



35 YEARS OF WORLD HERITAGE IN THE UK - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Introduction

The United Kingdom ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1984 and since then 33 World Heritage Sites (WHS) have been inscribed onto UNESCO's World Heritage List. These including 29 "onshore" and 4 in the UK's Overseas Territories. While Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is the common denominator, the UK Sites display great variety and complexity in terms of size, type, context, boundaries, governance, investment, and management requirements. Between 2019 and 2021 a comprehensive audit and review of the World Heritage sector was undertaken by World Heritage UK (WHUK). This paper sets out the context, challenges, and opportunities that were revealed by the review.

Role of World Heritage UK

There are numerous government and public organizations and bodies associated with the protection and management of World Heritage in the UK. WHUK is a national NGO that has a pivotal role independently representing to Government the voice and needs of those who manage the World Heritage Sites at a local level. It is the only organisation in the UK that is dedicated exclusively to supporting and promoting the sustainable planning, protection, and management of the UK's World Heritage Site collection. It is also the only one that is led by the Sites themselves reflecting a community driven approach which is favoured by UNESCO. It undertakes a wide range of advocacy, advisory, professional development, and networking activities to assist Government departments and agencies and other local stakeholders.

The overriding aim of WHUK is to implement the vision that the UK will have a more coherent approach to the management of World Heritage Sites and to ensure that the Sites become better known and understood and supported through sustainable funding. By this means the Outstanding Universal Value of the Sites can provide inspiration, learning, and enjoyment for society and contribute to the UK's standing in the world.

International Context

United Kingdom Response the World Heritage Convention

The 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention defined the types of sites that can be inscribed on to the World Heritage List and gives guidance on how these should be identified, protected, conserved, presented, and transmitted for future generations. The UK ratified the Convention in 1984 and as a “State Party” has a duty to cooperate and ensure the permanent protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Sites (WHS) in its care. UNESCO's World Heritage Committee (WHC) defines OUV as the “cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of humanity.”¹ 194 countries are signatories to the Convention. There are currently 1,554 World Heritage Sites distributed unevenly across the globe with 49% of these located in European Countries. UNESCO policy is now to accept a maximum of one World Heritage Site nomination per year from each State Party to begin redressing this global imbalance. The UK approach in response as a maximum is to only submit a World Heritage Site nomination every other year.

UNESCO's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation for the World Heritage Convention* (2019) sets out the obligations related to the Convention, identifies the criteria for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value and summarises the requirements for the preparation of nomination applications and provides guidance on the need for longer term commitments for World Heritage Site protection and management. The UK currently does not have detailed national guidance for the nomination process or later management of World Heritage Sites. However, it is expected that a Historic Environment Advice Note (HEAN) on managing change in World Heritage Sites will be published by Historic England in 2023. Such guidance already exists for both Scotland and Wales.

The World Heritage Site Designation Process

Before a candidate World Heritage Site can be submitted by a State Party to the World Heritage Committee for consideration, it must first be included on a Tentative List prepared by the State Party. UNESCO advise that the List should only include Sites that are considered to have Outstanding Universal Value and that only these be brought forward for preparation of a nomination dossier. UNESCO are now advising that only one nomination per year can be

¹ UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, World Heritage Centre 2019, p. 20.

submitted by each State Party. They also advise that State Party Tentative Lists should be revised at least every 10 years. As the State Party representative and focal point for World Heritage in the UK, the Department of Culture Media and Sports (DCMS) reassessed the UK 2011 Tentative List in 2023 and announced a revised list of 5 potential sites.

The preparation of a comprehensive World Heritage Site nomination dossier by Site promoters, its submission to the WHC by the State Party requires an extensive evaluation by the World Heritage Committee and its expert Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM). In the UK this usually takes 2 to 3 years or longer and involves considerable investment of resources by Site promoters and stakeholders.

The UK is currently bringing forward a World Heritage Site nomination for a natural site: the Flow Country blanket bog landscape in Caithness and Sutherland. It was submitted to the WHC in early 2023 and will be evaluated over the following year before being considered by the WHC during 2024.

The UK World Heritage Site Collection

There are currently 33 World Heritage Sites in the UK, spread across the UK mainland and adjacent islands of Orkney and St Kilda, and a further 4 which are part of the UK's Overseas Territories in Gibraltar, the Gough and Inaccessible Islands, Henderson Island, and the town of St George, Bermuda. On the UK mainland 26 of the Sites are classified as cultural, 2 are natural (Dorset and East Devon Coast Jurassic Coast and the Giant's Causeway) and 1 Site (St Kilda) has a mixed classification².

