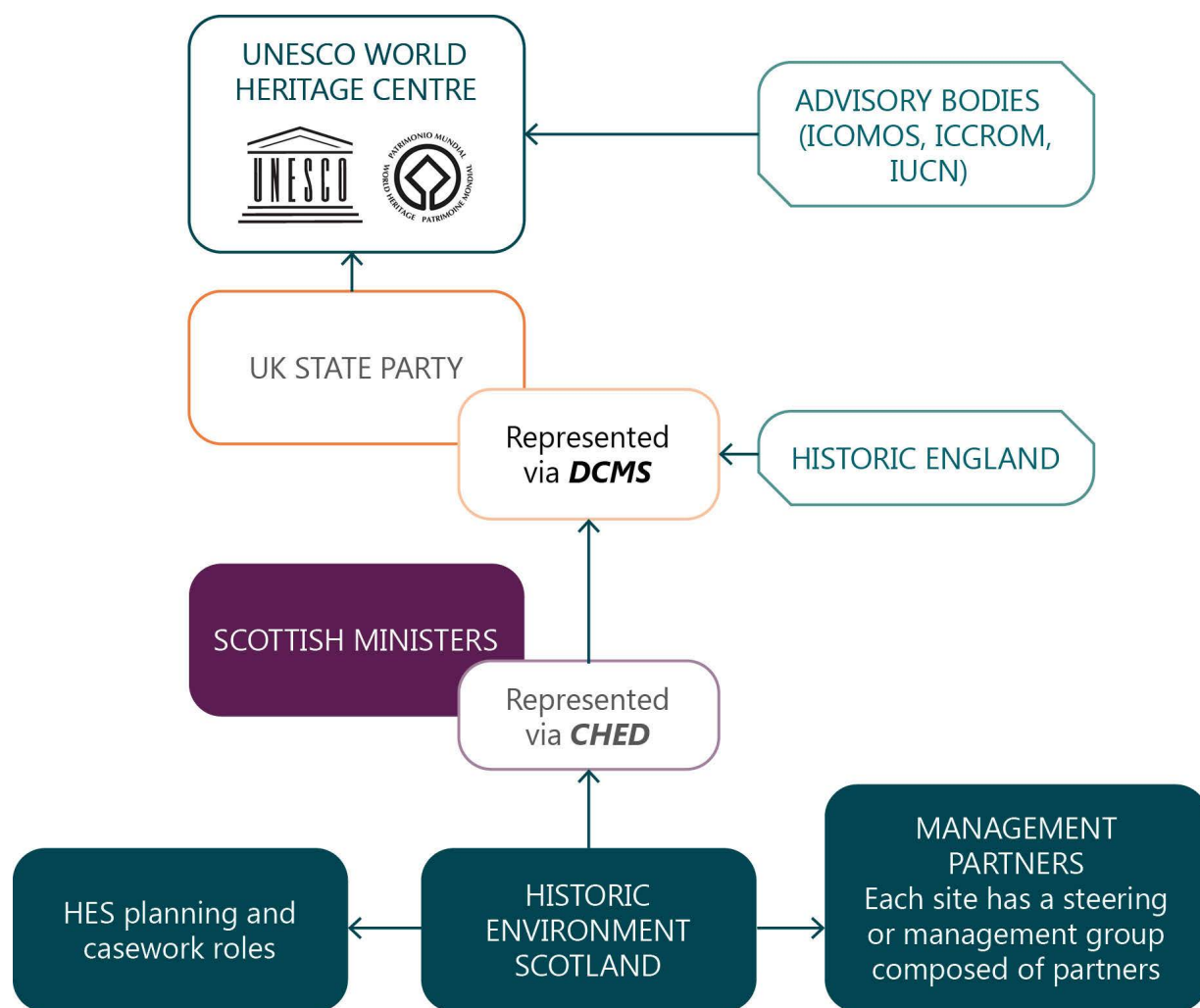
2.1 Project background – Historic Environment Scotland and World Heritage

World Heritage Sites (WHSs) are inscribed by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee under the terms of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The Convention adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1972 and came into force in December 1975, in accordance with the principles set out in its text, three months after it had been ratified by twenty states. The Convention commits its signatories, known as 'States Parties', to identify and protect cultural and natural heritage sites and monuments that possess 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV), that is to say, permanent value for all humanity. The World Heritage Convention now has 196 States Parties, making it one of the most widely adopted international treaties.

The UK ratified the convention in 1984. The UK's first WHSs were inscribed in 1986 and there are now 35 UK WHSs. Scotland is home to seven of these: New Lanark; Heart of Neolithic Orkney; St Kilda; Old and New Towns of Edinburgh; the Forth Bridge; the Antonine Wall; and (inscribed in 2024 after the completion of the research for this report) the Flow Country in northern Scotland. There remains a further Scottish site on the tentative list, the Zenith of Iron Age Shetland in the Shetland Islands.

As a State Party the UK government is ultimately responsible for implementing the terms of the convention. This responsibility is discharged by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). DCMS is advised on World Heritage by Historic England (HE). World Heritage is not formally part of the devolved responsibilities of the Scottish government; as an international treaty, the World Heritage Convention can only be implemented at the level of the government of the United Kingdom. In practice, however, the Scottish Government provides leadership on World Heritage in Scotland and is formally responsible for reporting 'any issues for Scotland's World Heritage Sites' to DCMS.¹ Spatial planning is also a devolved responsibility, and it is the planning system that provides the key mechanism for protecting World Heritage Sites from harm. Historic Environment Scotland, as the Scottish Government's lead body for the historic environment, in turn takes on many aspects of World Heritage protection, conservation, and management, firstly as statutory consultee on planning decisions affecting the historic environment, secondly as direct manager of the Scottish Ministers' portfolio of heritage sites, and thirdly as the main source of advice and support to individual World Heritage Sites and to properties that may potentially be nominated for inscription, with a particular focus on providing advice on the strategic management of Scotland's World Heritage.

1. <https://www.gov.scot/policies/arts-culture-heritage/>



World Heritage Governance in Scotland

A recent review of World Heritage in the UK, researched and written by Christopher Blandford, Chair of World Heritage UK, has found that basic management structures and approaches were consistent across most sites and compliant with World Heritage guidelines (notably through the employment of WHS coordinators or equivalent staff, the work of WHS advisory committees or steering groups, and the development of WHS Management Plans). It nevertheless highlighted a considerable degree of complexity and variety between individual sites in the UK WHS collection and in approaches to their governance and funding. The report noted that 'Unlike for UK National Parks and AONBs there is no national legislation, legal framework and support that underpins and raises the profile of the UK's WHSs'.² It also noted that across the whole of the UK, only five World Heritage Sites had visitor centres; only four had teams of five or more full-time staff; most had only one dedicated WH staff member, often at 'low management levels'; only three sites had dedicated charitable trusts

(two of which are in Scotland) to provide overall cohesion and direction to their management; and, it noted the vulnerability of the many sites run by local authorities to further funding cuts. The report therefore recommended 'improved governance' and 'improved public funding and alternative grant aid' as fundamental to assuring the future of the UK's World Heritage Sites. This is especially the case given the increased budgetary pressures in the wake of the COVID crisis of 2019-20 and the broader economic and fiscal challenges of the current inflationary environment. These pressures are having a particularly significant on local authorities, which are expecting increasing budget deficits.³

2. Chris Blandford, *UK World Heritage Asset for the Future. Technical Report (WHUK, 2019)* pp. 100-101.

3. Audit Scotland (2024), *Briefing: Local government budgets 2024/25*, https://audit.scot/uploads/2024-06/briefing_240514_councils_budgets.pdf; Unison (2024), *Councils on the Brink*, <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2024/09/Councils-on-the-brink-2024.pdf>

In addition, although not specifically discussed by Blandford, there is a view within HES that both the specifics of the governance and management of World Heritage in Scotland and HES's pattern of support for World Heritage have tended to develop on a reactive basis. While the general framework used for managing World Heritage in Scotland is based on UNESCO guidance in the form typically adopted in the UK, there is much variety in the details of implementation. Similarly, there is a perception that funding patterns may have developed in response to immediate needs rather than in relation to broader strategic objectives. This is a matter of particular concern in the current funding climate, where there is considerable pressure on public finances at both national and local levels. HES therefore wishes to understand better the governance and management of World Heritage in Scotland, in order to be assured that the most effective governance and management processes are in place and that HES's resources for World Heritage are appropriate and are equitably and effectively targeted.

2.2 Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of the project is to provide a robust review and analysis of the governance and management of World Heritage in Scotland, with a particular focus on HES's role.

To do this, the research sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Ascertain the governance and management structures of the six Scottish World Heritage Sites.
- Analyse their funding, coordination, and management, currently and historically.
- Ascertain and describe HES's role in World Heritage in Scotland, considering governance, resources (especially funding) and other support.
- Compare Scottish approaches to resourcing, coordinating and managing sites to those elsewhere in the UK, building on the Blandford review.
- Consider Scottish World Heritage Sites' sensitivity to potential future pressures.
- Draw on all these levels of research and analysis to identify and make recommendations for implementing best practice in the governance and management of World Heritage in Scotland.

2.3 Methodology

To fulfil the project aims and objectives, a mixed methodology of desk and interview research was carried out. Three strands of research were undertaken in a coordinated and progressive way:

- Strand 1: focusing on ascertaining the governance and management of World Heritage in Scotland.
- Strand 2: placing the Scottish findings in the context of comparative evidence on the approach in the other UK home nations.
- Strand 3: looking at the wider situation, both in terms of: a) established and emerging best practice for World Heritage as defined by UNESCO, the World Heritage Bureau and their advisors, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, (ICOMOS), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN); and b) the specific arrangements at selected comparator sites, where these may offer insight into relevant best practice for Scottish sites.

For each strand, there has been a mixture of desk research, analysis of shared managerial and administrative information, and interviews with key stakeholders, both for individual sites and World Heritage more broadly.

Desk research focused initially on web-based resources and publications from relevant organisations, including HES, the six Scottish WHSs, the Scottish Government, DCMS, Historic England, CADW, NI Department for Communities, Historic Environment Division, UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN, and potential comparator sites.

The research has also analysed administrative and financial data from HES and the six Scottish World Heritage Sites and the two tentative sites, focusing on funding inflows over the last eight years. Early contact was made with WH coordinators at each site to request this information.

Allowance was made for a total of 40 interviews, targeting:

- World Heritage coordinators and key stakeholders and/or funders at the six Scottish World Heritage sites.
- Wider stakeholders for World Heritage in Scotland, including representatives of the HES World Heritage Team, other key HES stakeholders

and funders of World Heritage, including representatives of the Scottish Government, National Lottery Heritage Fund.

- Key World Heritage stakeholders in the wider UK, including representatives of Historic England, CADW, the Northern Ireland Department for Communities, World Heritage UK, and the UK National Commission for UNESCO.

Forty interviews were completed, with the choice of interviewees having been made in close consultation with the HES project team.

A series of nine stakeholder interviews have taken place with a wide range of HES staff with an interest in World Heritage. Interviews have also taken place with other external stakeholders, including World Heritage UK, NLHF and representatives of Historic England, Cadw and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland and at selected individual Welsh and English World Heritage Sites, in order to provide a comparative perspective.

The final phase of the work synthesised the findings from the desk research and interviews. One aspect of this was defining the World Heritage Convention's requirements of States Parties for World Heritage governance and management, which have been set out thematically in section 3.4. The second aspect was drawing together findings from interviews and data analysis to provide an overview of the current situation of World Heritage in Scotland, similarly arranged by theme. Comparing the Convention requirements and aspirations with the reality within Scotland provides a background for assessing the extent to which Scotland's current World Heritage governance and management arrangements are compliant with the requirements and supportive of the larger aspirations that they reflect. These were then contextualised against the comparative information on World Heritage in the UK as a whole and within each of the UK home nations. Within this framework, the research also sought to establish:

- what current governance, management and support arrangements work most and least effectively and why;
- to identify those sites which would benefit from changes to management approaches and those at highest and lowest risk from current challenges and/or future changes;
- make recommendations on how HES can either directly improve, or seek to influence, current governance, management and support models to enable it to support World Heritage in Scotland most effectively.



Figure 4



Figure 5

3

World Heritage – Principles and requirements

World Heritage – Principles and requirements

3.1 The UNESCO World Heritage Convention

The designation, governance and management of World Heritage are founded on the principles set out in an international treaty, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This is familiarly known as the World Heritage Convention and will generally be referred to in this document as 'the Convention'.⁴ By ratifying the Convention, States Parties commit to the 'identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations' of their World Heritage. A full summary of the requirements can be found in Annex B.

3.2 Operational Guidelines

The Convention established a World Heritage Committee to supervise its implementation. The World Heritage Committee acts as the ultimate guarantor of the Convention's implementation, with advice from ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN, and the World Heritage Centre. The basic expectations for appropriate governance and management of World Heritage have been established by the World Heritage Committee through the World Heritage Centre in the form of Operational Guidelines. The Operational Guidelines set out:

- **Principles for the provision of international assistance**⁵
- **Criteria for cultural and/or natural OUV, alongside requirements for sites to possess 'authenticity and integrity'**⁶
- **Requirements for protection and management arrangements.**

The effective governance and resourcing of World Heritage Sites is therefore not only of fundamental importance to sustaining World Heritage but a formal requirement of initial and continued inscription on the list.

3.3 Other sources of policy, guidance and information

UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre have developed a number of other policy, strategies and guidance documents to further strengthen the principles for the governance and management of World Heritage. At an overarching level, UNESCO has identified five strategic outcomes that the Convention is intended to support: 'credibility' (ensuring that the World Heritage List is balanced and representative); conservation; capacity-building; communication (enabling people to understand and engage with World Heritage); and communities (increasing local community involvement in World Heritage).

A series of resource manuals set out best practice for preparing nominations, managing disaster risks, and managing natural and cultural World Heritage, with the latter including tools for self-assessing management effectiveness.⁷ There are also adopted strategies for disaster risk management (2007) and for capacity building (2011), and an adopted policy on the relationship between World Heritage and sustainable development (2015).

4. UNESCO, 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage'.

5. UNESCO, 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention'.

6. UNESCO, 'The Criteria for Selection'.

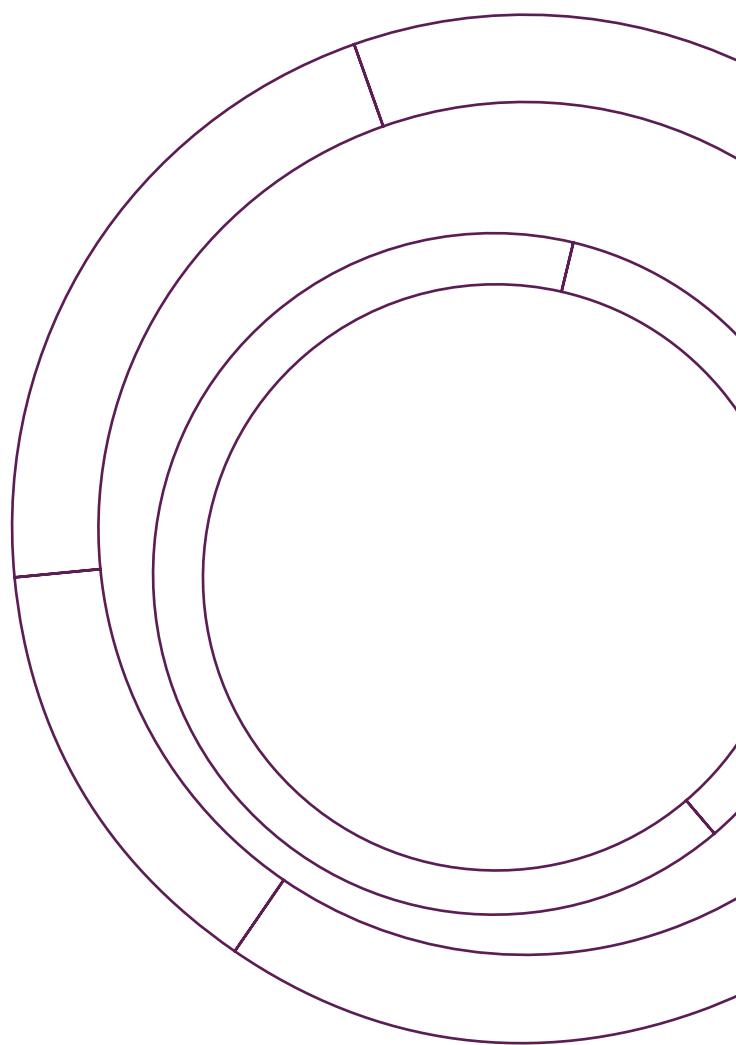
7. UNESCO et al., *Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage* (Paris, 2010); *idem.*, *Preparing World Heritage Nominations* (Paris, 2011); *Managing Natural World Heritage* (Paris, 2012); *idem.*, *Managing Cultural World Heritage* (Paris, 2013); *idem.*, *Enhancing our Heritage 2.0 toolkit* (2023).

3.4 Summary of State Party governance and management requirements and responsibilities

By combining the formal requirements of the World Heritage Convention with the expectations set out in the Operational Guidelines and the kinds of outcomes implied by the 'five Cs' objectives defined for World Heritage, and then removing duplications and crossovers, it is possible to produce a concise but comprehensive overview of the States Parties' governance and management responsibilities and requirements under eight headings, as set out in the infographic on the next page.

Although ultimately an indicative synthesis of, rather than a replacement for, these formal obligations and guidelines, it provides a cohesive outline framework of processes and outcomes that responsible bodies, agencies and other stakeholders should collectively support.

Some of these requirements have implications that go beyond governance and management requirements, but the level of crossover is high and, in addition, these represent the actions and outcomes that governance and management arrangements should underpin. In order to assess the effectiveness of the current functioning and effectiveness of the governance and management of World Heritage in Scotland, the key concern must be the extent to which they facilitate or frustrate the fulfilment of the obligations and objectives entailed by the World Heritage Convention. The next section of this report therefore considers the evidence gathered through the research in relation to each of these requirements.



	REQUIREMENTS	ACTIONS
IDENTIFY	Identify and delineate heritage properties with OUV (Outstanding Universal Value)	■ Identify properties with Outstanding Universal Value, without biases towards any particular types of property or heritage ■ Submit to the World Heritage Committee an inventory of properties for inscription on the 'Tentative List', nominating suitable properties to help build a credible and balanced list
PROTECT	Protect World Heritage through ensuring appropriate legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks are in place	■ Adopt general policies to give the heritage a function in the life of the community ■ Integrate heritage protection into planning programmes and coordination mechanisms ■ Encourage establishment of foundations or associations to facilitate donations for protection ■ Refrain from any deliberate measures that directly or indirectly damage the heritage
CONSERVE	Enable practical care of properties (scientific, technical, legal or administrative) through appropriate management services and systems	■ Produce and implement a documented management system, usually in the form of a management plan, which should identify factors with the potential to affect the heritage ■ Develop scientific and technical studies to identify actions that would counteract the dangers that threaten the heritage
COMMUNICATE	Present and communicate the importance of the sites and World Heritage in general to the public	■ Strengthen appreciation and respect of the cultural and natural heritage, and keep the public informed of the dangers threatening this heritage, with educational programmes ■ Engage communities to ensure that they are empowered to become involved with and to influence management
BUILD CAPACITY	Build capacity to ensure necessary technical, scientific and administrative expertise and support is in place	■ Foster national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the heritage and encourage scientific research in these fields ■ Strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviours of the people with direct responsibilities for heritage conservation and management
RESOURCE	Resource in order to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit World Heritage to future generations	■ Have in place one or more appropriately resourced services for the conservation, protection and interpretation of the cultural natural heritage
DEVELOP SUSTAINABLY	Ensure development affecting WHS is sustainable for the benefit of local, national and international communities	■ Draw on the potential contribution that heritage and heritage conservation can make to the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development ■ Contribute to and comply with the sustainable development objectives, including gender equality, in the World Heritage processes and in their heritage conservation and management systems
MONITOR AND REPORT	Monitor and report on the state of World Heritage to identify actual or potential change that threatens OUV or the state of conservation	■ Provide six-yearly periodic state of conservation reporting ■ Monitor WH to identify actual or potential change that threatens OUV or the state of conservation of a WHS, and reactively report such threats to the World Heritage Committee

4

Governance and Management of Scotland's World Heritage Sites



Figure 6

Governance and Management of Scotland's World Heritage Sites

4.1 World Heritage in Scotland

Scotland's seven WHSs include all three of the main types of World Heritage recognised under the World Heritage Convention and Operational Guidelines: cultural heritage, natural heritage and mixed cultural and natural heritage. However, cultural World Heritage Sites predominate, and comprise New Lanark; the Heart of Neolithic Orkney; the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh; the Forth Bridge; and the Antonine Wall. The remaining Scottish property on the tentative list, the Zenith of Iron Age Shetland is also a prospective cultural WHS. St Kilda was first inscribed as a natural heritage site, but it was subsequently recognised as possessing both outstanding cultural and natural value. The Flow Country is a natural-heritage-only World Heritage Site and consequently the only one of that type within Scotland and only the second in the UK. One of the sites, the Antonine Wall, is part of the wider transnational Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site, with further components in England (Hadrian's Wall) and Germany (the Roman Limes), and the potential for further separate but closely related WHSs, consisting of other sections of Roman frontier in Central Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.⁸

The arrangements for governing and managing World Heritage in Scotland (as in the other devolved nations of the UK) present a complex picture, because of the combination of State Party and devolved responsibilities.

