AHF Transforming Heritage

Transforming Places through Heritage programme Interim Report — Year 2

December 2021

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Contents

Executive Summary

This report provides an interim evaluation of the Architectural Heritage Fund's *Transforming Places through Heritage* (TPtH) programme following two years of grant-making. The programme, funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, opened for grant applications on 1st July 2019 with the first batch of awards approved by AHF's Grants Panel on 24th September 2019. This report covers the period to 30th September 2021, during which a total of **224 grant offers** were made, amounting to over **£9 million**, benefiting 167 charities and social enterprises and 184 different building projects in towns and cities in every region of England. (See Appendix 1 for maps showing the geographical distribution of each grant type.)

The table overleaf provides a breakdown of grant-making by type, including the number of grant offers made compared to original expectations. The two right-hand columns indicate the total number of grants that had been fully claimed following completion of the grant-funded work and the total amount disbursed (which includes partly disbursed grants that had not yet been completed by the end of September 2021). Overall, the programme is on track to deliver the intended level of investment in projects, with the number of grants awarded by type largely matching expectations for this stage of the programme.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the programme's immediate delivery has been fairly limited, despite the economic and social disruption it caused from March 2020 onwards. However, projects have been delayed and face greater uncertainty than pre-pandemic, uncertainty that is likely to last for some time. In addition to the Covid Emergency Support Grants made to a small number of grantees in need, the direct impact of the pandemic is evident in the lower than expected number of completed grants. The impact of Covid is explored in further detail below but, in summary, most projects are progressing despite delays and most beneficiary organisations still consider themselves to be sustainable operations.

This report focusses on performance to date against each of the programme's five **Critical Success Factors**, outlined on page 6 below. As this is the second interim report it offers only a partial picture but with an increasing amount of data available from grantee exit surveys, submitted on completion of grant-funded work, it is possible to start assessing the overall impact of the programme. At this stage we are confident the programme will achieve its objectives.

Executive Summary

Table 1: TPtH grants offered and disbursed by type, to 30 September 2021

	Number of Offers		Amount Offered		Completed and Disbursed	
Grant type	**Planned**	**Actual**	**Total Value**	**Average**	**No.**	**Value***
Project Viability Grant	95	99	£1,319,930	£13,333	41	£561,862
Project Development Grant	70	74	£3,024,096	£40,866	17	£992,859
Capital	15	15	£3,300,427	£220,028	4	£1,813,698
Crowdfunding Challenge Grant	23	10	£222,480	£22,248	7	£167,152
Heritage Development Trusts	3	7	£717,458	n/a	0	£366,324
Community Shares Booster	9	12	£331,650	n/a	12	£331,650
Covid Emergency Support Grants	0	7	£105,000	£15,000	5	£75,000
TOTAL	**215**	**224**	**£9,021,041**		**86**	**£4,308,545**
**amounts include partly disbursed grants in addition to completed grants*						

1. Formal opening of 160 King Street, Great Yarmouth with Eileen Eastaugh-Mascoll (left), owner of social enterprise restaurant Jamaikan Mi' Hungry, and Caroline Dinenage MP, Heritage Minister. The project was awarded a £350,000 TPtH capital grant.

Transforming Places through Heritage

Programme Overview

The **Transforming Places through Heritage** (TPtH) programme supports projects led by charities and social enterprises that have the potential to contribute to the transformation of high streets and town centres in England. It is funded by a grant from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and is part of a wider initiative to revive heritage high streets in England, alongside Historic England's *High Streets Heritage Action Zones*. Together, these programmes form part of the Future High Streets Fund, administered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government). Further information on priorities and eligibility, including the Programme Guide, is provided on the AHF website. Grants offered through the programme are summarised as follows:

Grant type	Purpose
Project Viability Grants (up to £15,000)	To explore options and test whether potential uses will be viable, including assessment of building condition and repair needs, community consultation, fundraising strategy.
Project Development Grants (up to £100,000)	Once viability broadly established, development of business case for preferred option and detailed technical designs.
Transformational Project Grants (up to £350,000)	Capital grants to cover the cost of building acquisition, repair and conservation work and associated fees as well as work required to enable 'meanwhile' use or change of use, including services and fit-out.
Crowdfunding Challenge Grants (up to £25,000)	For development or capital costs or both, matching the amount raised through a crowdfunding campaign.
Community Shares Booster (up to £50,000 equity)	Grants to develop community share offers and equity investments to match the amount raised in Community Shares. Administered by our partners Co-operatives UK.