The Diversity of UK Sites

There is great variety in the UK Sites in terms of scale, size, uses, ownership, guardianship, governance, and financial support. There are also large variations in the Sites in relation to local planning policies and local management and operation. The range of themes represented are similarly great and include palaces, parklands, historic townscapes, prehistoric sites, places of worship, industrial heritage, castles, geological sites, and cultural landscapes. A particular contrast arises between Sites centred on monuments or tightly defined groups of historic buildings, and Sites encompassing large-scale landscapes, townscapes and city centres. The latter group have complex patterns of land ownership and sometimes are impacted on or by strong development pressures. After inscription World Heritage Site conservation, management and operation falls for the most part in the UK to local authorities or other local organisations. Government's role in management is relatively limited and normally confined to involvement at those Sites that are directly managed by central Government agencies or where a serious problem has emerged.

² See www.worldheritage.org

Approximately 50% of the UK Sites are managed and primarily funded by local authorities or public partnerships; 20% by central government organisations; and 30% by independent trusts. Thus the management and operation of the majority of UK Sites is greatly dependent on public funding and there is great variation in the level and sources of this funding. Most Sites have a Site Coordinator or local manager but such posts are only supported by small budgets.

Evolution of World Heritage in the UK

As the number and diversity of Sites has increased over the last 35 years so have the challenges for future protection and sustainable management have become more complex.

The Pioneering Years

From the mid 1980's to the mid 1990's the nomination and inscription of the first 14 Sites pioneered these processes in the UK. There was limited guidance or consistency in the nomination dossiers. The UNESCO requirements for nomination were relatively simple and the UK for the most part selected simple monument centred "iconic" or archaeological sites which already had tightly drawn boundaries encompassing their perceived heritage value eg Durham Cathedral and Castle, Tower of London, Canterbury Cathedral, Stonehenge & Avebury. World Heritage status was usually an "add on" to existing protective designations. World Heritage Site Management Plans were not a requirement of the nomination dossier at this time.

Emerging Good Practice

From the mid 1990's for the next 10 years a further 12 World Heritage Sites were inscribed. These now included increasingly extensive areas encompassing complex cultural landscapes and townscapes with multiple ownerships. Such Sites included, for example, Derwent Valley Mills, Jurassic Coast, Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, and Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City. Partnership and community engagement approaches for jointly managing these Sites became necessary and were successfully evolved. The Sites were well supported by public and regional development agency funding and local World Heritage managers or coordinators were established at most Sites. As more comprehensive UNESCO guidance became available nomination dossiers became increasingly technical and sophisticated, requiring a considerable investment in time and money. A first generation of World Heritage Management Plans were produced and, like the nomination dossiers, have emerged as good practice models for future UK Sites and for other countries.

Challenges and Planning Conflicts

From the mid 2000's to the present the protection and management of UK World Heritage Sites has continued to be challenging. Only 8 additional Sites were inscribed in this period. 75% of the UK's Sites have continued to be dependent on public resources. Since 2008 there have been 30%-50% cuts in funding for many public sector organisations both in central and local government

compared to 1990 levels. Cuts to World Heritage management and operational budgets have been similarly reduced. Awareness of the significance and values of many Sites continued to be low at all levels from local to national.

In general, the protection of the majority of the UK World Heritage Sites continues to be reasonably achieved through national and local planning policies and guidance relating directly to World Heritage Site values. However, planning conflicts and the impact of some new major development proposals in the last 10 years have been controversial and some Sites have been regularly scrutinised by UNESCO, with ICOMOS. Missions reported consistently and adversely on the state of conservation of some Sites such as Stonehenge & Avebury, Westminster, and Edinburgh. The unfortunate removal of Liverpool World Heritage Site from World Heritage List in 2021 resulted from a complex set of interrelated issues but did underline the need for increased dialogue between all stakeholders and a more careful balance to be struck between the conservation of World Heritage values and the need for economic regeneration in a living/working World Heritage Site.

The increase in planning conflicts at World Heritage Sites in the UK have arisen from a mix of factors. Many recent landscapes, townscapes and settings for World Heritage Sites have become increasingly subject to complex development pressures; awareness of the significance of outstanding universal value at World Heritage Sites remains low; public funding for proactive World Heritage Site management and protection continues to be reduced; and, importantly, the lack of formal statutory or legislative protection for World Heritage Sites in the UK planning system.