Within Scotland the key responsible parties, agencies and stakeholders and their duties can be summarised as follows:

- 1** The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which is the representative of the UK as a State Party for the purposes of the Convention, submitting nominations of potential WHSs on UK territory to the World Heritage Committee and periodic state of conservation reports to UNESCO in Paris.
- 2** Historic England (HE), which acts as technical advisor to DCMS, working through its central World Heritage team and its regional offices to provide information and advice to DCMS and guidance to all UK World Heritage Sites and potential World Heritage Sites.
- 3** The Scottish Ministers, who report to the UK Government on any issues for Scotland's World Heritage Sites. As they are also responsible for the spatial planning system, which includes explicit provision for heritage protection, they also act as the primary sources of statutory and policy protection for World Heritage. The Scottish Ministers also have legal ownership or guardianship of several properties that either are themselves or lie within World Heritage Sites.



Figure 7

8. The original concept for a pan-European WHS for the surviving remains of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire gave rise to aspirations for 'the creation of a World Heritage Site encompassing all countries which contain parts of the Roman frontier, a single large and unique monument of international importance running through Europe, the Middle East and North Africa' (D. Breeze, S. Jilek, and A. Thiel, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire / Grenzen des Römischen Reiches / Frontières de l'Empire Romain* (Edinburgh, Esslingen and Vienna: Historic Scotland and Deutsches Limeskommission, 2005), p. 9). However, more recently this evolved into proposals for a series of separate WHSs under a 'common framework' (see https://limes.univie.ac.at/files/FRE-Merged_presentations.pdf).

4 Historic Environment Scotland (HES), which is a non-departmental public body, with its board appointed by Scottish Ministers. It is the Scottish Government's lead body for the Historic Environment, as defined by the Historic Environment Scotland Act (2014) and the Scottish Government's Historic Environment Scotland framework document. Together, these set out 'the roles and responsibilities which underpin the relationship between HES and SG'. HES's main purposes are to 'investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment and to manage its collections as a national resource for reference, study and research'. Though there is no formal reference to World Heritage in either the Act or the framework document, this function implies that HES should provide advice on World Heritage matters, and the HES Our Regulatory Framework document states that HES has four roles in relation to World Heritage:

- to provide advice parties who have secured their site a place on the UK Tentative List on preparing their nomination documents;
- to support the development and implementation of World Heritage Management Plans;
- to provide advice on any development proposal that affects a World Heritage Site;
- to notify the Scottish Ministers of any proposed development with the potential to affect a WHS's OUV.

5 Local authorities, which act as first-instance decision makers in most spatial planning matters and define local planning policy through their Local Development Plans. National planning policy requires local authorities to 'support the sustainable management of the historic environment' and 'identify, protect and enhance valued historic assets and places'.

6 Individual World Heritage Sites and their owners and managers, who are expected to manage their sites so as to preserve their Outstanding Universal Value for present and future generations, and (within the limits of their responsibilities) to present and interpret their sites in ways that allow the widest possible public to understand and engage with their Outstanding Universal Value.

At the level of individual sites, the standard management structure across Scotland, and across the UK, is the 'WHS coordinator model'. In this

model, the WHS is overseen by a senior steering group which is responsible for ensuring that a formal management plan is produced on an agreed cycle of five to 10 years, with day-to-day support and management undertaken by a WHS coordinator.

4.2 Identification, delineation and nomination

As we have seen, the responsibility within each State for the implementation of the Convention rests with the State Party itself. The UK government is the signatory to the convention and is ultimately responsible that there are satisfactory measures in place for the appropriate governance and management of UK World Heritage. These responsibilities are taken on by the UK government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which is the main contact for the World Heritage Committee and Centre. Ministers advised by DCMS decide which potential WHS are included in the UK's Tentative List and which are then brought forward from the Tentative List for formal nomination to the World Heritage Committee. The current policy is to keep the Tentative List short – with the present list having only five potential World Heritage Sites – and to make nominations only every other year, to provide more opportunity for other, more under-represented States Parties to make submissions.⁹

DCMS does not directly identify potential WHSs, but rather invites submissions from interested parties who wish to make the case that specific properties are of potential World Heritage status.

The most recent review of the UK tentative list took place in 2022-23. The process began with an open call for expressions of interest from potential World Heritage Sites. In view of the UNESCO concern to develop a 'balanced and representative list' and the predominance of cultural heritage sites within the British Isles in the UK's current WHSs, DCMS guidance particularly encouraged applications from properties that 'are classified as natural or mixed sites or are situated in the Overseas Territories or Crown Dependencies'.¹⁰

9. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/unesco-world-heritage-sites-uk-tentative-list-review/guidance-for-uk-components-of-a-transboundary-or-serial-transnational-future-nomination>

10. DCMS, 'UNESCO World Heritage Sites - UK Tentative List Review: information for applicants', <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/unesco-world-heritage-sites-uk-tentative-list-review/unesco-world-heritage-sites-uk-tentative-list-review-information-for-applicants>

The call for expressions of interest closed on 6 May 2022. This was followed by an informal development phase, with information sessions and workshops for potential WHSs, followed by a formal application process with a deadline of 15 July 2022. The completed applications were then reviewed by an Independent Expert Panel. The panel provided advice to the Secretary of State for Culture, Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, who announced the selected sites on Monday 10 April 2023. These comprised seven sites, of which three were natural heritage and four cultural heritage, with one of the latter also being a transnational site (Gracehill Moravian Settlements, Northern Ireland). Of the seven sites, two were located in Scotland: the Flow Country (natural site) and the Zenith of Iron Age Shetland (cultural site). The Flow Country was added to the World Heritage List in October 2024.

While DCMS's open approach to soliciting expressions of interest clearly reflects UNESCO's call for more engaged, consultative and participatory ways of identifying and developing potential properties for inclusion, it might be questioned whether the use of a closed expert committee to provide advice to DCMS maximised the potential for broader community involvement in the selection of the final list of sites.

Although DCMS takes responsibility for defining the Tentative List and choosing properties for nomination, the decentralised approach to initial identification of potential properties means that it largely falls to the Scottish Government to facilitate the identification of potential Scottish World Heritage Sites for inclusion on the Tentative List. Direct support for the preparation of nominations has, in the past, in turn been largely delegated to HES. This role is not identified in the Historic Environment Scotland Act or the Scottish Government's Historic Environment Framework Document that together formally define HES's role. Nevertheless, World Heritage is referenced in HES's Our Regulatory Framework document. This last identifies the 1972 World Heritage Convention as part of the legal basis for HES's services, mentions HES's role in 'decisions and advice' relating to World Heritage, its role in planning advice for WHSs, and in advising sites on their nominations 'once parties have secured their site a place on the UK tentative list'. The inclusion of two Scottish sites on the UK tentative list, and the successful submission of a formal nomination for the Flow Country, suggests that the process for identifying and supporting potential World Heritage Sites is functioning

effectively to meet the immediate goal of identifying properties of exceptionally high significance.

However, it was notable that stakeholders tended to perceive both the Scottish Government and HES as the main drivers for the selection and submission of applications for Scottish properties. Among those interviewed, none reported that existing Scottish World Heritage Sites had been taken to nomination primarily in response to local initiatives, though it should be noted that this has changed more recently, with Shetland's position on the tentative list being driven by local stakeholders. While it was not possible to understand the nomination process in detail for all the Scottish World Heritage Sites within the resources available for this project, multiple stakeholders offered views on the most recent nominations, for the Antonine Wall and the Forth Bridge. Responses tended to substantiate the perception that the crucial commitments and initiatives were centrally driven. In the case of the Antonine Wall, the perception was that inscription had largely resulted from the enthusiasm of senior staff members within Historic Scotland, one of Historic Environment Scotland's predecessor bodies. In the case of the Forth Bridge, the very clear implication was that the process had been driven forward by a small number of highly committed and determined individuals within HES, Fife Council and Transport Scotland, but that they lacked the level of wider institutional support and understanding that might be expected from those organisations, particularly at the highest levels. There was also a perception that senior figures in the Scottish Government had displayed a strong interest in securing the site's nomination and inscription, but these same figures were also felt to be motivated primarily by a prestige agenda, rather than by a

strong vision of the benefits to local communities and to heritage in the vicinity of the bridge that inscription had the potential to support.

This research found little evidence that there is a clearly defined and resourced function within HES to proactively identify and support the development of proposals for inclusion on the tentative list or a clear sense of who should be driving forward and funding the research, reporting and development needed to put together a successful nomination for inscription. One respondent within HES questioned whether it was going to be possible or even appropriate for HES to commit the level of resource needed to secure the technical advice needed to successfully develop the Tentative List Zenith of Iron Age Shetland. Whether or not this is actually the case, the perception itself reflects uncertainty about roles and resources even within the organisation.

Similarly, there was little sense of where responsibilities lie for managing the transition from nomination to operation as a World Heritage Site in the event of a successful application. This applied particularly to the Flow Country nomination, which presents special challenges because as natural heritage it presents management issues that extend beyond the usual expertise of Historic Environment Scotland.

In all these respects perceptions of the process in Scotland formed a notable contrast with perceptions of the process in Wales. Interviewees giving views on Welsh World Heritage Sites felt that most recent WH inscriptions have been strongly locally driven. Three of the four Welsh WHSs specifically cited in this respect, with Cadw perceived as a support but not a driver for the rest of the formal nomination process.

4.3 Protection: legal and policy frameworks and their implementation

4.3.1 DCMS as State Party

As we have seen, the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the Convention in Scotland is exercised by DCMS as State Party. DCMS provides the overall framework and acts as recipient and selector for applications for the Tentative List and subsequently decides on nominations to the World Heritage Committee. There were few concerns expressed about the way DCMS undertakes its roles. What concerns were expressed tended to focus on a perceived low level of resource for World Heritage within DCMS, especially in relation to

the small number of staff and frequent changes in personnel responsible for World Heritage within the department.

Within England only, DCMS has policy responsibility for the historic environment. This is primarily managed through heritage protection legislation. As a devolved matter, English historic environment protection law and policy has no application in Scotland. However, in practice the English and Scottish systems share a long history and have many of the same structures. The fundamental approach is through the passage of protective legislation for various classes of 'designated' heritage assets, most importantly:

- scheduled monuments;
- listed buildings;
- conservation areas.

In England, World Heritage is currently protected as a recognised 'national designation' and by planning policy, initially through a (now superseded) planning circular on World Heritage (2009) and then through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The latest edition of the NPPF (December 2024) recognises World Heritage Sites as 'designated heritage assets' of the 'highest significance'. It requires that substantial harm to or loss of WHSs due to development should be 'wholly exceptional', the same degree of protection as Grade I and Grade II* buildings or parks and gardens. Proposals causing substantial harm or loss should be refused consent, unless the works either achieve 'substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss' or meet stringent conditions that demonstrate alternative use or development is not reasonably possible.

However, World Heritage in England has gained more specific statutory protection as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA). The Act as a whole came into force on 25 April 2024, but the paragraphs relevant to World Heritage have yet to be implemented. When they are, planning decision-makers will be required to have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing relevant heritage assets, including World Heritage Sites. This kind of direct legislative provision has yet to be directly paralleled in Scotland. However, even if the LURA provisions are implemented, it is notable that the English approach continues to use the language of the planning balance, mirroring the language currently used in the statutory protection of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. In this policy context, potential harm to OUV must be considered in relation to the potential

benefits of development. This exists in tension with the latest edition of the UNESCO guidelines on impact assessment for WHSs, which deprecate such balancing exercises and allow for only 'negligible' harm to OUV. Scotland has incorporated stronger protection for OUV within its latest spatial strategy, the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which no longer uses the language of the planning balance (as discussed in more detail in section 4.3.3).

4.3.2 State Party Advisor: Historic England

Historic England acts as technical advisor to DCMS on World Heritage matters as part of its broader role as the UK government's statutory advisor on the historic environment. This includes providing advice on international instruments and conventions related to heritage, and on the legislative and regulatory measures needed to implement them. Within England, HE has two primary roles. In its capacity as the statutory consultee on heritage-related development applications, it provides informal and formal advice on development proposals with the potential to impact on World Heritage Sites. It also takes responsibility for monitoring threats to the state of conservation of individual WHSs and reporting such issues to DCMS. It also maintains direct contact with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and its advisors, ICOMOS, ICCROM and the IUCN.

HE's role extends to providing robust and authoritative advice and guidance for the governance and management of World Heritage. At present, however, the formal guidance on World Heritage issued by Historic England has been limited to England and is now obsolete, though it remains available for informational purposes.¹¹

The current intention is to fulfil this aspect of HE's responsibilities through:

- A Historic England Advice Note (HEAN) on Managing change in World Heritage Sites
- Providing training and advice on the application of the new UNESCO Heritage Impact Assessment process

The HEAN has been announced as forthcoming for a number of years and was expected to be issued in consultation draft in Summer 2023.¹² The draft, however, remains as yet unavailable, though it was reported to the researchers that it would be issued imminently. Pending the issue of the first specific national advice, Historic England's website directs those in search of information to UNESCO's World

Heritage guidance and resources. The HEAN will be directly applicable only in England, as it falls within Historic England's responsibilities relating to the English planning system, rather than the devolved Scottish system, which is the responsibility of the Scottish Government. In Scotland, HES's guidance on Managing Change in the Historic Environment: World Heritage has provided relevant guidance since its publication in 2016.

While Historic England formally acts as DCMS's advisor on World Heritage and source of advice and guidance to the wider heritage sector on best practice for the governance and management of World Heritage, there was concern from one interviewee that insufficient resources have been allocated to enable it to fulfil the latter function effectively. At present, overall responsibility for World Heritage within HE is assigned to its international team. The amount of resource allocated is perceived by some stakeholders to be limited. The team consists of three full-time-equivalent staff, for whom World Heritage is currently, and has been for some years, their primary focus. They work collaboratively with regional colleagues to provide development advice for World Heritage Sites. These resourcing levels may act as a limiting factor on the provision of advice and guidance on the management of World Heritage in the UK.

4.3.3 The Scottish Government and World Heritage

While UK World Heritage Policy is set by DCMS with advice from HE, the Scottish Government has substantial discretion to set its own policies for those aspects of World Heritage which are specific to Scotland. Until 2015, the Scottish Government was directly and actively involved in all aspects of World Heritage through Historic Scotland, an executive agency which both acted as the manager of Scottish Ministers' heritage properties and as the principal source of advice on heritage-related planning consents.

11. *English Heritage, The Protection and Management of World Heritage Sites in England: English Heritage Guidance Note to Circular for England on the Protection of World Heritage Sites (July 2009). This guidance became obsolete after the replacement of the Circular on World Heritage by the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012; however, it remains available on the Historic England website as source of information on World Heritage and its management.*

12. <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/world-heritage/guidance-for-world-heritage-management/>



Figure 8

The situation became more complex following the transfer of most of Historic Scotland's functions to HES in 2015-16. At this point, formal responsibility for historic environment policy remained with the Scottish Government, which retained its historic environment policy unit within the Culture and Historic Environment Division (CHED) (recently absorbed within the Culture and Major Events Directorate). At the same time, non-statutory historic environment policy was delegated to HES, which produced the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland in 2019. World Heritage was reported by interviewees to have remained within the retained policy responsibility of the Scottish Government, and no formal policy responsibility for World Heritage has been assigned to any other government body.

In addition, many aspects of economic management either lie within Scotland's devolved powers or complement the economic functions of the UK government. In combination with spatial planning powers, this means that the Scottish Government has substantial policy scope to foster World Heritage's potential to contribute to sustainable development, while much of the immediate executive responsibility lies with local authorities, which administer, in the first instance, both local spatial planning and economic development.

No less importantly, culture and education are largely devolved matters. This means that the Scottish Government could be expected to take a leading role in building capacity within Scotland through the education and training system, and the publicly funded research base, to ensure that there is appropriate technical and scientific expertise to manage Scotland's World Heritage effectively. The responsibilities also imply a key role

in communicating the value of Scotland's World Heritage.

Finally, the Scottish Ministers are the legal guardians of the whole of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney WHS, many significant sites in the Antonine Wall WHS, as well as key sites within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh WHS, including Edinburgh Castle, Holyrood Abbey and Holyrood Park, parts of which lie within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh WHS. This gives the Scottish Government ultimate direct responsibility for the conservation of important aspects of Scotland's World Heritage. The Scottish Government has delegated the discharge of these responsibilities to HES, who therefore have the greatest direct scope to realise the potential of Scotland's World Heritage.

The Scottish Government has played a supportive role by encouraging the identification and bringing forward of World Heritage nominations. Participants in the research particularly cited the Forth Bridge as a successful recent nomination which the Scottish Government sought to promote and advance. In practice, however, the practicalities of supporting nominations are largely delegated to Historic Environment Scotland.

There was a perception from some stakeholders that the establishment of HES as a non-departmental public body had led to less direct involvement and commitment from the Scottish Government to World Heritage. When Historic Scotland was a branch of the executive, there was a direct line of reporting through to the Minister for Culture. Ministers often took a direct interest in WH and were willing to provide both political and moral support for its development. There was a specialist policy team

within Historic Scotland that remained within the Scottish Government when HES was established. One interviewee reported that they felt that the importance assigned to historic environment policy and World Heritage in particular had subsequently declined, and left some degree of 'policy vacuum' for World Heritage.

Other interviews undertaken as part of this research tended to reinforce this view, with a perception that the Scottish Government's role is 'light touch' and 'quite limited'; the main focus is on 'horizon scanning', providing or facilitating necessary support in crisis situations, and providing international outreach, while HES provides the more focused expertise and leadership needed to assure effective management and monitoring of the sites themselves.

A number of HES interviewees argued that HES should now accept and work to respond constructively to the reality of the Scottish Government's diminished direct involvement in developing WH policy. This implies that there is a need for HES to develop a stronger role in identifying where national policy and related initiatives are needed or are potentially beneficial; and defining potential ways forward to developing them.

Within the context of the UK's legislation and policy systems for heritage protection, spatial planning is the key means by which World Heritage can gain some measure of formal protection. Spatial planning is within Scotland's devolved powers, meaning that the Scottish government has substantial discretion to use planning law and policy to protect World Heritage.

At present there is no direct protection for World Heritage in Scotland's planning legislation. World Heritage is specifically mentioned in two sets of planning regulations. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 require that applications for new development (as opposed to extension or alteration of existing structures or facilities) in World Heritage Sites must be accompanied by a design statement. The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 require that proposals for development in sensitive areas should be 'screened' to identify if an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. World Heritage Sites are one of the nine types of such sensitive sites for which an EIA screening must take place.

There are, nevertheless, provisions within planning policy to ensure that the protection of World Heritage Sites must be taken into account in planning decisions. The most recent Scottish Government planning policy, NPF4, requires that 'Development proposals affecting a World Heritage Site or its setting will only be supported where their Outstanding Universal Value is protected and preserved'.¹³ Although this is a very concise statement of the planning position, it is notable that it eschews any compromise or flexibility: OUV must be protected and preserved or the application will not be supported. This goes further than the equivalent English policy, which maintains a balancing approach. Scotland's stringent core policy on World Heritage is complemented by a more general provision that Local Authorities, should ensure that their Local Development Plans support 'sustainable management of the historic environment' and should 'identify, protect and enhance valued historic assets and places'.¹⁴

HES is a statutory consultee on all planning applications with the potential to impact on the OUV of World Heritage Sites.¹⁵ In addition, where there are planning applications for changes within or to a WHS that affect listed buildings or scheduled monuments, these are subject to special protection, requiring either listed building consent or scheduled monument consent. The latter is wholly administered by HES while the former is administered by local planning authorities, but with advice on more highly listed structures (Categories A and B), demolition of any listed structure, and demolition of a building in a conservation area (CA), and any application by the LA on listed buildings from HES. The advice given by HES is a 'material consideration', meaning that it must be taken into account in planning decisions.