In addition to the grants listed above, the TPtH programme includes revenue funding for organisational capacity building for a select group of pilot 'Heritage Development Trusts', an events programme (*Open High Streets*) led by the Heritage Trust Network and expert advice and mentoring support for projects delivered through a national framework of consultant Project Advisers.

TPtH differs from the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) and High Streets Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZ) programmes in that **TPtH is targeted primarily at individual historic buildings in, or transferring to, community ownership**. It aims to support projects led by charities and social enterprises; local authorities are not eligible to apply for funding. In contrast, FHSF and HSHAZ are place-based regeneration initiatives targeted at local authorities (all except two HSHAZs are local authority-led).

Covid Emergency Support Grants

At the height of the Covid pandemic and the national lockdowns in spring and summer 2020, much of the third sector, along with the wider economy, was focussed on survival rather than capacity building. Many organisations had to set aside work on new projects while they focussed on staying afloat. Even following unprecedented intervention by the UK Government, including emergency funding, the resilience of the charities and social enterprises supported through the programme was severely tested. A significant minority of TPtH-funded organisations were able to access funding from sources such as the Culture Recovery Fund. Part of the TPtH budget was also reallocated so a limited number of Covid Emergency Support Grants could be offered. One example, the Marlowe Kit, is outlined on page 13. In addition to these grants, it was important to take a flexible approach in managing existing grants, allowing projects extra time to complete the work for which a grant had been offered.

2. Former Pack's department store in the High Street Heritage Action Zone, Ryde, Isle of Wight: Shademakers UK, one of Europe's leading carnival groups, aims to develop and reopen the building as a creative and cultural space, 'Department'. A £68,000 Project Development Grant has been awarded.

Programme Performance: Critical Success Factors

The following sections of the report set out how the programme is achieving its objectives, as measured against the five 'Critical Success Factors' (CSFs), which guide all grant-making activity and other initiatives being delivered through the programme. The CSFs were identified as part of the development of the programme business case and all five are considered essential in order for the programme to achieve both AHF's strategic objectives and the priorities of the Future High Streets Fund:

- CSF1: To maximise regeneration benefits of local areas and high streets, assisting in making high streets and town centres fit for the future
- CSF2: To protect, enhance and safeguard historic buildings across England, offering viable new uses for disused and under-utilised high street properties
- CSF3: To build capacity within local community groups, social enterprise and charities
- CSF4: Piloting innovative, alternative uses, ownership structures and investment models to facilitate long term regeneration
- CSF5: To maximise the positive social impacts around restoring historic buildings.

3. Formal opening of the Hat Works, Luton: a £280,000 Transformational Project Grant contributed to a £1.7m project, including major grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England.

Critical Success Factor 1:

To maximise regeneration benefits of local areas and high streets, assisting in making high streets and town centres fit for the future

TPtH is a project-level programme that seeks to contribute positively to place-based regeneration programmes underway or planned across England. In particular, we have sought to invest where High Streets Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZs) are in place and in towns awarded funding from the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). Although TPtH grants cannot be directly matched with funds from these sources, by co-investing with other agencies in places where local authorities are implementing regeneration strategies we can help to build a critical mass of projects in town centres which will make a bigger and lasting impact overall.

To date, the TPtH programme has supported projects in 23 (32%) of the 72 places benefiting from FHSF investment, listed in the table below. Additionally, projects in 19 (28%) of the 67 High Street Heritage Action Zones have been supported through TPtH. In some places more than one project has been funded, such as Hexham, where grants have been awarded to Hexham Community-led Housing and Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust. The towns underlined in the table below are those where the pilot Heritage Development Trusts are working on projects.

In addition to the FHSF announcements made this year, in July 2021 the UK Government confirmed the 101 places that would benefit from Towns Deal funding. TPtH grants have been awarded to projects in 29 of these towns to date. Though not directly targeted at high streets, this and other recently announced funding streams can offer opportunities for 'shovel ready' TPtH-supported projects to secure capital investment.