National and Local Management of UK World Heritage Sites

The World Heritage Site Jigsaw

Some 80 different organisations have a responsibility for, or interest in, the management of UK World Heritage Sites, contributing to a confusing “jigsaw puzzle” of different responsibilities at the international, national and local levels, see Figure A. At national level and international level there are the roles and responsibilities of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and their advisers (ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN), UK State Party central Government departments and agencies, the UK National Commission for UNESCO, ICOMOS UK, the planning authorities, and a range of NGOs. At local level management structures for World Heritage Sites are variable, having evolved to suit local circumstances. Taken together, the local World Heritage Site steering groups involve a further 500 different stakeholders, interested parties and partners.

World Heritage UK is a charitable trust, and increasingly takes a pivotal role in the national World Heritage sector. Unlike all the other parties involved it is solely focused on the representation and promotion of all the World Heritage Sites. It bridges the gap between the local management of World Heritage Sites and the national World Heritage Site administration and policy making role of central Government.

National Government Roles

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sports (DCMS) with ministerial responsibilities is the States Party's signatory to the World Heritage Convention and is therefore responsible for the UK's compliance with the Convention. DCMS also sponsors and supports a range of "arms-length" related agencies which have more technical roles in relation to the management and conservation of World Heritage Sites eg Historic England, English Heritage Trust, Historic Royal Palaces, Greenwich Foundation, Visit Britain, National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Arts Council. The devolved Governments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland also sponsor and part fund their heritage agencies – Cadw, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA-NI) respectively – who have responsibilities for World Heritage Sites in these nations. National level organisations also include the UK National Commission to UNESCO (UKNC) who represent the UK's civil society interests at UNESCO and advise Government on UK's involvement in all UNESCO Programmes including World Heritage Sites.

The Planning System

Planning decisions affecting the World Heritage Sites are the responsibility of local authorities, the Planning Inspectorate, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in England. The Scottish Parliament in Scotland, the Welsh Government, and the Northern Ireland Assembly in Northern Ireland provide the same role in these nations.

Within the planning systems there is currently no statutory basis for UK World Heritage Sites and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention principles are not part of the legislative framework. The Sites are recognised in the National Policy Frameworks as being designated assets of the highest significance and are advised to be a "material" factor in decision making. There is, however, no consistent approach or practical guidance at a national or local level for balancing the positive and harmful aspects of any development proposal which impacts on a World Heritage Site.

Local plans, prepared by local authorities, are in the national policy context set by central Government and the devolved nations. Local policies for the protection and management of World Heritage Sites show great variation across the UK. Whilst the policy context overall provides a reasonable framework for World Heritage Site protection, there is little consistency, for example, in the definition of World Heritage Site setting or buffer zones, how public benefit should be balanced against conservation of OUV, how Management Plans for World Heritage Sites can be integrated into the planning system or how World Heritage Policy is interpreted. During 2023 UK Parliament has been considering new legislation to reform the planning system including establishing a legal and statutory basis for World Heritage protection. If ratified it could become law in 2025/2026.

Other Key Influencing Organisations

The national and local tourism agencies primarily focus on the marketing of WHS's that are well known and most visited "iconic" visitor destinations. There is little acknowledgement or support and promotion of the less well-known World Heritage Sites which consist of 50% of the UK collection of Sites.

The National Trust, the largest non-governmental heritage organisation and charity in England has an interest in 8 UK World Heritage Sites and is responsible as owner and funder for 2 Sites directly.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has emerged as a primary funding source for UK World Heritage Sites over the last 20 years. Between 2013 and 2018, for example, it grant aided projects to a value of £117 m in UK World Heritage Sites.

Variations in Local Management of World Heritage Sites

World Heritage Site management is primarily undertaken at a local level. Variations and models for this have emerged to suit the circumstances of a particular Site. This has also been influenced by the overall lack of a national World Heritage strategy and consistent Government support, time of inscription, availability of suitable local management and support, organisation and, degree of Site and stakeholder complexity.

The range of different organisations that own or manage World Heritage Sites are shown on Figure B. In summary, these include Local Authorities and Public Partnerships (53%), Central Government Departments or Agencies (17.9%), Independent Charitable Trusts (28.7%). Over 76% of the UK World Heritage Sites are dependent on public or government funding and less than 24% are striving to be self-funding. The key challenge for local World Heritage Management is to increase the number of Sites which are substantially self-funded.