13. Scottish Government, *National Planning Policy 4* (2024), p. 46, Policy 7, paragraph I).

14. Scottish Government, *National Planning Policy 4* (2024), p. 45, Policy intent.

15. Scottish Government, 'The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013'; Scottish Government, 'Town and Country Planning (Neighbouring Planning Authorities and Historic Environment) (Scotland) Direction 2015'; 2015; Scottish Government, 'Scottish Planning Policy'.

Evidence from interviews suggested that, while the general outcomes from the spatial planning system were felt to be acceptable in most cases, there were concerns that the actual operation of the system is not entirely satisfactory or sufficient to manage fully the risks posed by inappropriate development proposals. Most interviewees who discussed planning felt that there is a potential for tension between the Scottish system of heritage protection and the requirements of World Heritage. At the most basic level, statutory protection exists for 'historic and architectural interest', while HES's guidance and standard approaches to assessing development proposals are based on 'cultural significance', concepts that relate but do not directly correspond to OUV. Moreover, a 'balancing' approach that sets the preservation of cultural heritage significance against other social or economic benefits has been fundamental to the operation of the planning system across the UK's constituent nations; UNESCO, by contrast, has placed increasing emphasis on the preservation of OUV at all costs. This implies at least the possibility of conflict between the requirements of World Heritage and the usual approach to spatial planning in the UK.

4.3.4 The role of HES in Scottish World Heritage protection

Although Historic England is the official State Party advisor, it has no practical presence on the ground as a service for heritage protection, conservation and presentation of World Heritage in Scotland. In practice, therefore it is Scotland's national heritage lead bodies, in the form of HES for cultural heritage and NatureScot for natural heritage, that are the most important specialist services dealing with cultural and natural heritage respectively. Because there is currently a strong bias towards cultural heritage in the Scottish World Heritage collection, as well as the focus on HES's role identified for this research, most of the evidence gathered related to HES's role.

HES's involvement with World Heritage has two predominant aspects: providing direct support to Scotland's World Heritage Sites in the form of publicity and awareness-raising, direct funding and in-kind support and advice; and acting as the statutory heritage planning consultee on development proposals with the potential to affect World Heritage Sites.

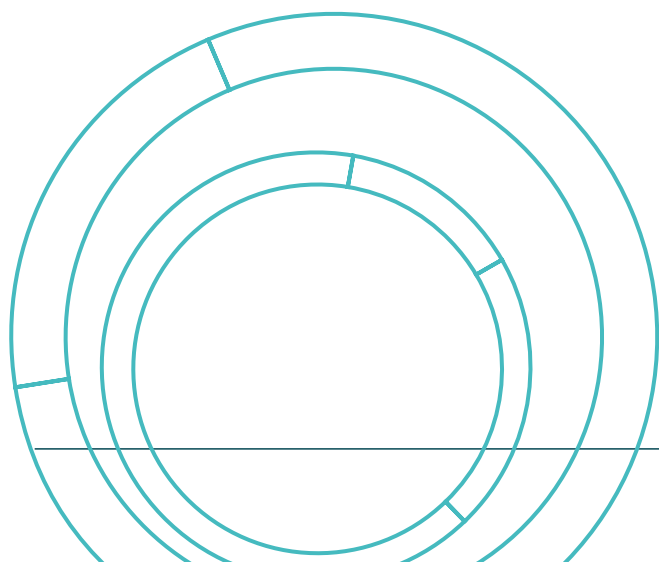
Generally, HES's role in World Heritage was very highly valued. HES funding was reported to have a critical role in assuring the sustainability and effective functioning of the WHSs that received support, New Lanark, the Antonine Wall and St Kilda.

From a broader perspective, some stakeholders reported that there could be benefit to a greater coherence of approach and more cross-team working within HES, and that there was also a need for more commitment to WH from senior leaders.

Some also noted a need to fill the 'vacuum' created by the Scottish government's reduced role in WH. One interviewee felt that the Scottish Government expected expert guidance from HES and would welcome informed proposals on how WH should be supported and developed. This was especially the case given the Scottish Government's strong focus on developing international links and promoting Scotland's culture as well as its prioritisation of sustainable development for local communities.

Other interviewees suggested that there was a desire within HES for more engagement with the Scottish Government at a strategic level. The main qualification to this remained the Scottish Government's retention (at least by default) of responsibility for national World Heritage policy (given that it was not formally assigned to HES by the Historic Environment Scotland Act or the HES Framework Document by the Scottish Government). This means that the approach taken by HES would have to aim to 'influence' rather than determine policy. As we have seen, however, interview evidence suggested that the Scottish Government primarily focuses on a light-touch, 'horizon-scanning' role, and expects that anything more than this would fall to HES as the historic environment lead body.

Some interviewees did, however, question how effectively HES managed its dual function as planning consultee and Scottish lead on World Heritage. The expectation seems to be that HES should be offering a unified view of proposed development within or affecting WHSs, when in actuality divergences could emerge from the WH and planning perspectives. It is not clear, however,



that this expectation is realistic, given that these are two separate functions with HES. Such perceptions may nevertheless imply a need for clearer communication of the need for independence between HES's different World Heritage functions.

Within HES, too, it tended to be conceded (indeed almost taken for granted) that the size of the organisation and its vertical division into distinct areas of activity made a fully cohesive approach to WH challenging. It was evident that many teams work to some degree on WH. However, it tends to be a very small part of most HES staff members' workloads and the impression was of WH being dealt with reactively and outside the context of broader strategic aims or policies.

An interviewee felt that when considering planning applications WH issues were considered as an 'add-on' or secondary factor relative to Scotland's statutory planning and consents regime. It was noted that HES's own guidance on managing World Heritage and on World Heritage impact assessment was not always referred to by HES case officers assessing proposals in WHSs with the potential to impact on OUV: 'the WH guidance... seems to be very underused, including within HES'. This in part reflects the pragmatic reality that WH continues to have an ambiguous position within the statutory

regime, being mentioned in policy but largely not in legislation. In addition, the statutory regime and its associated guidance was said to lie within the 'comfort zone' of HES staff, whereas WH tends not to, due to its somewhat different approach to significance, separate suite of guidance documents, and, since the updated 2022 WH impact assessment guidelines were published, different framework for assessing impact. Even during public local inquiries, both HES officers providing expert witness and appellants' representatives tended to avoid the specifics of WH when considering whether applications for development did or did not meet policy and guidance.

An at least partial exception to this is where development proposals have to be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Because these are less common and familiar, there is a tendency to seek guidance on their content from relevant colleagues with special expertise in relevant fields, including WH. The same interviewee noted that assessment of proposals affecting WH should be based on impacts on WHS attribute lists, but that these do not currently exist for all Scottish WHSs. Attributes lists are, however, currently being developed for these sites, and are expected to be available soon.



Figure 9

4.4 Conservation of World Heritage

While States Parties make an overarching commitment to secure the conservation of World Heritage, DCMS has virtually no involvement in the practical conservation or management of World Heritage in Scotland. In practice, this responsibility, in as far as it is exercised by Government and its agencies, is delegated to the Scottish Government and then, in most cases, to HES.

4.4.1 Role of HES in Conservation of World Heritage

HES is directly involved in the governance and management of all Scottish World Heritage Sites. In some cases, there is even closer involvement because the sites are, or include, properties in care; the most important examples being the Heart of Neolithic Orkney WHS and the Antonine Wall WHS. In other cases, HES acts as a source of advice and funding.

The role of HES in the management of World Heritage in Scotland was very highly valued by almost all interviewees. Most felt that HES's diverse expertise was critically important, spanning practical conservation, development planning, strategic management, education and interpretation and fund-raising. HES's reputation as the lead body was also felt to be important in providing focus and generating consensus on priorities and actions. This positive view was held both within and outside Scottish WH sites, and beyond the borders of Scotland.

The broad view from site stakeholders was that the HES's role is irreplaceable.

"[HES is] Crucial to the sustainability of the site. Without HES involvement and leadership, the momentum would be lost."

Local Authority Officer

Both HES financial support and in-kind advice and guidance were highly regarded by interviewees.

At the same time, however, this leads to concerns that there may be a tendency to depend on HES for a level of support that ultimately disempowers the individual WHSs or becomes a compensation for lack of local initiative or commitment.

Many people involved in World Heritage reported that individually there were HES staff members with high levels of understanding of and commitment to World Heritage, but that corporately World Heritage was a low priority. Consequently, several coordinators and key site stakeholders felt that HES should play a stronger role in advocating for World Heritage and for the importance of individual sites:

"I am surprised how low down on its list of priorities WH is,.... If they advocated more for World Heritage, and made more of WH when engaging with their international partners, I think we could raise the profiles of these sites."

Several interviewees felt there was a need for more integration and collaboration within HES. There were perceptions of siloed, team-based working, that failed to take full advantage of opportunities to deliver outputs more effectively and identify synergies and common interests, and some evidence of lack of understanding within HES of the responsibilities of other parts of the organisation.

4.4.2 Management structures of individual World Heritage Sites

While the broad structure of a Steering Group that oversees the production and implementation of a management plan applies across Scotland, as it does across the UK, the precise terminology and detailed structure varies from one site to another:

ANTONINE WALL

This a large serial site with multiple owners and responsible parties, including HES (with a series of Properties in Care) and five local authorities (which also have sites of archaeological interest). The property is part of the wider Frontiers of the Roman Empire transnational World Heritage Site.

Steering group	HES and five local authorities through whose areas the wall runs, chaired on a revolving basis by each local authority in turn.
Subsidiary groups	Planning and Protection; Access and Interpretation; Learning and Education; Research
Coordinator	Directly employed by HES, with 1 FTE role split between this function and Deputy Head of World Heritage. Produces World Heritage Site Management Plan.
Planning provisions	Supplementary Planning Guidance has been produced in collaboration and adopted by the five partner local authorities.
Special advisory and management arrangements	Transnational guidance and advice from an Intergovernmental Committee, along with management support from the Hexham Group (also known as the Frontiers of the Roman Empire Management Group), composed of the site coordinators and others responsible for day-to-day management of the FRE sites, and expert archaeological, conservation and historical support from the Bratislava Group.

FORTH BRIDGE

The Forth Bridge is unified site consisting of a large historic bridge, still in active use for rail transport, connecting two local authority areas (City of Edinburgh and Fife) and in close proximity to a third (West Lothian), owned by Network Rail, overseen by Transport Scotland, maintained on a commercial contract by BEAR Group.

Steering group	Subsidiary group of the Forth Bridges Forum, the pre-existing management group for the three Forth bridges (the rail bridge along with the two road bridges), with representatives from HES (chair), the Forth Bridge Management Group members, and local interest (community and historical) groups.
Subsidiary groups	None, but see also special advisory and management arrangements.
Coordinator	Not currently (early 2024) in post, but appointment imminent. Responsible for next iteration of the management plan.
Planning provisions	WHS and its protection are mentioned within the City of Edinburgh Council and Fife Council Local Development Plans, but not within the adjacent West Lothian Council plan. Key viewpoints were identified to support the plans as part of the nomination process.
Special advisory and management arrangements	Subsidiary groups of the Forth Bridges Forum include Tourism and Communication.

HEART OF NEOLITHIC ORKNEY

HONO is a serial site consisting of Neolithic monuments, including Skara Brae Neolithic settlement, with all components within state guardianship and HES care.

Partnership group	Overall strategic direction of the site informed by a partnership of HES with Orkney Island Council.
Steering group	Oversees the preparation, monitoring and delivery of the management plan. Advisory Partners on the Steering Group are NatureScot, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and the University of the Highlands and Islands Archaeology Institute.
Coordinator	Directly employed by HES, with 1 FTE role split between this function and Deputy Head of World Heritage. Leads implementation of management plan, promotes OUV public benefits, liaison between HES and local stakeholders.
Special advisory and management arrangements	None at present. Management plan delivery subgroups have previously included: Conservation and management; Access and Interpretation; Research and Education.

NEW LANARK

The property is a substantial but unified factory village and immediate surroundings, largely owned by a charitable trust.

Partnership group	Overall strategic direction of the site informed by a partnership consisting of the New Lanark Trust, HES, South Lanarkshire Council, oversees management plan.
Trust subsidiaries	New Lanark Hotels (insolvent and currently being wound up), New Lanark Trading and New Lanark Homes.
Coordinator	Directly employed by the New Lanark Trust with HES subsidy, frequently involved in day-to-day activities of the site; now effectively replaced by a new 'Head of Heritage' role, 'overseeing all aspects of heritage management and visitor experience, along with developing and maintaining a collection archive'.

OLD AND NEW TOWNS OF EDINBURGH

The site is a major urban centre, in which the primary management function is discharged by the local authority, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), with an independent trust, Edinburgh World Heritage, principally funded by HES with the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), acting as source of advice and conservation funding.

Strategic Oversight Group	Convenor and vice-convenor of CEC Planning Committee, Community Council representatives, ICOMOS UK, Chamber of Commerce and management partners. Oversees outputs from Steering Group to ensure they meet project objectives.
Steering Group	Advises on more detailed, day-to-day issues and oversees management plan, consist of Edinburgh World Heritage, HES and CEC.
Coordinator	Coordinator employed in CEC and part-funded by HES.
Sub-groups	Communication (providing promotion and outreach).
Special advisory and management arrangements	Edinburgh World Heritage, an independent charitable trust, provides independent advice, expertise and facilitation of community consultation, and acts as an intermediary for the allocation and distribution of grant-funding.

ST KILDA

The property is a remote uninhabited archipelago off the north-west coast of Scotland; the whole site is owned by a single national heritage charitable organisation, the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), with limited external stakeholder input / interest from tenants (MoD and Northern Lighthouse Board).

Strategic Management Group	Membership and function equivalent to Steering Group: provides overall strategic advice and manages production of the World Heritage Site Management Plan.
Operational Management Group	Agrees operational plans.
Coordinator	Employed coordinator whose work is incorporated within their broader role as NTS area manager.

The standard structure is found in its most typical form in the Heart of Neolithic Orkney and Antonine Wall. In a few cases, sites are run by a steering group without a specific coordinator – this model currently applies to the Forth Bridge, run by the Forth Bridges Forum with a coordinator role not (yet) in place. However, the intention is that a coordinator should be formally appointed in the near future. The ‘special ownership model’ applies to sites with a single or only a few owners that hold special status – this model could be applied to St Kilda, which is owned by the NTS and New Lanark. Finally, under the ‘separate entity model’ a distinct entity is created to manage a WHS that is particularly large or complex. This, for example, is the case for the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh site.¹⁶ The Antonine Wall again stands out as another special case, given that the site is not only part of a transnational World Heritage entity – the ‘Frontiers of the Roman Empire’ – but involves multiple local authorities within whose boundaries the Wall stands. Overall, the diverse character of Scottish WHS – ranging from the Forth Bridge as a major transport hub linking Edinburgh and Fife to the isolated and uninhabited island of St Kilda – means that management structures for each site have to take these special circumstances into consideration.

Nevertheless, there was evidence of functions being discharged and terminology being used in inconsistent ways across the different sites. While not necessarily a problem for individual sites, this will make communication of the roles and responsibilities related to World Heritage more difficult to conceptualise and understand for external stakeholders. In addition, it may lead to misapprehensions about the commitments that

individual board members are expected to fulfil on a routine basis. Someone recruited to serve on a ‘Steering Group’ would reasonably expect to have a strategic and directive role. The interviews suggested, however, that in at least one case the expectation from this group is for the provision of much more granular, conservation-led expertise – but that this has proven difficult to secure this from the group’s members. Where single organisations dominate ownership and management, as at St Kilda and New Lanark, we might expect those organisations’ internal processes to take a similarly dominant role, with external partnership boards or steering groups having diminished oversight over, and potentially ability to engage constructively in, World Heritage management.

There is evidence of a lack of clear, formal definition of the roles of the key stakeholders in many of the individual Scottish WHSs. HES’s own involvement appears in many cases to have arisen in an ad hoc and reactive, rather than strategic, way. The result in at least some cases is uncertainty about mutual responsibilities and expectations, and with this comes the risk that important stakeholders may ‘drop out’ of the process or discontinue necessary support. This is especially the case for local authorities in a context of declining public funding.

16. C, ‘The Costs and Benefits of World Heritage Site Status in the UK’, 73.

This further implies a need to formalise mutual responsibilities.

There is also evidence that in some cases central government initiatives are being developed in a way that appears somewhat isolated from the management of the sites. This was especially noticeable in St Kilda and Orkney, where the Islands Growth Deal seeks to capitalise on the sites' World Heritage status but there is little sense of this leading to engagement with or support for site-level initiatives or projects. The provision of improved visitor facilities has been specifically mentioned as part of the Orkney Gateway Programme, but interviewees within and outside HES seemed unsure whether initial proposals would be implemented. Greater visitor engagement with St Kilda is being driven by the Scottish Government as part of the Outer Hebrides Destination Development Project, and this may be a factor in the greater stress on visitor engagement in the latest iteration of the site management plan. This may imply a need for closer involvement of individual WHSs in Scottish Government initiatives with implications for World Heritage.

4.4.3 Partnership, Oversight and Steering Groups

An informed stakeholder with a cross-UK perspective stressed the fundamental importance of steering groups and, in particular, steering group chairs, for galvanising activities and initiatives and providing strategic leadership for individual WHSs. On the whole, however, it seemed that steering groups in a number of Scottish WHSs had a relatively low-key role and that chairs did not routinely take a strong leadership role. Difficulties with securing active Steering Group involvement were reported at St Kilda and Edinburgh, albeit with different models of what the Steering Group should do. At another site, a respondent mentioned that the diversity of voices that the group had originally been intended to capture were no longer fully involved. Recent events had accelerated this trend:

"I have noticed that leading up to COVID when the Heritage and Tourism sectors were being hit hard, and now with new ways of working, there just isn't the bandwidth any more to ...

contribute to a process. So that leaves only a few voices around the table."

The number of trustees on the board of the New Lanark Trust had also declined recently, from seven to five and there had been turnover of trustees within the remaining five. However, there was also evidence of a perception that this had brought new and valuable expertise and enhanced the decision-making process.

There appeared to be some different conceptions of what the function of a steering group or equivalent body should be. At one site, an informed respondent reported that the expectation was not that the Steering Group should provide overall strategic direction but provide advice on day-to-day management issues, and that the Group was not reliably engaging in these more granular issues.

There was also evidence of issues with the Forth Bridge management group. Here the main challenge was that representatives of the local community and community groups attending the management group used it as a channel for broaching wider issues with the ways their areas were managed by their local councils and Transport Scotland. One meeting was observed by one of the researcher team, and a strongly local focus was clearly evident, in place of the wider strategic and managerial concerns that might be expected to be the main priorities of the management group. It is possible that the right balance between managerial direction and local representation has not yet been struck at this site. There may also be specific challenges where an HES staff member occupies the chair of the group. There is an intrinsic tension between the potential desirability of the chair offering visionary leadership and the (legitimate) expectation that HES, as a public body and national lead on the historic environment, should act as an objective, neutral broker between interest groups.

There was evidence across sites of particular challenges with securing the active involvement of local councils. The interview research found repeated mention of the difficulties of getting elected members up-to-speed on the implications of WHS status. This was both a challenge in itself and in terms of delivery of training: 'Even trying to organise things with the partner organisations, even local authorities getting training for elected members, is difficult'.

The precarious financial position and consequently strained resources of many local authorities was also frequently cited as an explanation for the relatively low priority attached to WH by both local councillors and officers. It was also frequently reported that there was a tendency to think of WH status as a 'big tick' or 'seal of approval' rather than a commitment to a system of protection and management or a starting point for sustainable development that could benefit local communities. A high level of commitment from the six partner local authority partners was reported for the Antonine Wall meetings, though there was some evidence that it had taken a substantial investment of external effort, first by NLHF and then by HES, to achieve this. There was also a perception among some stakeholders that with the ending of NLHF funding, there was a risk that this pattern of collaboration would prove difficult to sustain.

The overall impression is that Steering Groups in Scotland, on the whole, lack the focus and will to provide the kind of firm overall strategic direction and levels of community engagement that sites need if they are to take full advantage of the opportunities and mitigate the risks presented by WH status. There was also little evidence of Steering Group chairs providing the kind of dynamic, politically astute, goal-directed leadership cited by interviewees with a wider perspective as having been especially valuable for some sites elsewhere in the UK.