Some towns will benefit from significant investment from more than one of these programmes. Great Yarmouth, for example, has been awarded £20.1m from the Towns Deal, £13.7m from the Future High Streets Fund and a £1.9m HSHAZ scheme. Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust will be an important delivery partner, working with the local authority and the wider cultural sector.

Given that high streets and town centres are typically dominated by properties in private and public sector ownership, between a quarter and a third of the places described above feature community-led projects supported through the TPtH programme. Our grants have enabled projects led by charities and social enterprises to develop detailed proposals and be included in Town Investment Plans and other local authority bids for major Government funding.

Table 2: Towns benefiting from Future High Streets Fund and HSHAZ investment and where TPtH grants have been awarded to projects

Future High Street Fund		High Street Heritage Action Zones	
Barnsley	Rotherham	Bacup	Ramsgate
Barnstaple	Sheffield	Barnsley	Reading
Crewe	Stretford	Burnley	Redruth
Great Yarmouth	Sunderland	Coventry	Ryde
Grimsby	Swindon	Croydon	Skipton
High Wycombe	Tottenham	Gloucester	Sowerby Bridge
Kidderminster	Trowbridge	Great Yarmouth	Woolwich
Middlesbrough	Winsford	Harlesden	
Northampton	Wigan	Hastings	
Paignton	Woolwich	Hexham	
Penzance	Yeovil	Lowestoft	
Ramsgate		Middlesbrough	

Case studies

The Buttermarket and Mining Exchange, Redruth, Cornwall

A project led by a local social enterprise in the heart of a High Street Heritage Action Zone, this Grade II listed complex developed between the 1820s-1880s on the historic site of the town market. It consists of linked two-storey buildings around a porticoed courtyard. Redruth Revival CIC is aiming to create a thriving economic, cultural and community hub, with workspace for approximately 50 people in 28 units, alongside an active programme of markets and entertainment. A TPtH Project Development Grant was awarded alongside a National Lottery Heritage Fund development grant.

Grants awarded:

£7,000 Project Viability Grant

£59,850 Project Development Grant

£250,000 Transformational Project Grant

4.

Stanley Halls, South Norwood, London Borough of Croydon

The Edwardian Stanley Halls hosted an array of performances, community events, educational classes, exhibitions and political debates throughout the 20th century. Stanley Arts was set up by the local community to save and restore the neglected Halls after they fell out of use, securing the lease in 2015 following a four-year campaign in one of the country's first community asset transfers. It is working to revive the complex as a cultural centre that combines performing arts, heritage activities, and community events with working space for a community of resident artists, charities and social enterprises. The building is now located in the South Norwood High Street Heritage Action Zone and the charity is the lead delivery partner for heritage engagement work within the Zone.

Grants awarded:

£3,000 Project Viability Grant

£27,272 Project Development Grant

£59,450 Project Development Grant

£60,500 Transformational Project Grant

5.

Critical Success Factor 2:

To protect, enhance and safeguard historic buildings across England, offering viable new uses for disused and underutilised high street properties

We are measuring the programme's success against CSF2 by tracking how projects achieve milestones on the route towards the operational stage as a result of TPtH grants and advice. One of these milestones is securing ownership of the building, if the grantee does not already own it. 'Ownership' is defined as the freehold or a long lease (ideally, at least 99 years but at least 25 years) on the project building.

Supporting building acquisition

This programme aims to facilitate community ownership of historic high street and town centre properties. Our funding supports projects at various stages in this process, such as helping develop the business case for acquisition from local authorities or in negotiations with private owners. Our grants also support third sector organisations who are the long-term owners of historic buildings, or who have recently secured ownership, but need development and capital funding to make repairs or adaptations or introduce new uses to make the building sustainable.

Responses to 69 grant exit surveys completed by the end of September 2021 indicated that **45% of the projects supported were enabled to secure ownership of a building as a result of TPtH funding** (through new acquisitions or supporting existing ownership). Private owners often set unrealistic prices for buildings, even when there is a 'conservation deficit' as a result of the costs of repair exceeding the end value. Securing funding for the purchase of buildings remains a significant challenge and too many potentially viable reuse projects falter at this stage. The transfer of assets from local authorities for nil value with a peppercorn rent still represents a minority of acquisitions. In this context, the rate of completed acquisitions is encouraging.