What has the UK Achieved?

Over the last 35 years the UK World Heritage processes, protection and management have become increasingly complex. In part since the 1990's this has been a response to the enhanced requirements and UNESCO guidance for the nomination and other processes³ and a greater range of available technical advice notes and guidance.⁴ Notwithstanding challenging issues, it also reflects the UK's continued commitment to the World Heritage Convention.

³ For example these include: *Preparing World Heritage Nomination: World Heritage Resource Manual*, UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN/ICCROM 2013; *Guidance on Developing and Revising World Heritage Tentative Lists*, UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN/ICCROM 2020; *Guidance and Toolkits for Impact Assessments: World Heritage Resource Manual*, UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN/ICCROM 2022.

⁴ Various editions of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, UNESCO World Heritage Centre: Latest Edition WHC 19/01 July 2019.

Some of the most recent nomination dossiers and associated World Heritage Management Plans resulting in successful World Heritage Site inscription such as Jodrell Bank (2019) and Slate Landscape of North West Wales (2021) are considered to be international exemplars of best practice.

All of the UK World Heritage Sites are now guided by successful Management Plans, a pattern that is not always the case in other countries. These are generally updated every 5 years. Whilst there is a great diversity in the UK World Heritage Sites, a relatively consistent and effective format for Management Plans has emerged. The implementation of the Management Plans is enacted locally by World Heritage Coordinators or local managers which are now present in all Sites.

A key part of the successful establishment of UK World Heritage Sites has been to make stakeholder and community consultation an integral part of World Heritage nomination and ongoing management processes. Engaging with the local communities to increase awareness, sharing knowledge and maximising social and economic benefits is a central role for each of the World Heritage Coordinators. “Young World Heritage Ambassador” initiatives⁵ such as at Blaenavon, Durham, and the Antonine Wall are successfully educating and inspiring the next generation of World Heritage supporters and professionals.

In the last 10 years regular capacity building programmes have been supported by Historic England and others to raise the awareness of World Heritage protection, significance, and values, particularly in the planning sector where development versus conservation challenges occur.

Established since 2015, World Heritage UK (WHUK), representing all UK World Heritage Sites, has demonstrated the pivotal role that such an NGO dedicated exclusively to World Heritage conversation, planning, and management can play. It has effectively bridged the gap between Government policy makers and the local activities of the UK’s 33 World Heritage Sites who are its members.

Remaining Challenges for UK World Heritage

Whilst much has been achieved in terms of good practice by the UK over the last 35 years, here are still significant challenges to be overcome.

The WHUK Review

The *UK World Heritage-Asset for the Future*⁶ review was undertaken by WHUK between 2019 and 2021 and was the first comprehensive audit of the UK World Heritage sector to be undertaken in the UK. It revealed a range of challenges and opportunities for the UK World Heritage sector, many of which are common to those faced by other countries. It also sets out a

⁵ The World Heritage Youth Ambassadors is a programme that helps young people aged 13-25 discover who they are, who they want to be, and be proud to shout about (www.whyam.org).

⁶ *UK World Heritage-Asset for the Future-A Review of the State of UK World Heritage Sites*, World Heritage UK 2019 (see worldheritageuk.org).

10 year vision and agenda for the UK World Heritage sector. Essentially the priorities and aim for the future need to focus on a more coherent UK Government strategy, vision, and support for the World Heritage Site collection; together with enhancements to achieve a more consistent and sustainable World Heritage Site local management.

Interrelated Challenges Revealed

Figure C summarises the challenges that the World Heritage sector currently still faces and will need to be addressed fully to implement the above vision and be central to the future sustainability of the UK's World Heritage Sites, particularly the least known Sites and those that are publicly managed and funded.

Need for Increased Awareness

The diversity and complexity of the UK World Heritage Sites and their associated governance is confusing. This contributes to the difficulty of a consistent raising awareness of the Sites and their related international, national and local values. The most well-known World Heritage sites are the “iconic” destinations – the 50% of Sites which are already well established tourist attractions such as Stonehenge & Avebury and the Tower of London. The remaining 50% are distributed across the UK but are much less well known, appreciated, or promoted as national tourist and cultural assets. Awareness of World Heritage Sites is generally low, especially amongst Government departments and agencies in England, other than DCMS. There is, however, greater understanding and support for World Heritage Sites in the devolved governments of Scotland and Wales where they are given a higher profile to support tourism, a vital part of these nations economies.