Overall, in this respect, the situation in Scotland seemed less developed than found in the best-run WHSs elsewhere in the UK. In particular, Wales gave prima facie evidence of clearer patterns of responsibility and accountability, with consistent and effective division of responsibilities among stakeholders and governance and management groups and roles. This was accomplished through a consistent approach to structuring World Heritage management groups, consisting of a strategically focused Partnership Board, a Conservation and Planning Group dealing with technical conservation and development, and Benefiting From Group with a focus on sustainable development, engagement, presentation and interpretation. The Partnership Boards leading the WHSs were kept 'lean' and had chairs with the commitment, connections and skills to act as important drivers for strategic decision-making and new initiatives. The subsidiary committees then had the flexibility to form short-term task and finish groups and to parent subgroups as required for specific projects (notably the management plan review) or themes.

The overall approach is a highly collaborative and mutually supportive one, both within and beyond this framework. This was reflected in long-term work to build trust and buy-in from local communities, which in turn resulted in a clear local grasp of World Heritage's potential to support positive socio-economic outcomes. This underpinned a stronger local commitment to WH and a more strategic approach to the management of individual sites. This was in spite (and perhaps in part because) of the more limited resources, both human and financial, that Cadw is able to direct to World Heritage and the four WHSs within the principality.

There was a similar apparent contrast with the sole Northern Irish WHS, where it seemed clear that the Steering Group sought to represent local communities as well as inform the strategic direction of and provide expertise for the management of the site. This occurred both through local council representation, and also through the role of the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust. The Trust was reported to have a strong and intentionally developed concern to develop links with and represent the local community, on both sides of the sectarian divide.

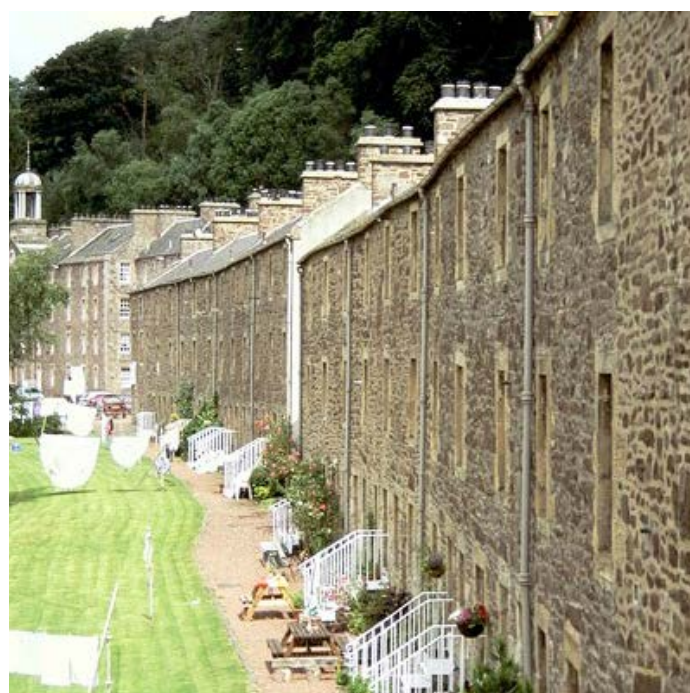


Figure 10

4.4.4 Management Plans

There was much evidence that WHSMPs are major consumers of scarce human and financial resources. In general, there was a perception that management plans tended to become a major focus of attention in their own right rather than being a targeted means to the greater end of improving management of sites.

"I think in general people spend way too long trying to write the plans and I think the responsibility of writing the plans falls disproportionately to coordinators ... So much money is spent on management plans."

"I've been involved in the reviewing of the previous one and involved in the current and next [WHSMP]. I found the process quite arduous. I sympathise with the coordinators."

The most sceptical interviewee suggested that management plans did little to promote effective management and development of the site and might even impeded it:

"I realise that it's a necessity but from my point of view it is a bit of distraction. It's a document that's prepared and then it sits on the shelf and nobody ever looks at it. ... I might be wrong, [but] my perception is that it's

not used for anything practical. ... it formalises informal aspirations ... I think that's it. But no one's really holding you to it."

There were multiple reports that each site's first WHSMP had been started 'from scratch' by someone who generally lacked prior experience of working with World Heritage. There is therefore a steep learning curve and a lack of prior understanding of what is and isn't likely to work. There was also evidence of management plans being comprehensively restructured and rethought each time the new iteration was produced. This goes far beyond the requirements and expectations set out in UNESCO guidance. This seems to reflect a tendency to think of the management plan as a driver for beneficial change, when its purpose is at least as much to formalise and proceduralise basic management and routine processes as provide a programme of new actions.

One respondent suggested that it would be helpful if HES could provide guidance on best practice for the processes, expectations and format for WHSMPs. This suggestion has to be held in tension, however, with the need to allow sufficient flexibility in format and expectations to meet the varied needs of the individual WHSs, and in relation to the draft guidance on WHSMPs produced by Historic England as advisor to the State Party. In combination, these may imply that producing formal guidance may not be an optimal use of HES resource.

There was also occasional critical feedback on some WHSMPs. In some cases it was suggested that WHSMPs devoted too much space to activities and initiatives that would have taken place regardless of the management plan or the World Heritage status of the site. There was a related criticism in one case that the actions set out for St Kilda were aligned with the strategic priorities of the lead organisation, NTS, but may not necessarily reflect what was actually most important or appropriate for sustaining and making accessible the OUV of the site.

In at least one case, feedback from the site WH coordinator suggested that management plans tend to be too unwieldy, and in at least this case presented an impressive but unrealistic set of aspirations, rather than practicable goals that could have been realistically delivered with the limited resources available:

“Management plans are also often too big. The last one had 56 priorities to be delivered by 1 staff member over a 5-year period. Management plans could be streamlined – this would take a lot off the shoulders of coordinators.”

This comment, however, also reflects misapprehensions about the role of the coordinator as responsible for ‘delivering’ objectives and actions. Their role is rather to bring together and facilitate collaborative working by those stakeholders who do have the responsibility and the means to do so.

The role of consultation within the drafting of management plans emerged regularly as a particular challenge. Almost all interviewees felt that it is essential, or at least desirable, to increase the amount and depth of consultation and engagement with local community. Several respondents involved directly with developing management plans nevertheless said they found it difficult to judge the extent and nature of consultation required. There was also uncertainty among some coordinators as to whether consultation should take place primarily to inform the priorities of management plans or to validate a nearly complete draft. Complexities with Local Authority consultation were also mentioned by several respondents: it could be difficult to secure constructive input when needed and processes of formal adoption could be lengthy.

In a number of cases, it was reported that the larger scale priorities of the site changed little between iterations of the management plan. For example, a local authority officer commented that “The management plan isn't where we expected it would be, and the themes are not going to change significantly.”



Figure 11

Partly in response to this kind of perception, respondents from some WHSs reported a move towards longer-term, more strategic ten-year management plans backed up by shorter-term action plans. The motivation was reinforced by a sense that five-year management plans were too big and generic to include concrete outcomes and foster accountability. The move to longer-term management plans and shorter-term actions plans was expected to have multiple benefits by:

- decreasing administrative burdens on the coordinators, steering group members and other key stakeholders by reducing the need to engage in the complex process of fully redrafting the management plan on a five-year cycle;
- enabling the management plan to focus on higher-level strategic aspirations, which change relatively little over time, meaning that the decennial renewal process would be more of a review and light-touch update than comprehensive rewrite, further reducing burdens;
- allowing action plans to be more focused and prescriptive than would be the case in a larger, longer-term document, meaning that the actions identified would be more likely to be concrete and deliverable;
- increasing accountability, by making specific action plan objectives the responsibility of named individuals or organisations;
- allowing actions to be tied to typical (two- to three-year) funding cycles, meaning that they could focus on projects and actions where funding had been obtained or was likely to be secured.

It might be noted that such an approach could also allow management plans to be shorter and more incisive, further reducing the complexity of reviewing and updating them.

Comparative practice in Wales also paralleled this move towards longer-term management plans – there, all WHSs had moved to a ten-year management plan during the last round of updates. This appeared to be the result of a series of pragmatic responses to the challenges of frequent rewriting and associated use of resources rather than an intentional collective decision. However, the fact that the renewal of management plans for all four Welsh WHSs took place at approximately the same time fostered a shared conviction that this represented a desirable way forward for all the Welsh sites. The Welsh 10-year plans are not, however, accompanied by short-term action plans but by a single integrated action plan, divided into short-, medium-, and long-term objectives. The impression seemed to be that this enabled actions to be defined ‘backwards’ from the long-term aspirations, providing a structured pathway towards those greater aims. In at least one case, this approach had yielded direct benefits by encouraging planning for a major long-term strategic aim. Though there was no immediate prospect of funding or implementing the works, it meant that when an opportunity to secure major funding did arise, the project had already been worked out in sufficient detail to provide the basis for a compelling and ultimately successful application for grants worth several million pounds.

It should be noted that UNESCO guidance suggests that management plans should be reviewed at least once every five years, but not that they should be rewritten.

4.4.5 World Heritage Coordinators

Several interviewees suggested that the success of an individual WHS depends to a great extent on having a capable, knowledgeable, politically informed, diplomatic, coordinator in place. Most stakeholders also emphasised the need for a coordinator to have deep understanding of the site, of wider heritage issues, and the range of stakeholders involved in the individual site they are responsible for. This depth of knowledge could often only be developed over time, making coordinators increasingly expert and effective the longer they stay in their roles – but also increasingly difficult to replace in the event they are absent or move on.

This could cause problems. Much knowledge and understanding is ‘in heads’ rather than externalised in systems or documents, and there is a lack of prescribed means for passing on this knowledge. In many cases, there is a lack of dedicated WH staff resource, other than the coordinator. The result is that much of the relevant understanding of the site itself and of its governance and managerial context is held by one person, who represents a ‘single point of failure’.

“We have a good and close working relationship [with the Coordinator] – but could do with more support because it’s a single post, and if [that individual] can’t be there ... then it all stops happening because there’s no broader heritage expertise in the council.”

There are particular issues in some sites with securing and maintaining coordinator expertise. At one site, there was evidence that the site’s location had led to particular difficulty recruiting, employing and retaining a coordinator with the degree of heritage expertise needed to effectively manage the process of producing the new iteration of the management plan.

Several interviewees felt that the actual or potential lack of reliable, sustainable, long-term access to coordinator expertise increases the vulnerability of sites. Without a capable coordinator, there is potential for serious consequences: without the key source of expertise, it may be difficult to identify appropriate responses to problems or issues or to facilitate coordinated decision-making by the various stakeholders with an interest in the WHS. This means both that the ideal would be to have high levels of retention in coordinator roles and that there should be both further personnel and robust systems in place to provide back-up in case the coordinator is not available.

This ideal was not reported as corresponding, in general, to the actual situation on the ground. Interviewees reported challenges with retention and staff turnover. Some interviewees reported that coordinators were often expected to do many other

things on WHSs than coordinate and manage. They often combine their WH with other responsibilities; even where in principle the coordinator is fully dedicated to WH, in practice they can get drawn away from coordinating into other activities and commitments. These are often practical management tasks or providing visitor or educational activities. Coordinators themselves often reported that they did not have enough dedicated time for their role. In many cases, it seemed that coordinators could find themselves undertaking tasks at different extremes of managerial responsibility, from helping to provide strategic direction for the site as a whole at one extreme to dealing with school groups at the other.

This is regarded as a problem, given the complexity of the stakeholder arrangements that individual WHSs tend to present. In most cases there are multiple stakeholders, often with distinct agendas in which World Heritage is not necessarily a high priority. This is especially the case with individual site owners, such as developers working within a large urban site like Edinburgh, where local government must negotiate multiple social, economic and cultural priorities alongside World Heritage, and partner organisations and local communities have their own business, personal, and reputational interests.

The Antonine Wall coordinator's post is especially important given the range of stakeholders involved at the site, but is not currently permanent. This means that there are substantial uncertainties about future capacity in the WHS, hampering effective planning.

It is clearly problematic if the permanence of a key role like that of coordinator is not assured, as this is liable to increase all the challenges with securing the kind of smooth and effective recruitment, retention and continuity of effort and expertise that interviewees uniformly reported as desirable. Some interviewees consequently felt that the coordinator role was not sufficiently well-recognised or well-remunerated at present.

There was also call for more opportunities to share experience, understanding and best practice between coordinators. There is a feeling shared by several interviewees that the existing HES-organised coordinators' group has become too process-based and focused on information sharing, due to lack of dedicated time to prepare for meetings.

Comparative research showed that there was considerable variety in the way that coordinator

roles, or their equivalents, were defined elsewhere in the UK. In Wales, an informed stakeholder reported that the coordinator role was a mid-level post that really was focused on coordinating the activities of others rather than taking significant direct responsibility for the strategic direction, operation, or management of the site. They help organise meetings, maintain systems and documentation, and bring together material – but do not actually produce significant content – for periodic reporting and management plans. The roles are always funded by the site owners or managing organisations, and there was no expectation that Cadw or the Welsh government would provide funding support unless they are themselves owners / managers of the site (as in the case of the Edwardian Castles).

In Northern Ireland, by contrast, a significant part of the Giant's Causeway's (half-time) coordinator role (alongside other duties relating to this combined post) is to develop and coordinate the implementation of the management plan. Strategic input is provided by the Steering Group and its supporting expert groups but the responsibility is focused on the postholder and their employer, the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust.

The variety of duties and expectations, inconsistency of employment conditions and role expectations, and the impermanence of some posts, both within Scotland and across the UK, are striking. This is an area where HES's important role in funding coordinator posts implies that there is potential for beneficial action.



Figure 12

4.4.6 Scientific and technical research

HES acts as an important sponsor and agent for research into the conservation of the historic environment. Relatively little of this research, however, is specifically directed at World Heritage, though there can be little doubt that World Heritage – especially when related to individual historic buildings – benefits significantly from this wider research effort. More recently, however, HES has been spearheading efforts to assess the impact of climate change on Scottish WHS. According to HES, climate “is the fastest growing global threat to WH properties.”¹⁷ HES uses the Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI) assessment tool to gauge the repercussions of climate change on the Outstanding Universal Value of each site as well as the economic, social, and cultural impact climate change might have on the local, national, and international communities attached to each site.¹⁸ HES has committed to produce CVI assessments for all World Heritage Sites in Scotland by 2023.¹⁹ CVI reports on the Antonine Wall, Old and New Towns of Edinburgh, and the Heart of Neolithic Orkney and St Kilda are now publicly available.²⁰

Beyond this there was relatively little mention of scientific and technical research, and little evidence of conscious demand among stakeholders for additional HES activity of this kind. However, it may be noted that the emphasis of the UNESCO requirements is on identifying solutions to threats. While defining and quantifying threats is an important first stage, the implication is that HES should focus effort on securing appropriate funding and support for research into the most constructive ways of responding to these threats.

4.5 Presenting and communicating: education, interpretation and engagement

4.5.1 Presentation, education and interpretation

There is a general perception that HES is effective at presenting Scotland’s World Heritage through its website. The Blandford review of World Heritage in the UK praised Historic Environment Scotland and Cadw’s ‘unified presentation and explanation of their World Heritage Sites’, which it contrasted favourably with the ‘distinct lack of consistent presentation’ in England and Northern Ireland.

There are, however, potential limitations with some WH sites. At HONO, the visitor centre is at the end of its functional life and in need of replacement. There has been a promise of funding to support rebuilding as part of the Islands Growth Initiative, but this possibility was not directly referenced by interviewees. Desk research and some interviews suggested that the New Lanark visitor experience may have failed to keep up with visitor expectations in recent years.

The direct contribution made by HES to education and interpretation on WHS seems to have taken place, in general, through quite well-defined initiatives and projects. From the evidence gathered so far, these were either broader in scope than WH (for example taking place in the context of wider provision for Edinburgh Castle, where demand for education and interpretation materials is especially high) or specifically developed in the context of an externally funded project (such as the Antonine Wall Go Roman handling boxes).



Figure 13

17. HES, ‘Climate Vulnerability Index Assessment for the Antonine Wall Component of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Property’, 5.

18. HES, ‘Scotland’s World Heritage and Climate Change’, 2.

19. NTS, ‘St Kilda World Heritage Site: Management Plan 2022–2032’, 49.

20. HES, ‘Climate Vulnerability Index Assessment for the Antonine Wall Component of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Property’; HES, ‘Climate Vulnerability Index Assessment for the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Property’; HES, ‘Climate Risk Assessment for Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Property’.

Interviewees with an interest in education, interpretation and outreach suggest that there is an appetite for more contribution by HES to education and outreach for Scotland's World Heritage Sites, but that this is contingent on dedicated funding being made available.

In addition to HES-led or mediated educational initiatives, individual WHSs make a significant contribution to education and outreach. Edinburgh World Heritage has a prominent role in producing advice and guidance for owners of property within the World Heritage Site. HES has also been providing specific funding to New Lanark for education since at least 2015.

4.5.2 Engagement

Engagement presented complex issues. The need for greater community engagement in all aspects of the management of World Heritage was widely recognised but was often reported to be challenging. There appears to be particular difficulty bridging the gap between seeking opinions and fostering active contributions from communities.

“During the nomination process, you can have great community engagement. But that community bit is merely a consultation – it very often doesn’t lead to subsequent or sustained community engagement – i.e. coproduction. Also, the benefits that accrue from early engagement are often not realised on the ground.”

As mentioned in section 4.4.4 on management plans, interviewees involved with the coordination and management of individual WHSs reported specific challenges with engagement in relation to consultation processes. They recognised that engagement needed to involve parts of the community that may have been difficult to reach, and to ensure that feedback received did not simply reflect the views of a self-selecting, often privileged, minority. Several respondents involved directly

with developing management plans nevertheless said they found it difficult to define who should be involved in the consultation and how they should be consulted. One respondent stated that it was particularly difficult to understand how to engage local communities in ways that were equitable and accessible and to know how much local views could or should shape outcomes. Edinburgh was cited as an example of a WHS that had sought to develop ways to address some of these challenges through a specialist strand of engagement work comprising sessions with local interest and community groups, complemented by a series of professional facilitated focus group sessions.²¹

Such findings imply that there may be benefit in identifying and disseminating good practice in community consultation and engagement both within and beyond Scotland. For example, the Slate Landscape of North-West Wales was cited for making engagement with local communities and community groups a consistent priority, and strong communication in both directions was reported to be the foundation of successful interactions.

4.6 Capacity-Building

There was evidence of a number of deficiencies in existing capacity amongst those involved with World Heritage in Scotland. There was a clear general concern that many stakeholders in the sector (including within HES itself), and even more so outside it, lacked a deep understanding and appreciation of what World Heritage is and why it matters. Many interviewees also felt that there is a general lack of wider awareness (beyond those with a special interest in World Heritage) of either the obligations or the potential benefits that World Heritage status brings with it. This was mentioned by stakeholders with both a UK-wide and specifically Scottish perspective.

“I think the main risk straight away I would say is lack of understanding of what World Heritage is particularly in the

21. City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh World Heritage & HES, *The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site – Management Plan 2024 - 2035 (Consultation draft)*, pp. 56-7.

UK. So that's not an answer that I'd give if we were based in Italy necessarily or even Germany or so forth, but in the UK lack of understanding and awareness of what World Heritage actually means and what people were signing up to".

World Heritage stakeholder, England

"I also think that there has been historically, and maybe in some parts still is, an insufficient grasp within the organisation of both the kudos and the risks that come with World Heritage status, and that possibly still applies to some degree. I don't feel it's really valued as it should be."

World Heritage stakeholder, Scotland

The lack of understanding tended to be viewed primarily in terms of a failure to grasp the truly international, global dimension of significance that World Heritage recognises, with all that this implies in terms of the exceptional preciousness of the properties, the way that they should be cared for and presented, and their potential role in sustainable development. They are part of a 'gallery of humanity'; they have the potential to communicate across boundaries and to act as a source of 'soft power'; they provide an antidote to the inward turn of contemporary politics. But the concomitant of these qualities is that loss of OUV is of international concern and the expectations for protection and conservation are exceptionally high.

