Welcome to Resilient Heritage: Business Modules.

This Is section 4: Wider Legislation- Where Do We Fit In? Module 4.3 From the Global to the Local

This module will explore the role of local authorities in preserving and promoting cultural heritage through the implementation of national frameworks and legislation. We will also examine how cultural heritage organisations can strengthen their missions and objectives by leveraging the resources local authorities provide to support community initiatives. Additionally, we will consider how collaboration and alignment with national and local government strategic priorities are essential components of this process.

We will then review the resources offered by various national organisations, previously mentioned in this module series, and discuss the range of guidance, advice, and toolkits they provide—developed within the frameworks of international and national guidance and legislation—to support the heritage sector. By understanding these resources, you will gain insights into effectively navigating the legislative landscape and accessing best practices to enhance the impact of your cultural heritage organisation.

Role of local authorities in cultural heritage

Local authorities play a vital role in the preservation, promotion, and management of cultural heritage, with key responsibilities in the enforcement of national heritage legislation. They ensure that local policies align with national standards through local planning frameworks.

Balancing local interests with national and international priorities, especially in terms of resource allocation, poses growing challenges in regional governance, where budgets are often stretched to their limits. Local authorities face the difficult task of distributing resources in ways that align with strategic priorities to support and enhance communities, while being mindful that demands frequently exceed their available resources and capacity.

In this context, it is crucial for heritage organisations to understand where they are placed to contribute to these strategies and goals, and what exactly they need from others to achieve this. By engaging in partnerships and resource sharing amongst stakeholders and leveraging the support of local authorities in facilitating public engagement and collaboration, heritage organisations can effectively work within the community to achieve mutual objectives.

Policy and Conservation Legislation

Scottish local authorities are empowered to grant planning permission and maintain historic environment records for cultural heritage through a robust legal and policy framework: The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 form the core of this framework, providing authorities with the necessary powers to regulate development and protect heritage assets. The Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014 established Historic Environment Scotland (HES), which supports local authorities with guidance and expertise. Additionally, the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and Planning Advice Notes (PANs) offer further directives on integrating heritage considerations into local planning. Local development plans, tailored by each authority, ensure that national policies and legislative requirements are reflected in local contexts, safeguarding Scotland's rich cultural heritage.

All Local Authorities face the common challenge of balancing local community needs with national strategic objectives. While national frameworks like The National Planning Framework encourage the integration of heritage considerations into local development plans, resource constraints and varying priorities often considerably limit the capacity of local authorities to provide support beyond their statutory powers.

**Funding and Resource Allocation**

The majority of resources available for the maintenance and development of cultural heritage typically aligns with broader Local Authority priorities set out in local governance frameworks. As a result, available local authority funding for heritage often tends to focus on council-managed, rather than community managed sites, such as Aberdeen Art Gallery, which secured £13 million in local government funding between 2013 and 2017 as part of a £33 million redevelopment project, that supported the city’s bid for the City of Culture title in 2017.

One practical way that Local Authorities can support community organisations is to align resources made available to address strategic priorities with shared initiatives that support a broad spectrum of benefits and outcomes. For instance, the Govanhill Community Development Trust collaborated with Glasgow City Council, Glasgow City Heritage Trust and Historic Environment Scotland to support the refurbishment of historic tenements in the Govanhill area. This collaboration supported Govanhill Housing Association to improve living conditions for its tenants, whilst also preserving the architectural character of these buildings.

Securing consistent or substantial funding from local authorities is a significant challenge for community-based cultural heritage organisations. Applications for any limited financial support that is available must clearly demonstrate broader social benefits and alignment with strategic priorities at both national and local levels. Even with this focus, heritage projects are often not prioritised over other local concerns. However, local organisations can leverage their knowledge of the community to their advantage, highlighting how their initiatives can effectively support local government priorities in the broader sense. By staying attuned to your local area priorities and understanding their connection to national strategies and frameworks, your organisation can better position itself to secure funding through collaboration or integration with community-focused projects that add value to local authority initiatives, whilst also aligning with your organisational objectives.

**Education and Public Engagement**

Educational programmes and public events that raise awareness, foster appreciation, and strengthen connections to local history and culture are common ways local authorities support and promote cultural heritage outside of their statutory duties. However, despite the growing adoption of co-production as an approach, limited resources make it difficult for community organisations to prioritise their needs in these processes. As a result, top-down programming still remains widespread.

An example of this is seen at The McManus: Dundee’s Art Gallery and Museum, which provides exhibition-related public programmes, including lectures, tours, family-friendly activities, and workshops, all aimed at enhancing learning and offering the community hands-on experiences connected to Dundee’s cultural heritage. While this approach creates opportunities for community feedback and engagement with the city's artistic and historical assets, it remains centred on delivering a resource shaped by The McManus' own priorities and programme, rather than fostering support for community-driven ideas.

Financial or in-kind support for heritage organisations in general is therefore more likely through involvement with specific area-wide seasonal, or project focused programmes set by the Local Authority, where community groups are invited to participate. This can be a good way to raise awareness of the work of your cultural heritage organisation within the community, as well as provide opportunity for collaboration with like-minded organisations and individuals.

**Partnerships and Collaboration**

Local authorities can play a crucial role in supporting museums, archives, and cultural institutions by facilitating partnerships and supporting joint initiatives. However, stand-alone financial support at the regional level for cultural heritage organisations is often extremely limited, making it unlikely to provide a consistent income stream. As highlighted in our examples, the development and preservation of heritage typically relies on the collaborative efforts of local authorities, national heritage organisations, and a diverse range of stakeholders who work in partnership to achieve strategic objectives that align with specific project outcomes.