At some 53% of Sites across the UK local communities have, however, a relatively high degree of awareness of the World Heritage. At the remaining 47% of Sites, local communities are reported to be only partly aware or unaware of World Heritage values. Low awareness appears to reflect a number of factors, including lack of resources for promotion; lack of interpretation on the ground; recent designation; and marketing dominated by tourism agencies.

Notwithstanding the above figures, at many Sites, particularly in disadvantaged areas, local communities are passionate about their World Heritage Sites and are supportive of initiatives such as the local World Heritage Ambassador schemes. Low awareness is often the result of lack of resources for community engagement, rather than lack of interest by the community.

Investment in Interpretative & Promotion Facilities is Variable at UK World Heritage Sites

Only 21.5% of the UK's World Heritage Sites report a good level of awareness amongst visitors. All of these have relatively good interpretation on the ground, good signage and visitor centres. Most Sites, however, reported low awareness amongst visitors reflecting a lack of resources for promotion and interpretation, with tourism promotion focused on other assets and qualities of the Site. Only 50% of World Heritage Sites have dedicated websites. Only 15% of Sites (including

Durham, Giant's Causeway, New Lanark and Blaenavon) are considered to have adequate onsite interpretation. The majority of Sites have relatively limited investment in Site interpretation and signage. There are currently only 7 visitor centres dedicated to World Heritage site interpretation and promotion.

Need for Increased Local Resources and Upskilling

Most UK World Heritage Sites are managed locally through World Heritage Site Coordinators aided by the World Heritage Site Steering Group or equivalent. At most Sites there is a critical need for increased capacity and up skilling of management teams. Around 70% of UK World Heritage Site Coordinators are a one person "team" and employed at low management levels, with limited influence over decision-making or the control of budgets. The background of most Coordinators is well suited to stakeholder coordination, outreach, engagement and similar activities and through much effort, some success is being achieved on this front at most Sites. Given the critical need now to consider alternative funding options, local management teams need a greater capacity and wider range of skills focussed more on marketing, communication, fundraising, and business management. Only 4 Sites have a dedicated multi skilled team of 5 or more full time staff. The 50% of Sites managed and primarily funded by local authorities are particularly vulnerable to the public spending reductions.

Need for More Rational Governance

The UK World Heritage Sites are managed and administered at a local level by a variety of organisations who have a range of governance structures. Given the diversity of Site characteristics and scales no one governance type will fit all Sites. The suitability and effectiveness of each of the governance types is variable with different issues arising at each. However, fundamental to all in the future is the capability and capacity of the organisation or governance structure to at least contribute to some self-generated revenue and fundraising. 50% of the UK Sites are managed and primarily funded by local authorities and public partnerships. These Sites are particularly vulnerable as public funding and resources continue to be reduced. There is an emerging need, therefore, for consideration to be given to governance and management models for some Sites that could offer opportunity and options for them to be more self-sustaining and less dependent on public structures and support. There are currently only 3 World Heritage Sites (Edinburgh, New Lanark and Jurassic Coast) that are charitable trusts dedicated to World Heritage Site management. Although still partially dependent on public moneys, all are striving to be increasingly self-sustaining.

Need for Enhanced Public and Alternative Funding Sources

Article 17 of the World Heritage Convention encourages States Parties to establish national support, foundations and endowments to ensure adequate funding arrangements for World Heritage Site management and conservation. The UK has not created such arrangements and World Heritage Site funding and responsibility for management have for the most part been devolved to local authorities, caretakers and owners.

WHUK research indicates that the approximate current annual revenue costs (including Site Coordinators, their overhead and their operation budgets) for managing the UK World Heritage Sites is only in the order of £4 million. The small scale of operations budgets available to most World Heritage Site Coordinators is notable. Limited budgets reduce their ability to diversify management teams, and expand promotion and improve awareness and interpretation of the Sites.

Total annual Government expenditure on the 27 mainland World Heritage Sites in 2016-2017 was estimated by WHUK to be in the order of £15.08 million (excluding National Lottery Heritage Fund project funding). The equivalent figure for the UK's 15 National Parks in the same period was estimated to be over four times as much, at £70.5 million. Government also provides funding via its agencies for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for National Nature Reserves. Such a disparity (which still continues today) is surprising given the international value accorded to World Heritage Sites and the UK commitment to the World Heritage Convention.