Projects' progress through development stages

Table 3 below indicates how funded projects reported their status at the point of submission of their final grant drawdown. **79% of grantees considered their projects were ready to move to the next stage of development** following completion of their grant-funded work. Only one project was judged to be unviable, which prevented further resources being expended on development work.

Broken down by grant type, 93% (37 out of 41) of projects completing viability were ready to move forward to the next stage of development but only 54% (13 out of 24) of Project Development Grants and Crowdfunding Challenge Grants were ready to move on to the capital works or operational stage – reflecting the fact that this stage is associated with the development and submission of funding bids, which can be very prolonged, especially where multi-stage applications are required. Of the 15 capital grants, 4 had completed capital works by the end of the reporting period and were ready to be operational.

Table 3: TPtH-funded projects' development stage at grant exit survey

	Grant type		
Project status	PVG	PDG CCG	Cap
Not viable	1	0	0
Stalled	2	0	0
Development	37	11	0
Capital works	1	9	0
Operational	0	4	4
Total	**41**	**24**	**4**

Case studies

The Branch, Market Place, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

The Branch is a vacant Grade II listed former bank branch. TPtH grants have enabled the Branch Trust to develop a proposal which draws together multiple statutory and voluntary agencies working under one roof to support the local community. The building will include meeting and training rooms for drop-in surgeries with local agencies, training workshops, debt counselling, IT and job search support, youth activities, carer & toddler groups, clubs for isolated older people, parenting courses, domestic abuse recovery, bereavement counselling and addiction support. It aspires to be a model of community collaboration and engagement that could be replicated elsewhere. During the Covid pandemic, the building has been used as a hub to distribute 40,000 meals to vulnerable and isolated people.*

Grants awarded:

£15,000 Project Viability Grant

£74,732 Project Development Grant

£100,000 Transformational Project Grant

6.

Provision House, 80-81 High Street, Dudley, West Midlands

This Art Deco department store was originally a Co-operative emporium from 1939 to 1983. Vacated by its last tenant in 2018, local charity Provision House took over the ground floor to provide services to people in need, including a social supermarket and a volunteer training programme. A Project Viability Grant was awarded in March 2020 to explore how it could expand onto the upper floors and establish a 'Headquarters of Help', including a community café and co-working spaces, giving its 50+ partner agencies access to the resources it would provide. Shortly after the grant award the need for the charity's services was brought into sharp relief by the onset of the Covid pandemic and the charity's resources were diverted into expanding its food bank and other essential services.

Grant awarded:

£15,000 Project Viability Grant

7.

Critical Success Factor 3:

To build capacity within local community groups, social enterprise and charities

The programme supports capacity building largely through its early-stage grants, as described further below. Alongside this, our consultant Project Advisers are deployed to provide additional guidance and mentoring to projects at various stages if required. These are supplemented by a dedicated capacity building events programme, *Open High Streets*, targeted at organisations planning or delivering projects. Capacity building is also a core component of our pilot Heritage Development Trusts initiative which is covered in the next section.

Capacity building through grant-making

68% of grant recipients completing exit surveys reported that the TPtH funding awarded had enabled capacity building in their organisation. This increases to 76% for projects in receipt of Project Viability Grants (PVGs) and highlights the important role of early stage funding in helping organisations gain and retain skills, particularly those relatively inexperienced in fundraising and project development, but includes organisations that may be highly effective in providing services in their specialist field, or running a cultural or community venue, but have never previously worked on historic building projects. The added value of PVGs in particular is neatly illustrated by a beneficiary who outlined in the grant exit survey how the grant had helped their charity:

- *"It introduced us to the complexities of grant processes and paperwork;*
- *"Advice from the officer was very useful in scoping our expectations on what would be practicable;*
- *"The grant enabled us to introduce professional consultants into the mix to advise on points outside our experience;*
- *It stretched the trustees to think more strategically."*

Open High Streets capacity building programme

Open High Streets is a series of events delivered by our partners Heritage Trust Network, Locality and Stir to Action. Originally planned as 'in person' workshops to be hosted in venues across England that offered live examples of repurposed historic buildings, the programme was switched to online-only in March 2020. This has made the programme more accessible by removing the need to travel to physical events and video recordings of each event are also available to view online. Positive feedback from participants has emphasised their value, which support peer-to-peer learning as well as learning from experienced practitioners on specific themes. The first 'in person' event was delivered in Lincoln on 24th September 2021, on the topic *High Street regeneration: finding the right strategy* and included a tour of Lincoln's HSHAZ and Heritage Lincolnshire's Greyfriars project.