This lack of awareness was said by some of these interviewees to be reflected in a tendency among many stakeholders to think of WHS primarily as a source of status or an award: 'I think people get the certificate, get the designation, then think that's job

done'. Several stakeholders reported that this is the case even within some parts of HES. Perhaps the most significant cross-cutting problem arising from this is a failure to see World Heritage Status as an enabler for positive change, as a starting point rather than a destination. This manifests itself in numerous ways:

- In many cases, there was a feeling that little is made of World Heritage status – many of the conservation, interpretation and development initiatives that take place are 'business as usual' under a World Heritage banner, rather than specifically inspired or shaped by the particular opportunities and risks that World Heritage status can open up.
- An associated lack of engagement with the bigger picture of World Heritage, by both HES as a whole and the individual sites, with particular challenges embracing the 'World' (global, international) dimension of World Heritage, at every level, from overarching national strategic initiatives through to the specifics of individual site interpretation.
- A failure to consider World Heritage status as an enabler for sustainable development with potential significant socio-economic benefits for local communities.
- A related lack of ownership and interest from local authorities, who tend to see WH as another obligation to be discharged rather than an opportunity to be embraced and advanced.

A number of respondents mentioned the particular challenges of working with elected members and council staff with limited awareness of World Heritage. This may reflect, and also help account for, some of the challenges with local authority engagement reported in relation to the functioning of steering groups. It may also speak to the need for greater professional World Heritage expertise within councils.

There is a consequent tendency to see the reporting and conservation requirements (and especially with the controls on development) that come with World Heritage Status as 'burdens'. Many interviewees reported that the requirements were often thought of as a bureaucratic cost that must be borne to maintain the site's prestige status rather than a fundamental part of a wider process of effective management of World Heritage that could bring significant material and cultural benefits to those who live and work in and around WHSs.

For some stakeholders, this points towards a need for HES to take a more active role in fostering appreciation and understanding of World Heritage and its potential contribution to sustainable development and, more broadly, international cooperation and 'soft power'. This has affinities for the related call for HES to take a greater role in influencing Scottish World Heritage policy.

For more specific skills and capacity, the most frequently cited shortage and gap was in fundraising. Several interviewees mentioned that support for employing fundraisers or providing access to development expertise would be enormously helpful in enabling their sites to become more financially sustainable. One respondent noted that fundraising was the most in-demand skill in the third sector, making it difficult for small organisations to recruit and retain appropriately skilled and experience fundraising and development staff.



Figure 14

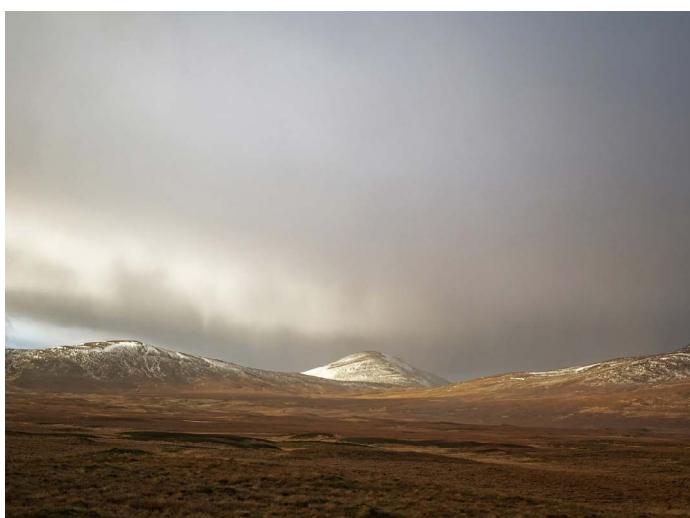


Figure 15

4.7 Resourcing of World Heritage

4.7.1 HES Funding

A basic aim of the research was to establish comparative flows of income from HES into the six Scottish World Heritage sites. To do this, financial information was collated by HES and transferred to the researchers. Where possible, the researchers also cross-checked these figures against published HES grants information and accounts from the six individual World Heritage sites, in most cases drawn from public domain sources such as the Scottish Charities Commission and Companies House. The figures were compiled to produce totals of different categories of expenditure for the central HES World Heritage Team and for HES funding of individual WHSs.

It should be noted that the figures are a mixture of actual expenditure and allocated funds, the latter of which may not always be fully expended or, where funding periods exceed a single year, be divided equally between the relevant years when actual expenditure may have been unevenly split. Properties in Care expenditure was not available for 2023-24, so reasonable inferences were made on the basis of past expenditure and information on individual sites.

The following tables therefore present the best reasonably practicable description, within the limits of the financial data available to the researchers, of the flows of grant funding from HES over the last five financial years, but they should not be assumed to be fully comprehensive or accurate.

An overview of the financial information is given in Table 1, which shows that the greatest single category of funding directed to World Heritage Sites, amounting to just under £5.2 million over the five-year period in scope, comes not through the World Heritage funding stream but through HES's main grant funding schemes. In recent years this has entirely been directed towards the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh and New Lanark, in both cases through a mixture of recurrent and one-off funding, as described in more detail on the next page.

Table 1: Cumulated funding flows from HES to World Heritage of all types over the five financial years 2019-20 to 2023-24 (all figures rounded to nearest whole pound). Note caveats described in the main text.

	HES WH Funding (£)	Other HES Grant Funding (£)	Total of HES WH & Grant Funding (£)	PiC Conservation Expenditure (£)	Total all HES Expenditure (£)
Antonine Wall	442,587	0	442,587	38,757	481,344
Forth Bridge	60,000	0	60,000	-	60,000
HON Orkney	244,137	0	244,137	562,479	806,616
New Lanark	100,000	1,622,601	1,722,601	-	1,722,601
ONT of Edinburgh	212,166	3,573,132	3,785,298	4,037,740	7,823,038
St Kilda	95,000	0	95,000	-	95,000
Totals for all individual sites	1,153,890	5,195,733	6,193,536	4,525,480	10,988,599
WH Team Projects	108,900				108,900
WH Team Salaries	1,177,464				1,177,464
Five-Year Totals	2,440,254	5,195,733	6,193,536	4,525,480	12,274,963
Average per year	488,051	1,039,147	1,238,707	905,096	2,454,993

For specific World Heritage expenditure, over the five years in the scope of the current research, there has been a cumulative total of just under £2.45 million of funding expended on staff salaries, support funding for individual WHSs and project funding, averaging just under £490,000 per year. Just over half of this went directly on salaries for the central World Heritage function in the Heritage Directorate. Note that salary costs for World Heritage Team salaries have been partly assigned to individual WHSs, to account for the fact that the Deputy Heads of World Heritage combine their roles with coordination of the Orkney and Antonine Wall WHSs. A relatively small amount of funding was also expended centrally on national World Heritage initiatives, such as celebrating World Heritage Day and updating the World Heritage pages on the HES website. These expenditures are set out in more detail in Table 2.

This shows that the total expenditure of this kind over the five years analysed amounted to just under £110,000, averaging £22,000 per year, but with high variability from year to year.

Table 2: Expenditure on World Heritage through the HES WH Team. Note caveats described in the main text.

Expenditure type	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Totals 2019-2024
WH Consultancy budget	-	10,000	-	-	10,000	20,000
WH Day, WHUK, YoSS	1,500	2,500	2,500	9,000	15,000	30,500
Creating / updating documents	-	3,500	2,400	2,000	-	7,900
Conferences, meetings, T&S	-	2,000	-	7,000	-	9,000
CVI Workshops and report	-	-	8,000	23,000	-	31,000
WH Photography and video	-	4,000	4,000	-	-	8,000
WH educational materials	500	500	-	-	-	1,000
UNESCO Trail Launch contribution	1,500		-	-	-	1,500
Total	3,500	22,500	16,900	41,000	25,000	108,900

The balance of the specific World Heritage expenditure has been on individual WHSs, which have benefited from just over £1.15 million of grants and support over the five-year period considered here, that is to say an average of just under £231,000 per year. The most significant single beneficiary in recent years has been the Antonine Wall, largely in the form of project funding for the Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project, discussed in more detail below. Edinburgh has also been a significant beneficiary. New Lanark has benefited significantly from both recurrent organisational funding and one-off grant funding, as detailed below. There has also been a significant flow of funds to Orkney, which as an HES PiC might be expected to have the bulk of WH-related expenditure to be underwritten by HES's PiC function.

A finer breakdown of the HES funding flows is shown in Table 3. The baseline assumption seems to be that £20,000 is allocated to each site that is not directly managed by HES, with what seems to be a default expectation that this helps support the coordinator function. However, at St Kilda a similar sum is used to support the archaeologist who works on site in the summer of each year. In Edinburgh, the support funding does help pay for the WHS Coordinator, and the cost appears to be somewhat higher than the £20,000 allocated to other sites, while at the Forth Bridge the lack of a coordinator in post has meant that the support funding is used to make a £10,000 per annum contribution to the Steering Group.

Table 3: HES funding for individual WHSs 2019-20 to 2023-24, and cumulative five-year totals (WH funding regular type and other funding streams in italics). Note caveats described in the main text.

Site	Expenditure type	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Totals 2019-2024
Antonine Wall	Support funding equivalent*	29,550	30,444	30,896	32,557	32,641	156,087
	WHMP, website, partnership	40,000	56,000	45,500	51,500	78,500	271,500
	AW CVI		15,000				15,000
	Total WH funding	69,550	101,444	76,396	84,057	111,141	442,587
	<i>PiC conservation</i>	<i>22,294</i>	<i>11,676</i>	<i>2,552</i>	<i>1,235</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>38,757</i>
	<i>Total all HES funding</i>	<i>91,844</i>	<i>113,120</i>	<i>78,948</i>	<i>85,292</i>	<i>111,141</i>	<i>480,344</i>
Forth Bridge	Support funding	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	60,000
	Total WH funding	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	60,000
HoN Orkney	Support funding equivalent*	29,550	30,444	30,896	32,557	32,641	156,087
	WHMP, partnership funding	29,500	23,000	16,500	8,900	10,150	88,050
	Total WH funding	59,050	53,444	47,395	41,456	42,791	244,137
	<i>PiC conservation</i>	<i>163,509</i>	<i>82,798</i>	<i>78,595</i>	<i>125,082</i>	<i>112,496</i>	<i>562,479</i>
	<i>Total all HES funding</i>	<i>222,559</i>	<i>136,242</i>	<i>125,990</i>	<i>166,538</i>	<i>42,791</i>	<i>806,616</i>
New Lanark	WH support funding	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
	Total WH funding	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
	<i>Maintenance & repair grant</i>	<i>180,000</i>	<i>180,000</i>	<i>180,000</i>	<i>180,000</i>	<i>180,000</i>	<i>900,000</i>
	<i>Learning and outreach</i>	<i>20,000</i>	<i>8,000</i>	<i>20,000</i>	<i>20,000</i>	<i>20,000</i>	<i>88,000</i>
	<i>HES CARS scheme</i>	<i>377,657</i>	<i>111,367</i>	<i>145,577</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>634,601</i>
	<i>Total all HES funding</i>	<i>597,657</i>	<i>319,367</i>	<i>365,577</i>	<i>220,000</i>	<i>220,000</i>	<i>1,722,601</i>
ONT Edinburgh	WH support funding	25,500	25,500	35,500	45,906	32,760	165,166
	WHMP			5,000	19,000	17,000	41,000
	WH educational resources	4,000		2,000			6000
	Total WH funding	29,500	25,500	42,500	64,906	49,760	212,166
	<i>HES City Heritage Grants</i>	<i>650,166</i>	<i>650,166</i>	<i>549,150</i>	<i>650,000</i>	<i>930,000</i>	<i>3,429,482</i>
	<i>HES Repair grants</i>	<i>100,000</i>	<i>43,650</i>				<i>143,650</i>
	<i>PiC conservation</i>	<i>1116374</i>	<i>596637</i>	<i>807634</i>	<i>709547</i>	<i>807,548</i>	<i>4,037,740</i>
	<i>Total all HES funding</i>	<i>779,666</i>	<i>719,316</i>	<i>591,650</i>	<i>714,906</i>	<i>979,760</i>	<i>7,823,038</i>
St Kilda	WH support funding	20,000	15,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	95,000
	Total HES WH funding	20,000	15,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	95,000

*This sum is the approximate salary cost of the coordinator, who is employed as part of the HES WH team.

The Antonine Wall has benefited significantly from partnership funding to support the Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project. This was necessary to secure a much larger grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) of nearly £1 million. It should be noted this line (WHMP, partnership funding) also includes £50,000 of funding sought for the most recent management plan rewrite, in addition to substantial expenditure on developing and maintaining the Antonine Wall website. The Rediscovering project has now reached the end of its NLHF funding period. Though at present it seems likely that the partner councils will provide some degree of support to continue the project on a smaller scale and there is a possibility of further NLHF support, future expenditures can be expected to be much lower.

Edinburgh receives recurrent annual funding to help support the salary of the Coordinator, who is based in City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) but works closely with HES. There has also been more than £40,000 allocated to the current management plan rewrite. Much more substantial income comes, however, from other grant funding. Most takes the form of grant funding to Edinburgh World Heritage (EWH) through the City Heritage Trust grants scheme, which is restricted to making grants directly to applicants within the city. However, EWH also receives a substantial unrestricted annual grant of around £250,000 (varying from year to year) to pay for administration costs. Within the wider Edinburgh WHS there have been in addition a small number of direct HES grants to individual projects, totalling just under £144,000 for the five-year period, with no grants in the last three years.

At New Lanark, additional funding has largely come in the form of support for conservation repairs and maintenance, amounting to some £180,000 per year, with a further £20,000 per year to support education and learning. This has recently been increased by a large grant in excess of £1.2 million through the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS), which helped underwrite the cost of total restoration and refurbishment of a double row of millworker's housing.

Those interviewees whose WHSs were in receipt of HES funding were emphatic that HES funds were crucial to the effective functioning of World Heritage. In several cases HES was cited as the critically important funder that enabled dedicated World Heritage activities to take place:

"I think it's worth being clear that it's important never to underestimate the impact of HES – we wouldn't be able to do what we do without them."

Leader, Scottish WHS

"[HES's] Biggest contribution is the ongoing employment of the coordinator. They are also normally an equal funder of specific things... [their role is] crucial ... Can't see that it would be happening without them."

Local Authority Officer

Although not separately itemised in the tables, recent expenditure on management plan revisions is worth noting, but could not be accurately quantified for the purposes of this research.

Some interviewees felt that the resource specifically allocated to World Heritage by HES, national and/or local government did not reflect its importance as Scotland's most internationally important heritage. In addition, some advocated providing continued support to help individual potential and new WHSs to help them deal with the challenges that come with encouraging sites to be nominated.

Because of this, some interviewees advocated allocating more central funding to individual WHSs to help them address the particular challenges and obligations that come with this status.

One respondent noted that the lack of alignment between HES funding cycles and the management plan review intervals could be problematic – with the disparity liable to increase with the move to 10-year plans (though this could be resolved through aligning the action plan period with the funding cycles). There were also some comments about grant amounts not being index-linked, so although in some cases grants have remained nominally stable over time, in practice this amounts to a continuing

real-terms cut to resourcing due to the effects of inflation. This has, clearly, been a particular issue over the last few years, as price increases in construction-related labour and material costs have outstripped even the current high levels of background inflation.

Some interviewees felt that the existing funding arrangements are continuing through a kind of inertial force and that the definition of the conditions and requirements that need to be fulfilled by grant recipients are inconsistent. There were also questions from one respondent about how equitable the distribution of funds currently is.

The overall impression is that in some cases, grant funding has come to be distributed in an ad hoc rather than strategic way and that, while nominally awarded for specific purposes, recurrent grants have tacitly become an expectation for the organisations concerned. It should be emphasised that respondents were clear that losing this recurrent funding would have serious impacts on their ability to sustain their sites, so this should not in itself be taken to indicate that the current funding allocations are inappropriate or unjustified. However, the current lack of clarity over what funding is going to which sites, on what grounds, and through which funding streams, presents challenges to appropriate levels of transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.



Figure 16

Comparative evidence from England, Wales and Northern Ireland suggested that dedicated WH funding distributed via HES's peer organisations was often more limited than in Scotland. In Wales, there is no specific strand of WH funding. Sites are expected to secure their own baseline funding, whether from site income, local government, or other funders, and the expectation is that site owners should fund even the WH coordinator role. However, WH sites can and do apply for grant funding through Cadw's grants programme and it was reported that WH status carries weight as part of the significance component in the assessment process. The result is a simpler, more limited, and more demonstrably equitable pattern of central support for individual sites. In England, the overwhelming priority for grant funding is given to heritage at risk, so any projects that do not address this concern are substantially less likely to receive support. World Heritage at risk would, clearly, be a high priority for funding, but this would be assessed through the same basic mechanism as other grant applications. In both Wales and England, then, there is a clear sense that grant funding is distributed through relatively consistent and transparent mechanisms.

4.7.2 Other sources of public grant funding: NLHF and NHMF

The main external grant funder for major heritage-related projects, in Scotland as in the rest of the UK, is the NLHF. There is no specific weight given to WH in the grant assessment process. All applications are assessed with reference to the potential of the proposed project to generate positive impacts, especially those aligned with NLHF's strategic priorities. These are often area-based, with local authority areas that have received below-average NLHF spend per capita being prioritised for support. They also tend to focus on funding projects that have a good prospect of bringing significant socio-economic benefit to local communities. The wider, potentially international concerns of WH are not a significant factor in this context. However, the NLHF does seek to align its priorities with those of central government and key sector stakeholders; their engagement and grants teams would therefore welcome clear and readily accessible statements of those priorities.

One noteworthy peculiarity of NLHF's funding is that only areas that have inhabitants, and so contain potential lottery players, are eligible to receive grants. The criterion used to determine this

is whether the area has a postcode. As St Kilda is uninhabited it does not have a postcode, and the Forth Bridge similarly does not have a postcode. Neither can therefore be directly funded by NLHF. However, associated communities, such as the communities on inhabited islands close to St Kilda, or North and South Queensferry at the ends of the Forth Bridge, can potentially apply for lottery funding.

There has been considerable success in securing NLHF funding for Scottish WHSs – the most conspicuous examples being the Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project, which was awarded a £980,600 grant over three years from 2018-19 onwards.²² This followed several smaller grants in previous years.²³ New Lanark secured NLHF funding for its millworker housing restoration, and has drawn down nearly £1.25 million for this purpose so far.²⁴ New Lanark has also recently secured a major conservation grant of £2.3 million from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.²⁵ New Lanark also secured significant funding in the last three years from the Scottish Government, to help with general repairs, updating a hydroelectric turbine, and fire detection. These government grants have totalled nearly £2.5 million.²⁶

4.7.3 Self-generated funding and other private fundraising

All sites except the Antonine Wall were able to draw on some form of self-generated funding. Local authorities also have grant in aid and taxation income that can, potentially, and in some cases in practice, be used as a source for supporting World Heritage, though it is widely recognised that local authority budgets are currently under severe pressure. This is bringing substantial uncertainty to the future management of some WHSs in Scotland, notably the Antonine Wall, where activity has been largely funded by the NLHF in recent years. The pressures on local authority funding have also led to significant funding freezes in CEC's funding for Edinburgh World Heritage, though unrestricted funding has increased substantially in the last year. Edinburgh World Heritage has a paying membership and a growing programme of fundraising from donors.

Several respondents, however, noted that there were alternative sources of funding for World Heritage, whether other funding agencies, charitable trusts or philanthropic giving by high-net-worth individuals. However, there were challenges accessing alternative funding routes due to a lack of fund-raising skills. This made it difficult to become more financially self-sustaining and less dependent on public funding.

Within HES itself, it is clear that the leading PICs, notably Edinburgh and Stirling Castle, generate substantial income that is sufficient to maintain and protect these sites while providing subsidy for the care and conservation of other, less heavily visited sites. This income declined drastically during COVID, but visitor numbers and income have rebounded and are now nearly at their pre-pandemic highs.

22. NLHF (2018) '£2 million to save Britain's Roman Walls', <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps2million-save-britains-roman-walls>.

23. Glamis Consultancy 'Rediscovering the Antonine Wall: Project Evaluation (October 2023)', p. 9.

23. NLHF (2014) 'Last millworkers' tenement at New Lanark World Heritage Site to be restored', <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/last-millworkers-tenement-new-lanark-world-heritage-site-be-restored>; New Lanark Trust Accounts 2023, formerly available for download from <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC008552> (since replaced by 2024 accounts).

25. New Lanark Trust Blog (nd), 'New Lanark awarded vital grant as part of £4.4 million National Heritage Memorial Fund support for Scotland's remarkable heritage', <https://newlanark.org/read-our-blog/287-nl-nmhf/>

26. New Lanark Trust Accounts 2023, formerly available for download from <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC008552> (since replaced by 2024 accounts); Scottish Government: Culture, Tourism, and Major Events Directorate to New Lanark Trust, 21 March 2021, available from <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/foi-eir-release/2021/06-a/foi-202100207810/documents/foi--202100207810---information-released/foi--202100207810---information-released/govscot%3Adocument/FOI%2B-%2B202100207810%2B-%2BInformation%2Breleased.pdf>.