Need for Integration of Tourism, Marketing, and World Heritage Site Promotion

The UK World Heritage Sites are a nationally significant resource for tourism, for the UK's Soft Power Strategy and indeed for understanding the UK's great contributions to world culture and world history. This strategic potential has yet to be realised. Tourism was a fast growing sector in the UK economy and heritage tourism in the UK saw exceptional growth in the 5 years before the pandemic. It is anticipated that tourism will be re-established as a major contributor to post pandemic economic recovery.

Visit Britain, the national tourism agency, statistics show that 7 out of the top 10 paid visitor attractions in the UK were heritage destinations. Of these 5 were World Heritage Sites, including the Tower of London, Stonehenge & Avebury, Westminster, Kew and the Roman Baths and Pump Rooms at Bath. Notably all of these are in London and the south of England. While heritage tourism is forecast to continue growing, unfortunately, the awareness of World Heritage Sites and their global brand remains low.

As indicated above, 50% of the UK World Heritage Sites are little known. Most of them, and their surrounding areas would welcome and benefit from increased tourism investment and expenditure. Once an increase in awareness of the World Heritage values and associated promotion has been achieved, increased tourism spend at these Sites could make more significant contributions to community economies and social capital. At the busier, better known (and often better promoted) Sites business targets for increased revenues and increased visitor numbers however may be in conflict with site capacity and conservation objectives. At some Sites, such as Stonehenge & Avebury, Giant's Causeway, and Heart of Neolithic Orkney, there is increasing concern about the impact of growing visitor numbers and over tourism on Site fabric and visitor experience.

Many of the UK's cultural World Heritage Sites reflect preindustrial town and landscapes, the impact of the industrial revolution, and the environmental mitigation of the works effects of the revolution, often through town planning and the creation of model communities. Many of these

Sites resonate with Britain's global role as a great power and shaper of world events, especially through the British Empire, the industrial revolution and the world wide export of ideas for town planning and environmental management. These are all assets of immense global significance. They are also of central importance to the understanding of Britain's island story including its historic role as a sea power and its responsibility for slavery which arguably are central features of its political culture. Understanding the UK evolution in this regard through World Heritage assets and their stories can be of growing significance to developing countries as they manage the social and environmental consequences of industrialisation and rapid urbanisation.

The Future for UK World Heritage

Unlocking the Potential

UK Government has an international responsibility to protect, nurture, and enhance our World Heritage, so that it is protected for generations to come. The UK's World Heritage is a remarkable resource and a central part of the UK's cultural inheritance. The Sites include the most important heritage assets in the UK, helping to spell out our island story, capturing Britain's greatest global impacts at one scale and contributing socio-economic benefits to local communities at the other.

The collection of World Heritage Sites is very important for the UK. The potential for the Sites to further contribute to UK Government achieving its current broader goals in the areas of social, cultural, and economic wellbeing is great. Unlocking the potential for this and for increasing the benefits for all from UK World Heritage Sites, both nationally and locally, will require new and continued action by both Government and stakeholders. With effective management the Sites can remain (and in many cases become) the crown jewels of heritage tourism in the UK, contribute to the projection of our Soft Power, whilst helping to benefit and reshape the image of some of the less favoured parts of the UK.

At the present time, however, the UK is not turning World Heritage fully to its advantage. Some Sites are exemplars of effective sustainable planning and management, but good management, promotion and interpretation is patchy, and at too many Sites is underfunded and under resourced. Well-known Sites are coming under visitor pressure also that must be carefully managed, whilst less well-known Sites would often welcome (and could with benefit accommodate) additional visitors.

National World Heritage Strategy

In order to realise the above potential, alternative and more sustainable and consistent levels of resourcing and support are going to be needed to unlock the potential for improved national promotion of UK Sites, and for more resilient local management of the Sites. Some central Government public funding will be needed to kick start awareness raising, upskilling and greater World Heritage Site resilience, allowing the most vulnerable Sites to develop a better blend of public and other funding sources to support management. The initiation and implementation of a UK wide World Heritage Strategy now needs to be a priority. It would facilitate collaboration

by the many stakeholders in the World Heritage sector for the further refinement and address the key challenges mentioned earlier.

The vision for UK World Heritage as a whole envisages a more coherent and consistent approach to the promotion, planning, and management of the whole collection of UK World Heritage Sites. Each of the UK World Heritage Sites has a detailed vision set out in its Management Plan. The national level Strategy will be in accord with these. Once established, the National Strategy will ensure Sites and their values are better known, fully understood, and partially supported through sustainable funding so that they can develop their resilience, provide inspiration, learning, and enjoyment for all, and be beneficial to their communities. Such an approach is in accordance with UNESCO guidance and Government’s cultural heritage policies and statements which emphasise the aspiration for the UK to continue to be a global exemplar of best practice in World Heritage Site management.