For community heritage organisations therefore, there are specific approaches that can be taken to maximise local authority support. One approach is to engage in policy and strategy consultation, advocating for your community needs within key national and regional initiatives. Another is to align with broader local authority initiatives by demonstrating within your business plan how your organisation’s work fits into broader community goals, and specific project outcomes. An understanding of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, key national strategies, and local authority responses is crucial for developing this approach. Demonstrating how your organisation and its objectives are positioned within larger regional and national projects will provide a greater chance of securing funding to advance your organisations goals.

National Organisations Supporting Cultural Heritage

Within the cultural and charity sector, numerous national organisations promote good practice and offer technical assistance, ensure accountability, and drive innovation within the field. This is useful to provide research, industry tools, and support for cultural heritage in Scotland and the U.K. that can be used alongside government frameworks and priorities to provide sector specific evidence-based data and resources to support your cultural heritage organisation in its mission and purposes, as well as in applying for financial support.

This module will continue by exploring various tools and support available to enhance your organisation's work, highlighting the range and scope of these options. Links to these tools are accessible via organisational websites and are highlighted in the associated links provided with this module. However, this represents only a fraction of the available support—additional options can also be found in the provided links. While not exhaustive, these resources will help supplement your organisation's efforts beyond legislation and policy within the heritage sector.

**Historic Environment Scotland: Guidance, Advice, and Toolkits**

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) supports the management and preservation of Scotland's historic environment through a range of resources, including guidance, advice, and toolkits. These resources cover planning and policy guidance to ensure compliance with legislation, technical advice for conserving historic buildings, and best practice case studies. HES also offers consultation services, providing expert advice on conservation, planning applications, environmental sustainability, and heritage management, as well as conducting archaeological assessments. Additionally, practical toolkits for building maintenance, digital resources like the Heritage Portal, and community engagement toolkits are available.

**Museums Galleries Scotland: Guidance, Advice, and Toolkits**

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) offers a comprehensive suite of guidance documents, advice services, and toolkits to support museums in their operations. Their guidance documents cover essential areas such as Museum Accreditation (which MGS manage in Scotland), collections care, and best practices for exhibitions. MGS also provides advice on funding opportunities, governance, and audience development, helping museums to secure grants, improve management, and engage visitors. Additionally, their toolkits include resources for educational programs, digital strategies for collection digitisation and social media, and sustainability practices to enhance environmental resilience.

**Greenspace Scotland**

Greenspace Scotland offers guidance, advice services, and a resource library to support the development and management of greenspaces. Their guidance documents cover topics such as greenspace strategies, community engagement, and sustainable management practices. They provide advice on project development, funding opportunities, and policy advocacy to help organisations create and maintain effective greenspaces. Resources are also available for linking greenspaces with health and wellbeing benefits, enhancing climate resilience, and facilitating community involvement in greenspace projects.

**Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS)**

Built Environment Forum Scotland is a strategic intermediary body which addresses issues to support the development and management of the built environment. Their resources include policy and planning guidance, heritage conservation best practices, and sustainable development strategies. BEFS also provides expert advice on policy implementation, project planning, and stakeholder engagement, along with assistance in identifying funding opportunities and applying for grants. Additionally, Advocacy, Fundraising and Sustainable Investment toolkits cover community engagement, sustainability practices, and heritage management, providing practical tools and strategies for successful project execution.

**Case Study: Built Environment Forum Scotland**

“We also have the Sustainable Investment tool which loan. Last year, which is a tool that individuals, organizations and communities can use to evidence the value of a project or a place that is important to them, potentially to look at what other funding streams might be available. But also, if you're thinking about taking on a project and where to start, this is a good baseline to evidence the value of the asset that you have in the first place, and really hook it into other potential funding pots, maybe the”

**Museum Association**The Museum Association (MA) offers guidance documents, advice services, and toolkits to support museum operations and professional development. Their resources include guidelines on ethics and professional standards, which are the basis for Museum Accreditation, best practices for collections management, and advice on exhibition development. MA also provides guidance on career development, funding opportunities, and advocacy efforts. Toolkits are available for creating educational programs, developing digital strategies, and promoting sustainability within museums.

**SCVO**

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) provides services that include expert advice on governance, funding, and organisational development, helping heritage organisations navigate complex regulatory environments and secure vital resources. SCVO also offers tailored training and development programs to enhance the skills and capacity of staff and volunteers within cultural heritage organisations.

**OSCR**

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) offers guidance on charity law compliance, helping organisations understand their legal obligations and governance requirements. It provides resources for effective financial management and transparent reporting, ensuring accountability and integrity. Additionally, OSCR offers toolkits covering governance, financial management, and organisational development, providing practical guidance and templates for streamlined operations. OSCR also advises on best practices for organisational management, enhancing operational efficiency, and facilitates access to funding opportunities, helping organisations navigate grant applications and donor relations.

Conclusion

In this section, we have considered how Local authorities are crucial in preserving and promoting cultural heritage by enforcing national legislation, managing resources, and collaborating with stakeholders. They face challenges in balancing local needs with national priorities due to limited resources, but heritage organisations can enhance their impact by aligning with strategic priorities, engaging in partnerships, and leveraging support for community-focused initiatives.

National organisations within the cultural and charity sector provide essential support for heritage organisations in Scotland and the U.K. through guidance, advice, and resources. This module also highlighted a variety of tools and resources that these organisations offer, which can be used alongside government frameworks to enhance your organisation’s effectiveness and help secure financial support.

This is the end of Module 4.3 - and the end of section 4: Wider Legislation- Where Do We Fit In?

Further information can be found in the subsequent sections of Resilient Heritage: Business Modules.