At St Kilda the single largest contributor to the site's financing is the Ministry of Defence, which pays an annual rent for a radar station of £100,000 plus VAT.²⁷ A small additional rental stream comes from the Northern Lighthouse Board.²⁸ Beyond this, the self-generated income at St Kilda is very limited but does cumulatively make a contribution of around 35% to overall site revenue. A further contribution, averaging around 10%, comes from a dedicated charity, the St Kilda Club, which generates revenue from a shop and other fundraising activities, and has on occasion made very substantial donations for specific conservation projects. The most notable recent example was the donation of £80,000 in 2021-22 financial year for the renovation of the pier.²⁹

The individual WHS with the most highly developed commercial visitor offer is undoubtedly New Lanark. This example, however, highlights even more than HES's PICs the vulnerability of this offer to crises that disrupt visitor flows. Historically, a 38-bedroom hotel and leisure centre have been major contributors to the site's finances, but they have high fixed costs in staff. Though the hotel and leisure centre maintained staffing through the pandemic with support from the government's furlough scheme, they have reported heavy losses in recent years, progressively draining cash reserves.³⁰ The hotel returned to profit under new management over the last year, but the 2023 and 2024 accounts indicate that the New Lanark Trust and associated companies still have substantial but reducing net liabilities and a current deficit.³¹

4.8 Sustainable development

A significant minority of interviewees, especially those with a wider strategic view across Scotland or the UK, felt that opportunities for sustainable development were not being fully capitalised on. In the case of those involved in the Forth Bridge, this view was especially strongly expressed. There was a clear view that mass housing development in the area was both putting undue pressure on existing communities and infrastructure and that World Heritage had become a focus for this discontent. Moreover, stakeholders also felt that nomination was a major missed opportunity for promoting a more balanced, heritage-led approach to development that could bring significant benefits to those communities.

Challenges with sustainable development, especially regarding impacts on local populations, were also voiced in respect of Edinburgh. Here, however, the issues primarily relate to 'over-tourism'. The forthcoming introduction of the 'tourist tax' was viewed as a potential way of increasing the sustainability of heritage, provided that the resulting income was directed appropriately.

There was a clear desire to promote sustainable development at New Lanark, but this involved challenges related primarily to difficulties with transport links and with understanding how heritage could be fully and appropriately integrated into business development plans. The hope is that the appointment of a new Head of Heritage will facilitate this, but as yet it is not possible to say whether this position will lead to the desired outcomes.

St Kilda also stood out as a complex case, where the archipelago is clearly viewed within the Scottish Government as a potential nucleus for economic development but some stakeholders raised concerns about the practicability and sustainability of such development.

The generally uncertain and tentative approach to development found in Scotland formed a striking contrast with the situation in Wales, where the more recent WHSs were very much local council initiatives, underpinned by a strong concern to promote the sustainable regeneration of socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Indeed, sustainable development seems to have been the primary concern for pursuing World Heritage status for three of Wales's four WHSs. The pioneer in this respect was Blaenavon Industrial Landscape (inscribed 2000),

27. *St Kilda: Firing Ranges: Question for Ministry of Defence*, UIN 10940, tabled on 22 January 2024, <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-22/10940/>

28. *Ibid.*

29. *St Kilda Club Accounts*, available for download from Companies House, <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/SC246110/filing-history>.

30. *New Lanark Hotels Accounts*, available for download from Companies House, <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/SC049059>.

31. *New Lanark Trust Accounts for 2023 and 2024* (2023 accounts formerly available for download from <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC008552> and since replaced by 2024 accounts).

which then served as the inspiration for Pontcysyllte Aquaduct and Canal (inscribed 2009). Most recently, this was followed by the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales (inscribed 2021), which was driven forward by Gwynedd Council, working closely with Anglesey councils and Snowdonia National Park Authority. All these recent examples represent examples of industrial heritage, and the interviewees reported that the initiative for inscription came primarily from local authorities looking for ways to regenerate areas that had undergone serious post-industrial decline. World Heritage Status was viewed as a way of attracting resources for restoration and rehabilitation, as a basis for rebuilding local pride, and as a means of attracting visitor interest.

These hopes have been substantially realised. All three have seen significant flows of funding, with the most significant being from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and, more recently, the Levelling-up Fund. Interviewees with local authority staff involved in the Slate Landscape WHS also made it clear that a major motivation for pursuing World Heritage Status was to draw visitors away from overstressed areas and attract them to less developed parts of the region. In addition, there was a clearly articulated concern to avoid mass tourist development and attract 'the right kind of tourist', who would be genuinely interested in and sympathetic to the area's history and heritage.

Overall, there was a sense of positivity and optimism about the potential for development in Welsh WHSs that was difficult to parallel in Scotland.

4.9 Monitoring and reporting

4.9.1 Monitoring and reporting processes

HES acts as the main source of information for the Scottish government when discharging its responsibility to the UK government to identify issues with the state of conservation of individual WHSs. HES acts as the main intermediary for collating information about the individual WHSs in Scotland for periodic reporting and reactive monitoring. In as far as it was mentioned, interviewees seemed to regard the standard UNESCO periodic reporting cycle as manageable, but beyond this there was remarkably little discussion of monitoring and reporting processes. On the one hand, this suggests that existing processes are relatively unproblematic and readily followed, but may also suggest that there may be a

need for more conscious consideration of reactive monitoring processes, especially as these are best implemented through close collaboration between HES's World Heritage Team and Planning, Consents and Advice Service.

4.9.2 Current and potential threats

Overall, there are few immediate direct threats to the OUV of Scotland's World Heritage Sites. However, there are some significant challenges to the management of some sites – which may have the longer term potential to impact on OUV. The most immediate of these are financial, notably at New Lanark, where the audited accounts for 2022/23 noted a large and growing deficit in both operating income and cash reserves, few liquid assets and the illiquidity of most other assets. The auditor's report indicates that: 'at the year end [September 2023] the charity had a deficit on General Fund of £914,330, the group a deficit of £1,937,428 and the group had net current liabilities of £710,202. These conditions indicate the existence of a significant material uncertainty which casts doubt about [sic] the charity's and the group's ability to continue as a going concern.'³²

It is clear that New Lanark is doing its utmost to recover its financial stability, and the latest publicly available accounts show a reduced level of current liabilities at £579,481 and a smaller deficit of £1,350,539. Nevertheless, New Lanark Trust is acutely vulnerable and any further substantial financial or operational shock could have major consequences, with the auditor continuing to indicate significant material uncertainty about the charity's financial sustainability.

32. *New Lanark Trust Accounts 2023*, formerly available for download from <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC008552> (since replaced by 2024 accounts), p. 9; *New Trust Accounts 2024*, p. 9.



Figure 17

The Antonine Wall is also expected to see a rapid decline in dedicated World Heritage funding in the immediate future, as discussed above. This is unlikely to put the site at substantive risk, as much of its significance is associated with relatively stable below ground archaeological deposits or well-cared for publicly owned archaeological sites. It would, however, threaten to disrupt the significant momentum that has built up in recent years under the leadership of HES and West Dunbartonshire Council.

It did not prove possible to identify detailed public domain financial information for St Kilda, but it does appear to be running in deficit and depending on NTS general funds and fundraising by the St Kilda Club for continued conservation care and its (limited) operation as a visitor destination.³³

Development pressure was cited as a continuing significant threat for Edinburgh, the Forth Bridge and parts of the Antonine Wall. Edinburgh was now felt, however, to be on a relatively secure footing, following sustained attempts to engage with the previous concerns of the World Heritage Committee.

However, the most significant overall threat is likely to be climate change. This was reported across sites as a significant and growing threat to the preservation and conservation of Scotland's World Heritage. The impacts in terms of increased rainfall

and growing challenges with effective rainwater management were specifically cited in connection with the Edinburgh WHS.³⁴ The broader impacts of climate change and extreme weather on ecology, biodiversity, species distribution and behaviour, and physical access for site managers and visitors were noted, especially with regard to St Kilda. There are extreme concerns for the conservation of Skara Brae, in the Heart of Neolithic Orkney site, where there is a conviction that the impacts of climate change are likely to be so severe that the long-term existence of the site is at risk. There appeared to be a fatalistic attitude to this, on the grounds that the cost of preservation would be too extreme to be realistically contemplated, and an HES interviewee noted that 'Skara Brae has a funding deficit in terms of protecting it from the sea'.

33. BBC News, 'St Kilda fundraising appeal launched', <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-36572332>.

34. See Crowley, Kate, Y. Cha, S. Tett and G. Geffers (2022), *Cultural Heritage and Urban Resilience in Scotland: Co-designing extreme rainfall impact assessment tools for adaptation*. University of Edinburgh, <https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/269199/1/269199.pdf>; Tett, S., Y. Cha, K. Donovan, G. Geffers and E. Hawkins (2023), 'The Impact of an Extreme Cloud burst on Edinburgh Castle' *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 104(10): E1807-E1816; O'Neill, S, S. Tett, and K. Donovan (2022) 'Extreme rainfall risk and climate change impact assessment for Edinburgh World Heritage sites', *Weather and Climate Extremes*, 38: 100514.



Figure 18

5

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Summary of key findings

The research so far has found that stakeholders expressed few significant concerns with arrangements for the physical conservation of Scotland's portfolio of heritage sites. Sites are generally well cared for and HES's role as custodian of its Properties in Care is also highly regarded. Apart from specific challenges from development pressures in Edinburgh, in parts of the Antonine Wall, and in the vicinity of the Forth Bridge, development controls are generally adequate to manage inappropriate change and to enable sustainable development. In all cases, arrangements for governance and management that meet UNESCO requirements are in place and there is no evidence that any site is at significant risk of becoming non-compliant. There are also numerous specific examples of good practice and valuable initiatives to sustain OUV, enhance its management, and increase community engagement. The coherent overall 'branding' and presentation of World Heritage by HES is also widely admired, both within Scotland and across the UK.

However, the strength of the operational side of managing WH does not seem to be paralleled by a strong overall strategic approach or wider vision for the future of Scottish WH, whether collectively or at the level of individual sites. This was perceived to affect to a greater or lesser degree almost every dimension of World Heritage in Scotland.

5.1.1 Identification

- The existence of two strong Scottish sites on the current tentative list and the recent, successful formal nomination of the Flow Country indicate that the identification process is succeeding in identifying globally important sites for inclusion on the WH list.
- However, there was clear evidence of lack of ownership from local authorities in past nominations, suggesting that the process has, at least historically, been insufficiently socially and politically inclusive and participatory, with negative impacts on conservation and development of the sites post-inscription. DCMS's approach to the Tentative List arguably reinforces rather than mitigates this tendency. Nevertheless, Wales's

success in developing more locally led nominations implies that there are likely to be some specifically Scottish factors, rooted in the lack of a strategic approach to World Heritage, that are impeding greater local commitment to the nomination process. Nevertheless, the strong local drive to pursue WH status in Shetland shows that these are not universal or insuperable.

5.1.2 Protection

- While there are few manifest failures in the UK-level system at present, there is an argument to be made that DCMS's and HE's roles are not, at present, sufficiently well-resourced or consultative.
- Within Scotland, though the Scottish Government's policy protections for World Heritage in NPF4 are well-worded and appropriate, the lack of statutory protection for World Heritage is potentially problematic. This contrasts with the apparent direction of travel in English historic environment legislation, which has recently seen specific inclusion of World Heritage within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, though the relevant provisions have yet to be enacted.
- There is a perception among some stakeholders within HES, that there is insufficient expertise and awareness within the organisation and more widely to deal confidently, consistently and effectively with development proposals with the potential to affect cultural World Heritage Sites. Though in most cases this had not led directly to negative outcomes, it had led to a clear perception of risks in the current approach to protection of World Heritage.
- Beyond spatial development, there was a perception that the creation of HES and the resulting separation of advisory functions from national policy for the historic environment had created ambiguities over who was responsible for what in relation to World Heritage. This was associated with suggestions that Scotland could benefit from stronger policy leadership on World Heritage.

5.1.3 Conservation and management

- There are few indications of individual WHSs currently being at significant direct physical risk, though climate change is already posing growing, and ultimately potentially irreversible challenges, for HONO and St Kilda, and increasing burdens of adaptation and repair in sites with substantial built heritage, notably Edinburgh and New Lanark.
- Management structures meet the basic UK and UNESCO requirements, but there is evidence of substantive issues with the effective functioning of Steering Groups and Partnership Boards at some Scottish WHSs. There is confusion over the roles of different advisory components of the management structures, with inconsistent expectations for strategic leadership, operational decision-making and conservation input.
- There was a strong perception that World Heritage management plans were not functioning as effectively as they could, with frequent reports that they were challenging and resource-intensive to prepare, and either formalised things that would 'happen anyway' – though it should be acknowledged that documenting existing management processes is a central purpose of the management plan – or set out too many ambitious goals that may be desirable in themselves but were unlikely to be practicably achievable and/or were not assigned to partners able to take responsible for realising them. In some cases, this was leading to attempts to rethink management plans as combinations of ten-year strategic documents and more focused, shorter-term action plans where all actions were given 'owners', with reported positive impacts on both resource requirements and the management plan's effectiveness as a management tool.

5.1.4 Presenting and Communicating

- Overall presentation of Scotland's World Heritage by HES is well regarded. This is not always paralleled at the level of individual sites, where their exceptional status is often not clearly signalled.
- HES has contributed significantly to WH educational initiatives and there is an appetite for greater involvement, but this would require funding and resourcing.

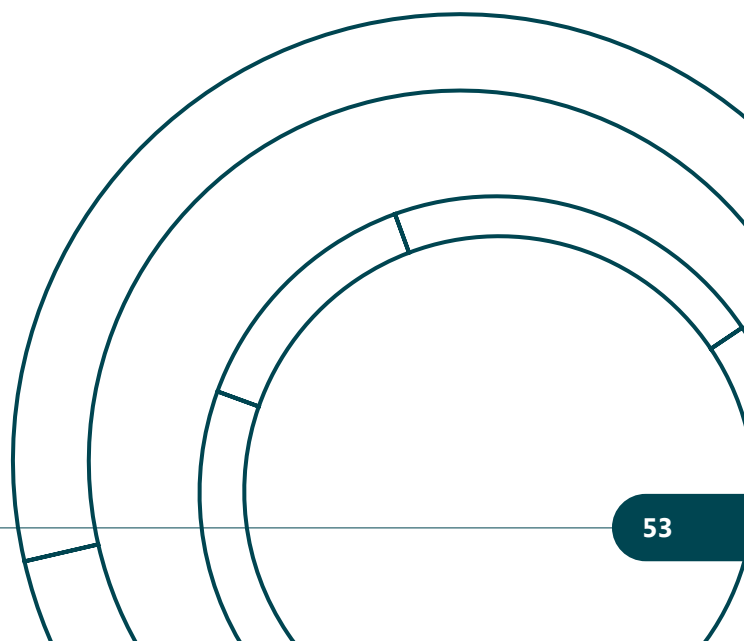
- Engagement with local communities presents special challenges, with evidence that initial engagement at the pre-nomination stage tends to falter and that 'consultation' rather than 'co-production' remains the norm. Engagement during the revision of management plans appears to present particular challenges, both with local communities and local authorities.

5.1.5 Capacity Building

- There is a lack of, and a need for, greater understanding of the nature and implications of World Heritage status, among all stakeholders and at all levels. This applied within HES as well as outside it.
- There was a particular perception of deficits in fundraising capacity, hampering individual site's ability to become more financially self-sufficient and sustainable.

5.1.6 Resourcing

- Current HES World Heritage and grant funding is heavily skewed to Edinburgh and New Lanark. This is not necessarily inappropriate given a) the size, complexity, development pressures and exemplar position of Edinburgh; and b) the acute current financial vulnerability and exceptional historical significance of New Lanark. Indeed, for these reasons both sites would be likely to be major grant recipients even if they did not possess World Heritage status.
- While current funding levels and distributions are broadly defensible, there could be greater clarity over how and why funds are allocated in the way they are. In particular, it would be helpful to consider in more detail the rationale for the allocation of HES support funds. In principle, these could be expected to be used consistently



as partial support for full-time coordinators co-funded with other partners, but are in some cases used for a variety of different purposes. Overall, it is not clear that current funding mechanisms are sufficient to ensure that future funding is consistently allocated in ways that advance strategic priorities for Scotland's World Heritage as a whole.

- There are no clear arrangements in place for supporting management bodies of WHSs when these bodies are experiencing significant financial risk.

5.1.7 Sustainable development

- There is increasing recognition of the importance of sustainable development, but little evidence that this is being pursued in a systematic or successful way across Scotland's WHSs.
- This contrasts notably with the situation in Wales, where sustainable development has been at the heart of the three most recent WHS inscriptions.

5.1.8 Monitoring and reporting

- Periodic reporting poses some burdens on WHSs and their management groups, notably coordinators, but it was not cited as an especial problem.
- There was little evidence found of the effectiveness of reactive monitoring arrangements, though it is a requirement of World Heritage status. There seems to be an assumption that major risks will emerge through routine planning processes.
- There are significant threats to the financial sustainability of New Lanark and from climate change to the long-term integrity of multiple sites, but most conspicuously Skara Brae (Orkney) and St Kilda.
- While the CVI represents an important first step to confronting and responding to the threat of climate change, there is evidence that the extent of its implications for Skara Brae has led to a fatalistic attitude.

5.2 Discussion

The research found few indications that the OUV of Scottish World Heritage Sites is at immediate risk of significant loss. On an everyday operational basis, most sites appear to be moderately to highly effectively run. However, a clear sense emerged that there is currently a failure to identify and take advantage of the potential opportunities and benefits of World Heritage status or to fully manage its accompanying risks. There were perceptions of:

- Lack of active involvement and strategic direction from steering groups and their chairs.
- Lack of involvement or commitment from some key stakeholders, especially within local authorities.
- A related tendency for WH status to be seen as leading to the 'burden' of compliance with UNESCO requirements, rather than UNESCO requirements being a facilitator for positive outcomes.
- Inconsistent and often complex arrays of partnership and management boards, steering groups and subgroups, which in many cases are not leading to demonstrably efficient and effective strategic leadership, decision-making or operational execution at the level of individual WHSs.
- Inconsistency in the expectations of the coordinator role, and a tendency for coordinators to be drawn into operational concerns and activities that are not formally part of their duties.
- Management plans becoming resource-intensive ends in themselves that often formalise 'business as usual' or incorporate hazy or unrealistic aspirations; these issues are recognised and being addressed through changes to review periods and the incorporation of action plans, but have not as yet led to systematic reconsideration of how the management plan model should be implemented.
- Uncertainty about the purpose, format and extent of community and stakeholder consultation that should inform the management of WHSs.
- A lack of engagement with or commitment to the international dimension of WH, with its substantial potential as: a platform for international outreach and enhanced 'soft power'; as a driver for Scotland's visitor economy; and as a component of enhanced interpretation and engagement.

- Lack of consistency or transparency in the allocation of HES grant funding, with consequent challenges for equity and accountability, reflected in the difficulties involved in assembling financial data to provide a robust and cohesive overview of HES funding flows into individual WHSs.
- Accumulated inconsistencies in the way that regular World Heritage support funding is used across different WHSs; while it seems that it should in principle be used for supporting coordination, this is not being reflected consistently from one site to another.
- HES in-kind support for individual WHSs being reactive, and in some cases tending to pick up 'slack' elsewhere in the system, leading to HES staff being drawn into granular, operational concerns, which then risks causing a pattern of learned dependency among other WHS stakeholders.