Capacity building is an important element of the TPtH programme because most grantees are embarking upon their first project involving the repair and reuse of an historic building. In some cases the beneficiary organisations are themselves newly established (such as The Arcade Dewsbury, see page 12) and TPtH grants are the first funding they have secured. Usually, however, they are charities or social enterprises from outside the heritage sector that see value in delivering services from an historic high street building. The programme's beneficiaries also include specialist building conservation charities with a track record of delivering multiple projects; this includes four of the seven pilot Heritage Development Trusts. Here, the capacity building is derived more from being part of a peer group and targeted governance support than through individual grants.

Case studies

The Marlowe Kit, Canterbury, Kent

The Marlowe Trust plans to acquire the 12th-century Poor Priests' Hospital and convert it into a learning centre (named 'The Kit', after Christopher Marlowe) hosting their creative workshops, youth theatre, associate schools programme and planned co-delivery of Canterbury College's Performing Arts course. A Project Viability Grant was awarded but the theatre closed soon after, in March 2020, and by December it had had to cancel or refund 40,000 tickets, resulting in a loss of 97% of income for the year. 95% of staff had been furloughed and 21% of the staff team made redundant. A Covid Emergency Support Grant enabled the Trust to cover the fixed overheads of the Marlowe Kit for two months, giving the theatre time to re-open and begin generating income, and to commission local spoken word artists – The Rough Cut Poets – to work with the young people in their Youth Theatre to create poems/spoken word in response to the heritage of the medieval building. This helped to strengthen community engagement and to create advocacy and fundraising material for the Kit's development.

Grants awarded:

£14,946 Project Viability Grant

£15,000 Emergency Support Grant

8.

The Arcade, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire

Built in 1899, Dewsbury's listed Arcade was a popular town centre destination for over 100 years. A combination of falling town centre footfall, poor management and lack of investment by absentee owners, saw it empty out and finally close. After lying empty for four years Kirklees Council purchased the site in 2020. A steering group was established which is developing a proposal for the Arcade to be run as a community business. The vision is to create a vibrant space for local and young entrepreneurs, offering affordable units for a mix of retail and cultural activity.

A new community benefit society, The Arcade Dewsbury, is now being set up and this has benefited from a development grant through the Community Shares Booster programme to prepare a community share offer.

Grants awarded:

£15,000 Project Viability Grant

£10,000 Community Shares Booster development grant

9.

Critical Success Factor 4:

Piloting innovative, alternative uses, ownership structures and investment models to facilitate long-term regeneration

Pilot Heritage Development Trusts

The primary means by which the TPtH programme will achieve CSF4 is through the pilot Heritage Development Trusts (HDTs) initiative. The initial four organisations have made significant progress since they were awarded HDT status in December 2019. This is best illustrated in the pace at which each of the HDTs is delivering capital projects in their local areas. Table 5 overleaf provides selected highlights for each HDT. In recognition of the fact that the HDT model offers great potential for regenerating high streets if it was adopted in more towns and cities across England, and that there was known demand in other places, it was decided to expand the initiative. Previous applicants who had been shortlisted but were unsuccessful in the first round in 2019 were invited to submit revised bids for consideration. Consequently, three new HDTs were announced in April 2021. These are summarised below:

Table 4: Summary description of the second cohort of pilot Heritage Development Trusts

Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust (est. 2016)	A charitable community benefit society, the Trust aims to deliver affordable spaces, diverse communities and inclusive neighbourhoods through socially-driven co-ownership. It is one of a group of connected organisations in the Hastings Commons 'ecosystem'. Manages the Hastings Trinity Triangle HSHAZ, one of only two community-led HSHAZs in the country.
Heritage Lab CIC (est. 2018)	A community interest company based in Ramsgate, Kent, looking to deliver its first project. Actively seeking opportunities in the HSHAZ and other parts of town and building partnerships with Ramsgate's creative and heritage sector. TPtH investment will enable it to develop from an entirely volunteer-run to a staffed operation.
Heritage Lincolnshire (est. 1990)	A long-established county-wide building preservation trust with a strong track record of delivering high quality historic building repair and reuse projects. Currently focussed on planning and delivering projects in Boston and Lincoln (in the HSHAZ). TPtH investment will enable it to scale up its operation.