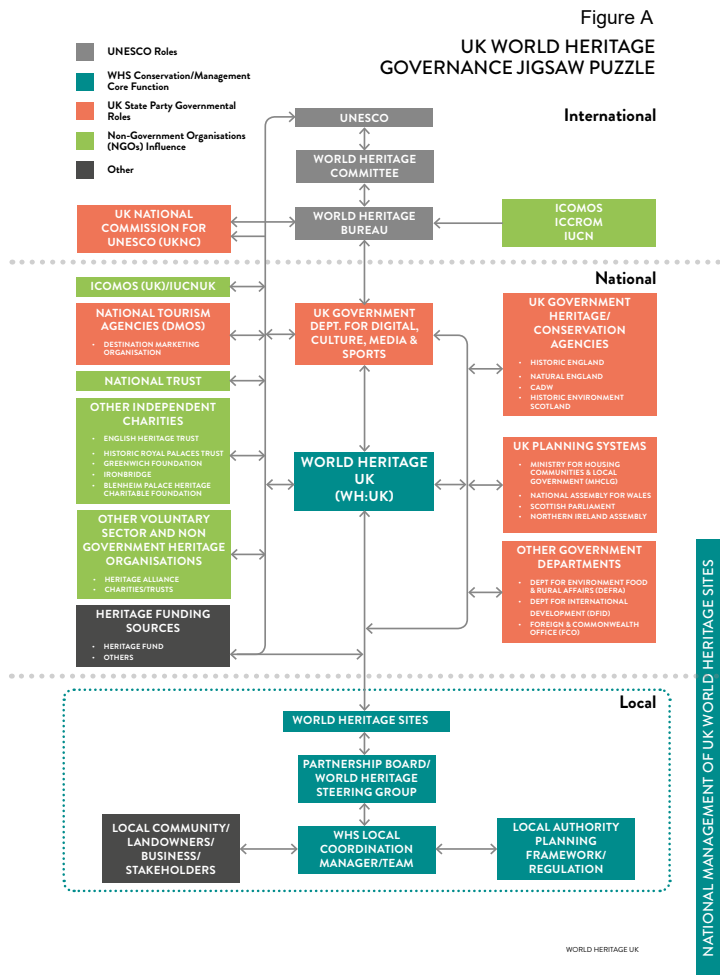
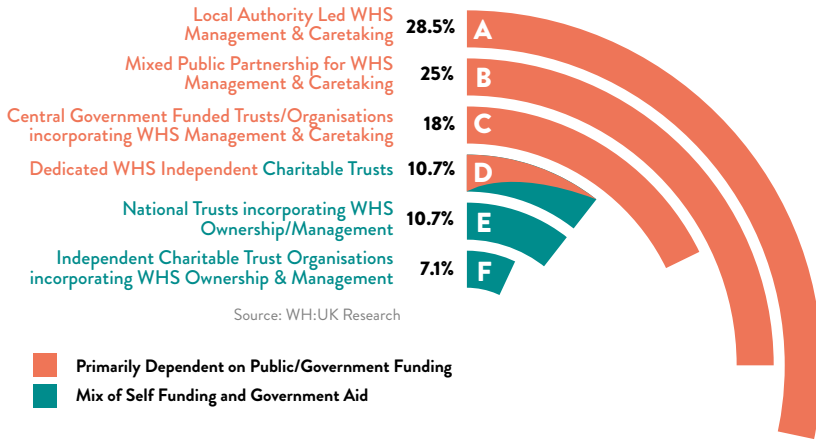


Fig. 1 Governance Jigsaw

Figure B

EXISTING VARIATIONS IN GOVERNANCE OF UK MAINLAND WORLD HERITAGE SITES



A 8 Sites

- CITY OF BATH
- MINING LANDSCAPE OF CORNWALL AND WEST DEVON
- DERWENT VALLEY MILLS
- LIVERPOOL - MARITIME MERCANTILE CITY
- PONTCYSYLLE AQUEDUCT AND CANAL
- SALTAIRE
- PALACE OF WESTMINSTER AND RELATED SITES
- BLAENAVON
- INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE

B 7 Sites

- CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL AND RELATED SITES
- DURHAM CASTLE AND CATHEDRAL
- FRONTIERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE HADRIAN'S WALL,
- THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT
- STONEHENGE, AVEBURY AND ASSOCIATED SITES
- FRONTIERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE ANTONINE WALL,
- FORTH BRIDGE

C 5 Sites

- MARITIME GREENWICH
- ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, KEW
- TOWER OF LONDON
- GWYNEDD CASTLES AND TOWN WALLS OF KING EDWARD
- HEART OF NEOLITHIC ORKNEY

D 3 Sites

- DORSET AND EAST DEVON COAST
- NEW LANARK
- OLD AND NEW TOWNS OF EDINBURGH

E 3 Sites

- STUDLEY ROYAL PARK AND THE RUINS OF FOUNTAINS ABBEY
- GIANT'S CAUSEWAY
- ST KILDA

F 2 Sites

- BLenheim PALACE
- IRONBRIDGE GORGE

LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF UK WORLD HERITAGE SITES

WORLD HERITAGE UK

Fig. 2 Governance Variation

Figure C
CHALLENGES FACED BY UK
WORLD HERITAGE SITES

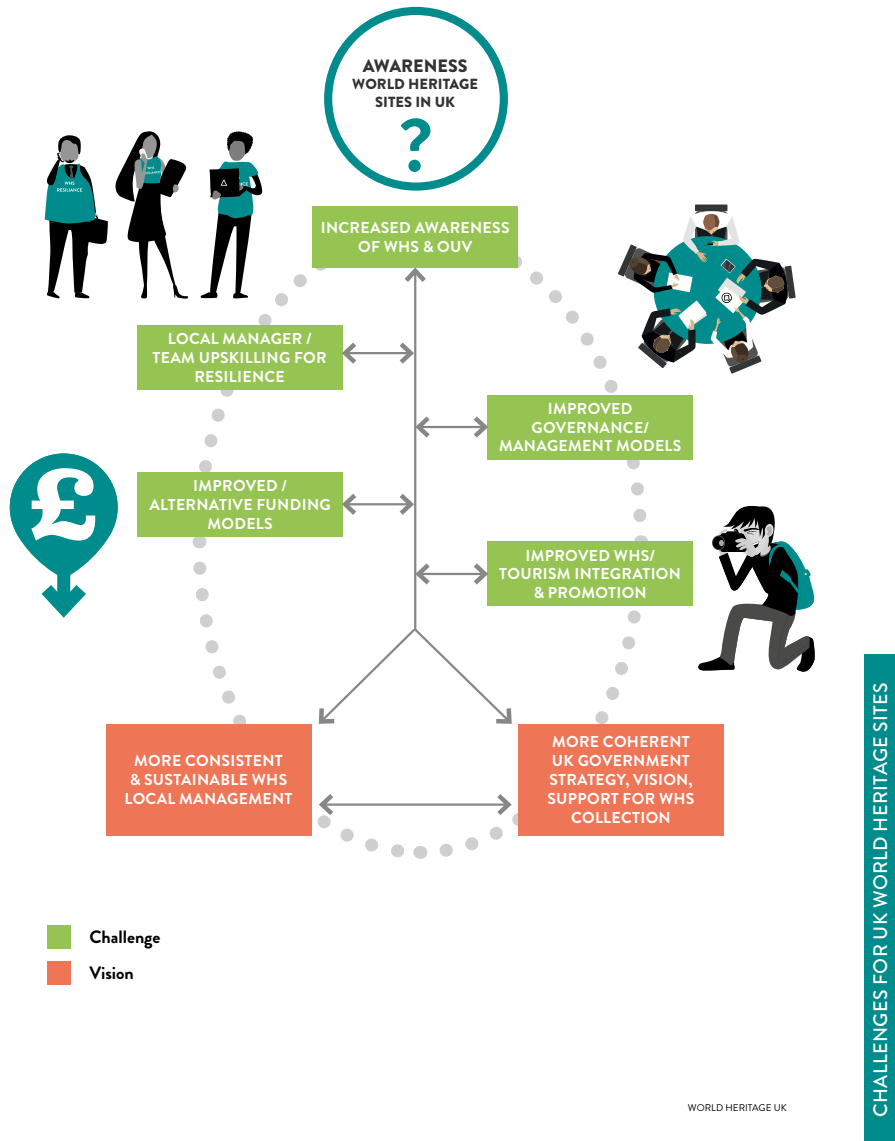


Fig. 3 Challenges

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