These issues are a matter of particular concern given the substantial and growing threats confronting Scotland's World Heritage from Climate Change and the continued after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Underlying factors that may have contributed to some of these issues seem to include:

- The ambiguous status of World Heritage within the UK's and Scotland's heritage protection regimes, with consequent challenges placing World Heritage within HES's wider mission and, in particular, with incorporating World Heritage considerations (and distinctive requirements) into casework processes and workflows.
- A general lack of understanding of World Heritage, which has a framework of values, assumptions and management expectations that differ appreciably from those characteristic of the established UK and Scottish heritage protection and management regimes.
- A related lack of understanding of the potential risks and opportunities presented by World Heritage, especially:
 - The extremely high level of significance that World Heritage status implies and the consequent need for correspondingly high levels of care and consideration in managing change
 - How World Heritage status can be used as a facilitator for positive change.
- Lack of a clearly and satisfactorily defined role for HES in the governance and management of World Heritage, due to its absence from key legislative instruments and the framework document that define HES's responsibilities.
- The size and internal complexity of HES, with a small core World Heritage team sitting within the heritage directorate (and so being somewhat disconnected from HES's broader activities), including some aspects of its responsibilities for two key WHSs, Heart of Neolithic Orkney and the Antonine Wall.
- Other World Heritage responsibilities being quite widely distributed across other teams but forming a very small part of their overall workload, meaning that they experience challenges developing deep working familiarity with World Heritage.
- The decision to pursue World Heritage status having often been driven centrally by the Scottish Government and/or HES rather than in response to local priorities and ambitions, with the exception of Shetland's successful application to become part of the UK tentative list.
- A lack of deep engagement with local stakeholders and an implicit tendency to view engagement as 'seeking opinions and input' rather than promoting understanding and support of World Heritage.
- The emergence of management and funding arrangements on a site-by-site basis, with each finding their own way to conform to the basic DCMS requirement for a Steering Group, Coordinator or equivalent, and production of a management plan.
- A consequent lack of clear and consistent allocation of responsibilities between the various stakeholders and groups involved in World Heritage both nationally and in individual sites.
- A related tendency for the component bodies (partnership boards, steering groups, subgroups) to lose their internal coherence and sense of mission, and for activity to become unduly dominated by producing documentary management and action plans rather than focusing on the actual management approach itself.

The diversity of factors involved means that there is unlikely to be a single or straightforward way of building on the current high level of basic operational managerial competence to attain a more cohesive and strategic approach to World Heritage, with higher levels of demonstrable equitability, accountability and transparency.

Yet a strategic approach will be essential given current wider imperatives: to make heritage more accessible to a wider range of people; to ensure that heritage benefits local communities; and to confront the significant and growing challenges that World Heritage, like other kinds of heritage, will have to face as a result of increasing tourism and development pressures and, most of all, the impacts of climate change, which have been very much confirmed by the CVI work supported by HES. A strategic approach will also be important if HES is to avoid a continuation of a perceptible long-term pattern towards ad hoc, reactive expansion of the scope of its World Heritage involvement and responsibilities (though this should not necessarily be taken to imply that HES should not increase its involvement in or support for WH, but rather that any such expansion should be intentional and informed by broader strategic goals).

There is already some comparative evidence of other approaches to World Heritage in the UK offering potentially useful models. Although the initial assumption, at the beginning of the research process, was that such models would be found on a site-by-site basis, discussions with Wales and Northern Ireland suggests that there is potential for lessons to be learned at a higher, systemic level on ways of developing clear patterns of responsibility and accountability.

5.3 Recommendations

There is, in certain respects, no immediate need for major change in a system that is, by and large, fulfilling its basic responsibilities well. However, there is still scope for significant improvement to better meet UNESCO requirements, and a specific need for greater transparency and accountability in the use of public funds to support World Heritage.

To facilitate such change, the single most basic starting point is probably a conscious and systematic formalisation of roles and responsibilities. This would need to be done with care and with regular reviews to monitor impacts and implications, to ensure that inappropriate or dysfunctional approaches

would not come to be formally and permanently embedded in the system. But some kind of clarification of who is responsible for what, aligned with the interests, capacities, and scope for action of the various parties involved, would seem to be a prerequisite for other kinds of desirable change.

This would then provide the foundation for rationalisation of some of the most important managerial structures and functions of both the WH team and individual sites. This in turn would allow for a better overview of what kinds of funding and practical support are most appropriate and how they should be managed. Specifically, it would enable more consistency in ways of applying for, distributing and ensuring accountability for funds.

The following represent a series of themes and related courses of action that could, singly or collectively, potentially help address some of the issues identified above.

Theme 1: HES's role

- **Secure greater clarity around roles and responsibilities in Scottish World Heritage – both with regard to the Scottish Government's relationship with HES and also HES's relationship with other World Heritage stakeholders.** This is likely to involve seeking to a) formalise HES's role as lead advisor to the Scottish Government on World Heritage matters, including allowing HES to take the initiative in developing policy proposals and initiatives for the Scottish Government to consider and accept or reject as they consider most appropriate; and b) develop and secure acceptance of HES and other partners' and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in individual World Heritage sites. The responsibilities and boundaries for these roles should be carefully thought through and negotiated to ensure that there is an appropriate alignment between the various stakeholders' formally defined responsibilities, interests and capacities. There is also an argument for greater clarity and potential expansion of the Scottish Government's role in relation to DCMS and Historic England, especially given the relatively low level of resource assigned to World Heritage within those bodies.
- **Formalise roles and responsibilities through agreed documentation.** The agreed roles should be formalised in documentation, most likely through an update of the Scottish Government Framework Document for HES for their respective

roles and responsibilities and through memoranda of understanding for the key partners and participating stakeholders in each WHS. These memoranda should be readily available as a component of the management plan or wider management documentation, and be a focus for accountability.

- **Develop a stronger role for the HES World Heritage Team in building awareness and understanding of World Heritage, its meaning, implications, and potential benefits, across all stakeholder groups.** There is a need for deeper understanding for the principles and requirements of World Heritage, both within and beyond HES. Internally, there are reasons to think that skills and understanding for planning related advice and decision-making could be better developed and more consistently applied within HES, and there was also a perception that senior leadership within HES could show a deeper understanding and commitment to WH. Newly appointed WHS coordinators, local authority officers and elected members would all benefit from consistent, accessible training.

Theme 2: Strategic oversight

- **Focus the HES WH team on providing national leadership and capacity-building for World Heritage,** with a strong focus on strategic issues for World Heritage both nationally and at the level of individual sites; on leading policy formation; and on building individual capability through support and training to individuals, institutions and networks involved in Scottish World Heritage. There are likely to be a number of distinct strands to developing this:
 - formalisation within the HES Framework Agreement of HES's role in periodic reporting and reactive monitoring;
 - proactively providing advice and support to the Scottish Government on World Heritage-related policy, identifying opportunities that could be pursued and issues that need addressing, and defining potential national initiatives to address them;
 - formalisation of HES's and NatureScot's roles and relationship in the governance and management of Scotland's World Heritage, to ensure that there are clearly defined sources of expertise and support for both natural and cultural World Heritage;

- ensuring that there is high-level expertise on World Heritage within HES that can act as a source of advice and support for both individual WHSs and for HES's wider planning and policy responsibilities;
- act as a 'critical friend' to individual WHSs, helping identify areas of weakness and source appropriate expertise where this is not immediately available;
- providing support for the development of documented management processes, in the form of targeted funding, guidance and the identification of appropriate technical expertise, centred on but not restricted to the production of formal management plans;
- acting as an agent and facilitator for identifying and defining best practice, drawing on internal and where appropriate external specialist knowledge expertise, and then disseminating it to the sector;
- encouraging World Heritage in Scotland to build higher levels of engagement with both local communities and World Heritage internationally.

Theme 3: Management and governance of World Heritage Sites

- **Within HES, develop stronger patterns of cross-team communication and working for World Heritage.** HES is a large and complex organisation, with work on World Heritage being undertaken as a small component of many teams' workloads. These activities would benefit from being more closely coordinated, as there is clear potential for synergies and collaborations, as well as a need for the World Heritage aspect of these teams' work to be better understood and represented. This may involve the WH team being given some form of role in ensuring that HES's World Heritage-related activity and initiatives are implemented in a cohesive and integrated way, with a focus on responding to external needs through the right internal expertise and initiatives.
- **Promote simpler, more consistent and more empowered World Heritage governance and management structures,** with potential for seeking the adoption of the Welsh model of three core groups with well-defined roles and sub-groups for more site-specific projects. Departures from the model could be permitted to take into account local needs, but should be justified by clearly and demonstrably improved function and/or outcomes.

■ **Use a localised coordinator role as the basis for building stronger engagement** and securing a stronger voice for local communities and local authorities, beginning prior to the nomination process for potential future World Heritage Sites. The Welsh model shows that local communities can become important partners in the process of developing and delivering the benefits of World Heritage status, but that this requires committed resource. Grassroots interest in and commitment to World Heritage also has the potential to feed through into greater interest and commitment from elected members.

■ **Ensure consistency in the role, remuneration and conditions for World Heritage coordinators.** The coordinator role should focus on bringing stakeholders, communities and expertise together. Sympathy with and understanding of heritage is essential, but not necessarily the primary area of skill and understanding needed by coordinators: it is the ability to interact constructively with, gain the trust of, and promote cohesive action across multiple partners and stakeholders that appears to be the critical aspect of the job. There is an argument that the coordination role could also involve stronger direct engagement with local communities and their representatives, but it might be more effective if the Steering Groups rather than coordinators explored ways to achieve this. The role should probably remain a mid-grade position at initial appointment. However, there is an argument for ensuring that Coordinators have some kind of structured career pathway to increased responsibility and remuneration within individual WHSs, to promote long-term retention of effective individuals.

■ **Consider moving toward consistent placement of WHS Coordinators within Local Authorities.** There is a good case to be made that by default World Heritage coordinators should be seated in a relevant local authority. When placed in local authorities, the coordinator has greater capacity to act as an advocate for and source of expertise on World Heritage at local level, and as a representative of local interests, priorities and concerns and informant on local initiatives and actions with potential to impact on WH, to other stakeholders, regionally and nationally. The traditional expectation of independence and objectivity from local government officers is intrinsically compatible with the role. For similar reasons, there should be an at least provisional presumption against direct employment of

coordinators by site owners, as it may compromise their ability to act as an independent 'honest broker' between different stakeholders. In addition, local government employment would make it easier to ensure that role definition and requirements for skills, experience and understanding meets consistent standards while assuring Coordinators of consistency and equality of pay and conditions between WHSs. Given the resource pressures on local authorities, any such move would, however, have to be introduced with care, and with continued funding support from HES, to ensure that the role remains financially sustainable, appropriately focused on coordination of World Heritage, and supportive of wider participation in World Heritage at the Scottish, UK and international levels. Funding support should be provided in the context of memoranda of understanding defining key attributes of the role and key employer responsibilities.

■ **Build staffing and capacity within individual WHSs.** There is an arguable need for more capacity, in terms of both quantity and consistency of expertise, to be built into the system. This primarily means enhanced World Heritage staffing at local level and/or more comprehensive approaches to documentation that go beyond the standard focus on the management plan. The most practicable way of doing this is likely to be through encouraging the setting up of WHS Trusts where they do not currently exist. These would be supplementary organisations that add a further layer of expertise and support on top of existing ownership, management and fundraising arrangements, drawing on the model provided by Edinburgh World Heritage. Structure and staffing could be flexible to respond to changing circumstances and the level of financial resource that could be realistically secured by individual trusts. Each would be expected to have a small core staff who would work closely with the Coordinator, Steering / Partnership / Management Group. Their main purpose would be to provide: secretariat support for the management groups and structures; act as facilitators for fund-raising; provide project support; develop engagement, outreach, education and interpretation resources and initiatives; and, where relevant, broader advice and guidance. This would be likely to entail some duplication of activity and expertise with coordinators, but this should be regarded as potentially desirable contingency in a system where coordinators currently tend to represent the 'single point of failure'.

■ **Rethink the approach to WH Management Plans.** World Heritage management plans are and will remain the default approach to managing individual UK World Heritage Sites. Nevertheless it could be beneficial to make use of the flexibilities of format and structure allowed for in the Operational Guidelines. The focus should be on securing effective management of WHSs, and the management documentation should be subservient to this greater purpose. There is a particular need to externalise and make accessible key knowledge and understanding of the individual WHSs, their history, significance and contexts. It should also be emphasised that while there is a requirement to review the management plan at least every five years, there is no expectation that it should be comprehensively redrafted. Indeed, there is an argument to be made that a good management plan is likely to need updating in a way that is responsive to changing circumstances but not fundamentally rewritten or reconceived. Moreover, a document that evolves constructively through careful revision and adaptation by eliminating irrelevant or outdated sections and adding new, rather than undergoes regular comprehensive reformulation, is likely to be more practically useful, comprehensive and useable. As a gesture in this direction, it would be worth considering whether management plans should be labelled not with time periods but with the date of the most recent review, with the expectation that the last review should consistently be within the last five years. There would be some risks to this more evolutionary approach: the main danger is that the document may grow and lose structure and focus over time: to preclude this, the review process should include explicit assessment of whether the document is as well-structured and as concise as it reasonable can be while assuring appropriate management of the site. There may be value in relating the review process to periodic reporting, given that there are many potential crossovers. If pursued, there would be value in considering carefully whether the review of management documentation should proceed or follow periodic reporting. Time periods for review could be aligned with the six-year cycle by having a deeper review every six years and a short review every three years. Successful implementation would be contingent on developing strong core documents that would be expected to need relatively light-touch updating rather than fundamental revision.

■ **Ensure that management plans form part of an effective broader system of documented management.** While management plans are important, they should not become ends in themselves. The UNESCO requirement is not for a management plan per se but for a documented management system. Good management is the purpose and the management plan is a means to that end. This means that the focus should always be on defining and promoting good management approaches, and then using the management documentation to systematise and secure them. In addition to the management plan itself, this may involve producing a more comprehensive baseline system of documented information – potentially embracing, for example, historical, archaeological, architectural and ecological analyses, formal conservation planning, and business information. Developing the documentary base could also help further reduce the risks of individuals becoming ‘single points of failure’ within World Heritage management.

Theme 4: Protecting and recognising WHSs and OUV

- **Seek a stronger statutory framework for protecting World Heritage.** Arguably, there is a need for more direct statutory protection than the system currently allows for, so that the legislation more clearly articulates the primacy of World Heritage. While it is unlikely that the Scottish Government would prioritise developing independent primary legislation for World Heritage protection, there may be opportunities to follow England in formalising the status of World Heritage as part of a wider bill with relations to the historic environment. Failing that, there may be an argument for more extensive reference to World Heritage in future iterations of NPF4 to emphasise both the very high level of significance of WHSs and also their potential to contribute to wider spatial planning, cultural, social and economic strategies.
- **Increase capability for handling WH-related planning applications.** Within HES there is a need to ensure that planning and development advice are consistently informed by a sound understanding of the special requirements of World Heritage, notably through fostering best practice in the assessment of development impacts on Outstanding Universal Value, and on developing understanding of World Heritage

at local level and especially in local authorities. Develop regular and ongoing training targeted at understanding impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Sites.

- **Ensure that attributes and elements of attributes are consistently and effectively defined for all Scotland's WHSs.** Attributes and their elements form the critical bridge between fairly generic statements of OUV and the concrete elements of the site that require protection. As a relatively recent addition to the requirements for the description of WHSs, attributes are not always available and when available often take different forms. Attributes and related elements should be identified and agreed for all World Heritage Sites in Scotland. Their specific form will need to accommodate the particularities of individual sites while retaining as much conceptual and structural commonality as reasonably practicable.

Theme 5: The funding and financing of World Heritage

- **Consistent funding contributions towards the cost of all WHS coordinators should continue to be provided through the regular HES WH budget but should be made more equitable and transparent,** and used as a lever for securing consistent standards of coordination. The funding should be partial, with the balance coming from other stakeholders, with relative contributions being made on an equitable basis and formalised as part of a broader Memorandum of Understanding for the management of the individual site. To maintain equity and transparency of funding arrangements across PiCs and non-

HES sites, funding should be directed in the same way to PiCs other WHSs: part-funding should come from HES's World Heritage funding stream, while the balance of funding should come either entirely from HES's PiC budget or, ideally, at least in part from the local authority through which the coordinator would be employed, if the recommendation on the employment of coordinators within local authorities is followed.

- **Ensure that current funding is maintained or enhanced, but that funding mechanisms provide grants in a way that is transparent, accountable and appropriately allocated.** The evidence suggests that the funding that HES directs towards individual WHSs is much needed. However, there is a need for a more consistent and transparent system. This could either be accomplished by strengthening the current World Heritage funding stream, by formally allocating some funding currently moving through the main grants process to World Heritage; or by folding all grants into the main grant scheme, with appropriate weighting given to the high significance of WHSs and the WH team helping potential WH applicants to navigate the grants system effectively. It may also be beneficial to take into account sites' potential to thrive and contribute to sustainable development of the local economy. This is particularly relevant to WHSs like New Lanark, where the managing organisation is confronting substantial financial challenges, but also makes an important contribution to the area visitor economy and employment, as well as to the provision of affordable housing and commercial property space.