As with the original cohort, these three organisations are benefiting from revenue funding alongside support from Almond Tree Strategic Consulting, which was appointed to undertake a governance review of each organisation and provide on-going organisational development support. This support differs according to the needs of each individual HDT but has included, for example, risk management, strategic planning and policy development (e.g. GDPR; environmental sustainability). A full evaluation in 2023 will assess the distance travelled by each HDT.

The programme also includes communications support from specialist consultants and the development of an online communications toolkit that can be utilised by the HDT group.

Critical Success Factor 4:

Piloting innovative, alternative uses, ownership structures and investment models to facilitate long-term regeneration

Table 5: First cohort of Pilot Heritage Development Trusts – key achievements to date

HDT	Key achievements
Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust	• Recruited new full-time members of staff – Project Manager and Assistant Heritage Officer • Completed repair and conversion of 160 King Street • Converted 26 South Quay into the Yare Gallery • Secured funding and started work on the restoration and re-use of the North West Tower, part of the medieval Town Walls • Repaired Pinnacle Tower in town centre • Purchased former 'Iron Duke' pub, emergency repairs and surveys completed • Purchased 14 King Street • Delivery partner for Towns Deal and Future High Streets Fund; 4 projects being supported through these schemes
Historic Coventry Trust	• Completed phase 1 of HSHAZ Demonstrator project at the Burges and gained planning permission and funding for deculverting of River Sherbourne to create new public space • Completed conversion of 3-5 Priory Row cottages into visitor accommodation (4 units) • Completed conversion of Swanswell Gate & Cook Street Gate into visitor accommodation (2 units) • TPtH capital grant awarded for Whitefriars' Gate • Completed Anglican Chapel in London Road cemetery • Completed repair and conversion of Drapers' Hall and opened as a music venue with winter/spring programme of concerts
Tyne & Wear BPT	• Increased staff capacity through the recruitment of a Business Administrator • Completed the sale of its major property asset, boosting the Trust's financial sustainability through creation of an investment vehicle • Completed the repair and conversion of shell and ground floor of 170-5 High Street West, Sunderland • Progressed with securing partners and funding for 177 High Street West, Sunderland • Expanded its activity into the Hexham HSHAZ, where it is developing a new project at 1 Cattlemarket
Valley Heritage CIO	• Recruited part-time Heritage Projects Officer—first member of staff • Secured all funding required and commenced works on the former Lancashire & Yorkshire Bank project in the Bacup HSHAZ • Actively involved in the Bacup HSHAZ Cultural Consortium which is leading to important partnership opportunities • Expanded activity into Hyndburn Borough to support a project for Hargreaves Warehouse.

Critical Success Factor 5:

To maximise the positive social impacts around restoring historic buildings

Alongside the heritage value of projects, we consider the potential social impact of project proposals. This can be hard to quantify in any project proposal and even more so at the inception or early development stage, which is when most projects apply for TPtH funding. It is also difficult to compare the relative merits of different future uses for buildings: an affordable housing scheme with a refugee education service or a community hub targeting isolated older people, for example. It is not until such places have been in operational use for a year or more that credible social impact measurements can be made.

We are able to assess the relative prosperity of the places where TPtH-supported projects are located, based on the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. **87, or 49%, of the projects funded through the programme to date are located in the top 20% most deprived communities in England (when extended to the top 30% most deprived the figure becomes 63% of projects).**

It is recognised, however, that many of the challenges facing high streets and town centres are shared across every English region. Even in more affluent areas there are communities in need and empty historic properties can be repurposed to provide services which help meet those needs. The Branch project on page 10 is a good example of this. The maps in Appendix 1 show that grant-making has covered a wide geographical area, including economically disadvantaged towns that more recently have been characterised as 'left behind' places, such as coastal towns and traditional manufacturing centres.

The Government's stated intention to 'level up' the country has now been backed up with significant investment in certain priority areas. The next interim report will review how many projects supported through TPtH have secured Levelling Up funding.

Crowdfunding and community shares

Donations and social investment raised directly from members of the community through crowdfunding campaigns and community share offers can be a strong indicator of the community value of a project and its future social impact. The aim of such campaigns is often to raise funds to purchase a building for community use. The people who give or invest are likely to be the future users of the building, especially if it is to be a community space. This method of fundraising has proven to be highly effective for community-owned pubs, shops and venues in particular.

Though there have been fewer applications for Crowdfunding Challenge Grants than originally anticipated, those that have been awarded (ten to date) have supported successful campaigns, indicating that the public's appetite to invest in projects has not diminished despite the impact of Covid. This was also borne out in the success of a number of community share issues which were supported by the Community Shares Booster strand of the programme, having met or exceeded their investment targets. The TPtH programme has funded five development grants and supported seven community share offers with matched investment to date. These included the Fielden Acre project delivered by Calder Valley Community Land Trust in Todmorden, West Yorkshire, which raised £270,000 and The Exchange, Erith (a 'community of makers' taking over a vacant former Carnegie Library) which raised £78,880 from 452 individual investors.

By supporting projects which create more 'social infrastructure' through the repurposing of historic buildings, the TPtH programme is contributing to the creation of more sustainable high streets and town centres which are attractive to a diverse range of people.

Conclusions

Transforming Places through Heritage is currently on track to achieve its objectives, in terms of meeting each of the Critical Success Factors. Though tested by Covid, demand for grants has remained high and the vast majority of projects are making progress.

We originally estimated that the programme would contribute to the delivery of 60 completed historic building reuse projects by 2023 (with a third of these directly funded with TPtH capital grants but most securing capital funding from other sources). Due to Covid delays, it is now possible that fewer projects will reach completion within that timescale but the long-term prospects are good. The 224 grants awarded to date are building a strong pipeline of projects, many of which have already been able to secure capital funding from various Government funding initiatives. Recent announcements on funding from the Towns Deal, Levelling Up Fund, Community Renewal Fund and Community Ownership Fund mean that a large number of English towns and cities have been identified as priority places. Resilient third sector organisations emerging from the pandemic will be in a good position to take advantage of funding opportunities in those areas.

The future of the high street

Over the last year, the disappearance of 'big name' department stores such as John Lewis, Marks & Spencer and Debenhams from high streets all over the country has been emblematic of the terminal decline of the old retail-dominated model for the high street. The loss of these large 'anchor' stores has often had a knock-on effect, leading to declining footfall and the closure of other shops. All of this continues to highlight the need for a more diverse high street offer, which includes more housing, culture and social infrastructure. Local charities and social enterprises can play a big part in making this happen, as highlighted in a recent *Guardian* article, which featured a selection of projects supported through the TPtH programme.

'The Greenest building is the one that already exists'

In the wake of COP26 in Glasgow, which raised global ambition to take action on climate change (though some commentators have stated that commitments fell short of what was required), the contribution of the heritage sector in delivering the transition to a 'net zero carbon' economy will become increasingly important. It has been encouraging to see momentum building behind the Architects' Journal's RetroFirst campaign, now supported by more than 200 organisations, which is helping to raise awareness of the embodied carbon in the built environment and the need to recycle, rather than demolish, existing buildings. The TPtH programme is well placed in this regard and by 2023 will be able to showcase a varied range of exemplar reuse projects in town centres.

Appendix 1

Location of funded projects by grant type

Project Viability Grants

Project Development Grants

Crowdfunding Challenge Grants

Capital Grants

Appendix 2

Location of funded projects by grant type

Pilot Heritage Development Trusts

Community Shares Booster Grants

All *Transforming Places through Heritage* grants

Photo Credits

1. Stuart Livesey
2. Lily George
3. Shaun Armstrong
4. Redruth Revival CIC
5. Steven Wood
6. The Branch Trust CIO
7. Mark Price
8. David Oxberry
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