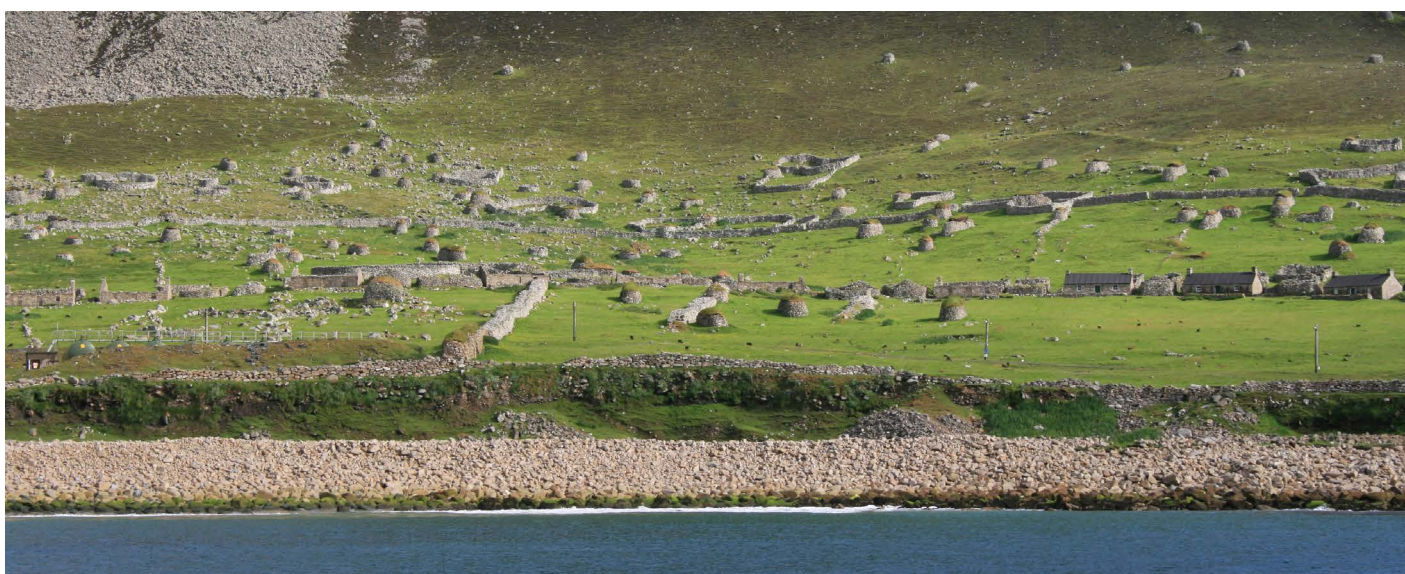


Figure 19

6

Annex A: State Party Responsibilities under the World Heritage Convention

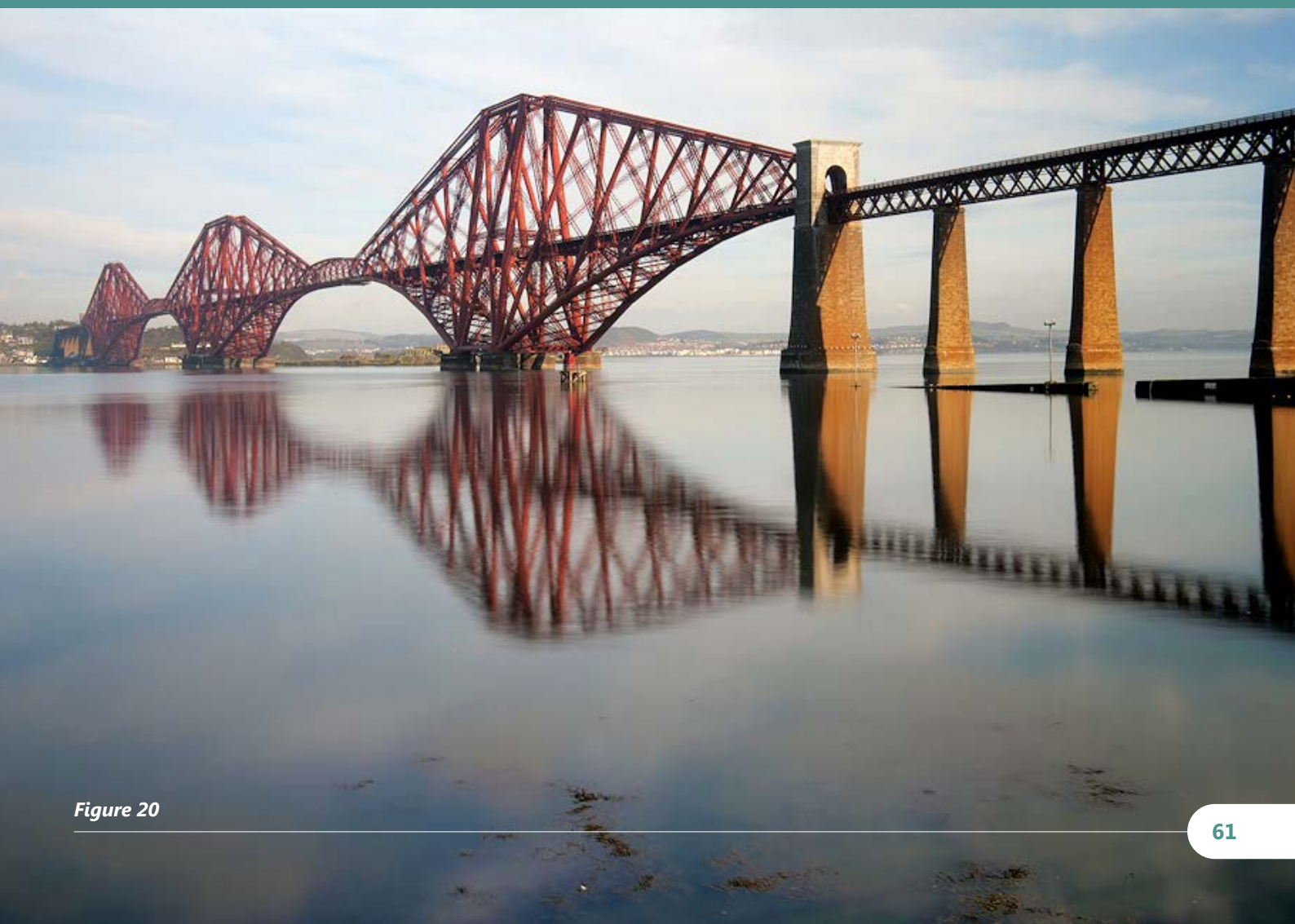


Figure 20

Annex A: State Party Responsibilities under the World Heritage Convention

The text of the 1972 World Heritage Convention sets out the binding commitments under international law that are taken on by its signatories or 'States Parties'. These are encapsulated in summary phrases that occur throughout the text of the Convention in a limited number of variant forms, each with three, four or five terms. Three of these terms, 'protection, conservation and presentation', recur in all instances and appear alone in the preamble and section (e) of Article 5, which sets out the detailed requirements taken on State Parties. These are supplemented by 'identification' in all other instances apart from Article 24. This article mentions the three core terms along with 'rehabilitation', which also appears in Article 5 section (d) and in a series of sections dealing with conditions for the provision of International Assistance by the World Heritage Committee and World Heritage Fund: Article 13 section 2, 22 sections (a) and (c), and 23. Finally, Article 4, which gives a summary of the overall responsibilities of the States Party, also includes 'transmission to future generations'.

These five terms can be extrapolated as follows:

- 1** Identify and delineate heritage sites and monuments with OUV and nominate them for inclusion on the World Heritage List.
- 2** Protect World Heritage, principally through ensuring it has a legal, regulatory, contractual, planning, institutional and/or traditional status sufficient to ensure it is safeguarded.
- 3** Conserve World Heritage Sites by understanding cultural heritage and knowing its history and meaning, and materially safeguarding it, as well as by restoring and enhancing it as needed, and ensuring appropriate management approaches, personnel, knowledge skills and understanding are in place.
- 4** Present the sites and World Heritage in general to the public, so that they can be accessed, appreciated, and understood appropriately by local and wider populations.
- 5** Rehabilitate the site, through appropriate restoration and enhancement while maintaining its authenticity and integrity, in accordance with good conservation practice.
- 6** Transmit the site to future generations with its Outstanding Universal Value as far as possible intact.

Article 5 of the Convention specifies in more detail the concrete actions and measures enjoined upon States Parties to realise the imperatives to 'protect, conserve and present':

- A** adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes;
- B** set up within its territories, where such services do not exist, one or more services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and possessing the means to discharge their functions;
- C** develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the State capable of counteracting the dangers that threaten its cultural or natural heritage;
- D** take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage; and
- E** foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field.

The Operational Guidelines provide an additional more detailed list by collating all requirements of States Parties, drawn both from the Convention and subsequent declaration, agreements and instruments. This comprises 15 separate points:

- A** ensure the identification, nomination, protection, conservation, presentation, and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage found within their territory, and give help in these tasks to other States Parties that request it;
- B** adopt general policies to give the heritage a function in the life of the community;
- C** integrate heritage protection into comprehensive planning programmes and coordination mechanisms, giving consideration in particular to the resilience of socio-ecological systems of properties;
- D** establish services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the heritage;
- E** develop scientific and technical studies to identify actions that would counteract the dangers that threaten the heritage;
- F** take appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures to protect the heritage;
- G** foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the heritage and encourage scientific research in these fields;
- H** not take any deliberate measures that directly or indirectly damage their heritage or that of another State Party to the Convention;
- I** submit to the World Heritage Committee an inventory of properties suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List (referred to as a Tentative List);
- J** make regular contributions to the World Heritage Fund, the amount of which is determined by the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention;
- K** consider and encourage the establishment of national, public and private foundations or associations to facilitate donations for the protection of World Heritage;
- L** give assistance to international fundraising campaigns for the World Heritage Fund;

M use educational and information programmes to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, and to keep the public informed of the dangers threatening this heritage;

N provide information to the World Heritage Committee on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the state of conservation of properties; and

O contribute to and comply with the sustainable development objectives, including gender equality, in the World Heritage processes and in their heritage conservation and management systems.

It is of interest to note that in spite of the checklist's comprehensiveness, the word 'rehabilitation' does not occur either within it or anywhere else in the Operational Guidelines. The nearest synonym in the Operational Guidelines is 'restoration', which itself is used in a carefully qualified way. This is likely to reflect concerns about excessive restoration or reconstruction of cultural heritage, with its risks to the integrity and, especially, the authenticity of heritage sites. In addition, the Operational Guidelines make use of a broad definition of 'conservation' that embraces 'all efforts designed to understand cultural heritage, know its history and meaning, ensure its material safeguard and, as required, its presentation, restoration and enhancement.'

In addition, UNESCO has identified five strategic outcomes that the Convention is intended to support:

- **Credibility:** ensure that there is a comprehensive and balanced World Heritage List;
- **Conservation:** ensure the effective conservation of World Heritage properties;
- **Capacity-building:** promote the development of effective capacity building measures including assistance for preparing the nomination of properties to the World Heritage List, for the understanding and implementation of the World Heritage convention and related instruments;
- **Communication:** increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication;
- **Communities:** enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

While these do not directly describe State Party responsibilities, in many respects they correlate closely with them. 'Credibility' relates to ensuring that the processes of identification and nomination are working as they should. 'Conservation' corresponds directly to the same category in the States Parties' responsibilities, but is used in a broad sense that must also include those aims and actions related to protection. 'Communication' is essentially the same as the obligation to 'Present' World Heritage, but with the resulting positive outcomes more overtly defined. 'Communities' relates closely to the sustainable development objectives mentioned under o) in the Operational Guidelines list.

Drawing on both these, the latest edition of the Operational Guidelines sets out a list of areas for gathering information on the application of the Convention within the States Parties' periodic reporting. This includes some areas of evidence gathering that extend beyond the immediate requirements of the Convention or relate to international obligations that are beyond the scope of the analysis presented here; when these are excluded there are nine core areas for reporting:

- 1 Tentative list
- 2 Nominations
- 3 General policy development
- 4 Inventories and registers of natural and cultural heritage
- 5 Status of services for protection, conservation and presentation
- 6 Financial status and human resources
- 7 Capacity development
- 8 Policy and resourcing of World Heritage properties
- 9 Education, information, and awareness building

For individual properties, there is also a requirement to report on:

- 1 Protection and management
- 2 Financial and human resources
- 3 Scientific studies and research projects
- 4 Education, information and awareness building
- 5 Visitor management
- 6 Monitoring
- 7 Identification of property management needs

There is also valuable insight into the expectations for governance and management arrangements for individual sites to be gained from UNESCO's Enhancing our Heritage 2.0 toolkit (2023). This includes twelve tools, each relating to a distinct area of management:

- **Tool 1:** Values, attributes and management objectives – assesses the understanding of the values and attributes of the World Heritage property or other heritage place, and whether existing management objectives are appropriate to guide the management system.
- **Tool 2:** Factors affecting the property – assesses if factors that affect or could potentially affect the property or heritage place are known, well understood and documented. It also analyses the adequateness of management measures for the identified factors.
- **Tool 3:** Boundaries, buffer zones and wider setting – assesses different aspects of the configuration of the World Heritage property or other heritage place to examine their appropriateness, as well the interactions between the property, its buffer zone and wider setting.
- **Tool 4:** Governance arrangements – assesses if the roles and responsibilities of different managers are clearly defined, if there is effective coordination between them, and the level of engagement of rights-holders in the management of the property or other heritage place.
- **Tool 5:** Legal, regulatory and customary framework – assesses how policies, legislation, customary practices and other legal and regulatory instruments are used to manage the property or other heritage place.

- **Tool 6:** Management planning framework – provides an overview of the effectiveness of the planning framework and assesses the adequacy of the management plan or other main planning instrument used to guide management.
- **Tool 7:** Needs and inputs – assesses if current human capacity and financial, material and technological resources are adequate to effectively manage the property or other heritage place.
- **Tool 8:** Management processes – assesses the appropriateness of management processes by examining if there are policies and procedures in place to ensure that processes are implemented according to good practices and desired standards.
- **Tool 9:** Implementation of management measures – assesses progress in implementing the management plan, subsidiary plans, and relevant work programmes.
- **Tool 10:** Outputs – Monitoring productivity – assesses the delivery of outputs resulting from the implementation of planned actions, routine work and management processes.
- **Tool 11:** Outcomes – monitoring state of conservation – examines whether monitoring programmes are adequate to assess the state of conservation of the property and if its values are being maintained.
- **Tool 12:** Review of management effectiveness assessment results – summarizes the findings of the assessment and helps to prioritize future follow-up actions.³⁵

These tools indirectly provide insight into UNESCO's expectations of effective management at the level of individual sites. Such detailed analysis is beyond the remit of the current research project but the tools do provide the broad categories of activity that analysis should focus on.

By combining the formal requirements of the World Heritage Convention, with the expectations set out in the Operational Guidelines and toolkit guidance, and the kinds of outcomes implied by the 'five Cs' objectives defined for World Heritage, and then removing duplications and crossovers, it is possible to produce a concise but comprehensive overview of the requirements for the governance and management of World Heritage by States Parties.

Although ultimately a synthesis of, rather than a replacement for, these formal obligations and guidelines, it provides a helpful and cohesive

framework for defining the processes and outcomes that responsible bodies, agencies and other stakeholders should collectively support:

- 1** Identify and delineate heritage properties with OUV and nominate them for inclusion on the World Heritage List, with special regard to maintaining a balanced and credible list:
 - identify properties with Outstanding Universal Value, without biases towards any particular types of property or heritage-
 - submit to the World Heritage Committee an inventory of properties suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List (referred to as a Tentative List);
 - nominate suitable properties for inscription to help build a credible and balanced list.
- 2** Protect World Heritage through ensuring appropriate legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks are in place to protect cultural and natural heritage, and where appropriate for World Heritage specifically:
 - refrain from any deliberate measures that directly or indirectly damage their heritage or that of another State Party to the Convention;
 - adopt general policies to give the heritage a function in the life of the community;
 - integrate heritage protection into comprehensive planning programmes and coordination mechanisms, giving consideration in particular to the resilience of socio-ecological systems of properties;
 - have in place one or more appropriately resourced services for the protection and interpretation of the cultural and natural heritage;
 - take appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures to protect the heritage;
 - consider and encourage the establishment of national, public and private foundations or associations to facilitate donations for the protection of World Heritage.

35. UNESCO, *Enhancing our Heritage 2.0* (2023), p. 2.

- 3** Conserve World Heritage by taking practical care of properties but also by ensuring all the necessary supporting factors are in place to enable this, whether scientific, technical, legal or administrative. For World Heritage this is primarily assured by having appropriate management services and systems in place:
 - have in place one or more appropriately resourced services for the conservation and interpretation of the cultural and natural heritage;
 - ensure that appropriate management structures and arrangements are in place for each World Heritage, through the production and implementation of a documented management system, usually in the form of a management plan, which should identify factors with the potential to affect the heritage, assures appropriate visitor management
 - develop scientific and technical studies to identify actions that would counteract the dangers that threaten the heritage;
- 4** Present and communicate the importance of the sites and World Heritage in general to the public, ensuring that they can be accessed, appreciated, and understood appropriately by local and wider populations.
 - use educational and information programmes to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, and to keep the public informed of the dangers threatening this heritage.
 - Engage communities to ensure that they are empowered to become involved with and to influence the management of World Heritage.
- 5** Capacity-build, to ensure that necessary technical, scientific and administrative expertise and support is in place to achieve the other key aims:
 - foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the heritage and encourage scientific research in these fields;
 - strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviours of people with direct responsibilities for heritage conservation and management;
 - improve institutional structures and processes through empowering decision-makers and policy-makers;
 - introduce a more dynamic relationship between heritage and its context and, in turn, greater reciprocal benefits by a more inclusive approach.
- 6** Resource World Heritage 'to the utmost' in order to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit it to future generations.
- 7** Develop sustainably – ensure that development within WHS is sustainable for the benefit of local, national and international communities so as to:
 - sustain heritage, considered as an end in itself, and as part of the environmental/cultural resources that should be protected and transmitted to future generations to guarantee their development;
 - draw on the potential contribution that heritage and heritage conservation can make to the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development;
 - contribute to and comply with UNESCO's sustainable development objectives, including gender equality, in the World Heritage processes and in their heritage conservation and management systems.
- 8** Monitor and report on the state of World Heritage to the World Heritage Committee, in order to identify actual or potential change that threatens OUV or the state of conservation of a WHS and in particular:
 - provide six-yearly periodic state of conservation reporting; and
 - monitor WHSs to identify actual or potential change that threatens their OUV or their state of conservation and reactively report such threats to the World Heritage Committee.

6.2 Overarching objectives, structures and processes

The World Heritage Committee consists of 21 State Party representatives elected by the General Assembly of the Convention's State Parties. Its role is:

- To compile and maintain a World Heritage List of properties with OUV
- Formally inscribe or de-inscribe them as appropriate
- Maintain a 'list of World Heritage in Danger'
- Receive and make decisions on requests for international assistance
- Decide on its order of priorities

Each year, the World Heritage Committee elects seven of its members to act as the World Heritage Bureau.

At the highest level the Committee is advised by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) (for cultural heritage) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (natural heritage), with ICOMOS in turn supported by 110 national committees and IUCN by varied national, regional and interregional committees.³⁶ The World Heritage Committee is also supported by its secretariat, the World Heritage Centre, appointed by the UNESCO director-general and based at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

6.3 Governance and management principles

The obligations of the World Heritage Convention imply a need for exemplary governance and management arrangements for World Heritage Sites (WHS). According to UNESCO, both international actors – the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and Centre – and national organisations in the form of central and local governments, private trusts, site-specific private owners, community groups, and traditional owners must share the primary responsibility for the governance and management of each site. Implementing agencies and funding agencies, consultancy services, and public authorities outside the heritage sector are listed as common sources of secondary support.³⁷

At the national level, Governance and management structures should support these overarching requirements and ensure that they can be implemented effectively. The World Heritage Committee and Centre have set out a basic framework for governance and management structures in the Operational Guidelines. UNESCO also provides specific guidance on important aspects of World Heritage Site management, notably in the form of resource manuals and guidance documents on managing cultural and natural heritage, on assessing the effectiveness of heritage management systems, on impact assessment for proposed changes with the potential to affect the OUV of World Heritage Sites, and on managing disaster risks.³⁸

States Parties are required to go through a cyclical process of Periodic Reporting, outlining their implementation of the World Heritage Convention for each WHS in their territory. For European sites, the latest data available dates from 2022-23 and was examined by the World Heritage Committee in 2024.³⁹ They are also required to 'submit specific reports and impact studies each time exceptional circumstances occur or work is undertaken which may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property or its state of conservation'.⁴⁰

36. UNESCO, 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention', paras 30–37.

37. UNESCO, 71.

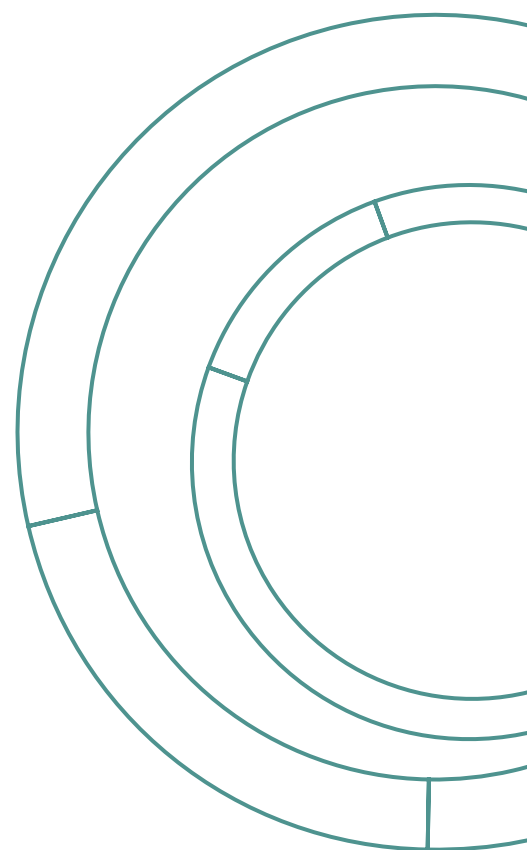
38. UNESCO, *Managing Natural World Heritage* (June 2012); *idem.*, *Managing Cultural World Heritage* (November 2013); *idem.*, *Enhancing our Heritage Toolkit 2.0* (2023); *idem.*, *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* (July 2022); *idem.*, *Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage* (June 2010).

39. UNESCO, 'Periodic Reporting'.

40. 'Operational Guidelines': 56, section 169.

Within each State, the individual sites should have appropriate management systems in place. Some of these may be part of broader national systems of heritage management and protection; others will operate specifically at the level of the individual sites. UNESCO has identified common elements that make up an effective management system. These elements include: a shared understanding of the site by all stakeholders and their involvement; a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback; monitoring of the impacts of trends and proposed interventions; the allocation of necessary resources and capacity-building; accountability and transparency in the way the management system operates; and a cycle of short-, medium- and long-term actions to protect and conserve the site.⁴¹

As a UNESCO requirement, each site must operate under an appropriate management plan or documented management system, providing a shared framework for the active conservation, management, and enhancement of a site.⁴² However, given the diverse character of each WHS and the different needs arising from each site's locale and available resources, UNESCO does not give specific guidance on the concrete manifestation of the operational structures in each site. Institutional frameworks under which the sites operate can therefore vary considerably. Furthermore, UNESCO emphasises organisational decentralisation as an important factor: decision-making should be as close as possible to the site itself and local communities involved.⁴³ Implementing agencies and funding agencies, consultancy services, and public authorities outside the heritage sector are listed as common sources of secondary support.⁴⁴ Where multiple organisations make up the institutional framework – which is the case for most WHS in Scotland – close attention should be paid to the problem of waste of resources due to overlap and poor accountability, which are liable to occur as the organisational frameworks increase in complexity. An integrated approach that focuses on stakeholder involvement and participation is seen as core feature of sustainability. Institutional guidelines should also reflect the values of empowerment and inclusion; a management system should not generate any passive stakeholders without a voice.⁴⁵



41. UNESCO, 34.

42. UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines 2023*: 34, section 108; 'Managing Cultural World Heritage': 33;

43. UNESCO, 72.

44. UNESCO, 71.

45. UNESCO, 72.



Figure 21

7

Annex B: References

Annex B: References

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