



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Spending Review 2019

2016 Heritage Council Review – Assessment of Implementation

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This paper has been prepared by IGEEES staff in the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. The views presented in this paper do not represent the official views of the Department or Minister for Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

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Executive Summary

In 2016 the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (D/CHG) conducted a wide-ranging review of the Heritage Council which examined the income streams, operations, programme administration and outputs of the Council over the years 2010-2016. This spending review paper assessed the implementation of the recommendations made in the 2016 review and the key findings are presented below.

The Heritage Council is a statutory body, established by the Heritage Act 1995 (amended by the Heritage Act 2018). Under the Act, the Heritage Council is tasked with the following functions:

- Promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage;
- Co-operate with, engage with, advise and support public authorities, local communities and persons in relation to the functions of the Council, and,
- Promote the coordination of all activities related to the functions of the Council.

The Heritage Council works in partnership with local communities, local authorities, voluntary groups, Government and various agencies to support heritage-related jobs, education, awareness and tourism. The Council provides grant funding to local authorities for the Heritage Officer network and County Heritage plans, grants to communities for heritage projects and infrastructure, and supports a number of regularly funded organisations such as the Irish Landmark Trust and the National Biodiversity Centre. The Heritage Council represents a key programme within the D/CHG's Vote, accounting for over 12% of the Heritage budget. Departmental funding to the Council has been steadily increasing since 2013 after several years of reductions during the economic crisis.

Key Findings

- The Heritage Council made good progress on implementation of the recommendations with 80% assessed as either fully or partially implemented. 28% were fully implemented, 52% were partially implemented and 20% remain to be implemented.
- Recommendations relating to strategic orientation and planning had the highest level of implementation with 100% either fully or partially implemented. This was largely due to the development of the Council's new Statement of Strategy 2018-2020 *Heritage at the Heart*, which more closely aligned the Council's strategic orientation with Governmental and Departmental Heritage policy.
- Recommendations relating to Performance Management and Data Collection had the lowest level of implementation with 71% remaining to be implemented. This finding reflects a capacity constraint in the Council around its internal analytical capacity and it is recommended that they focus on developing in-house expertise to evaluate expenditure. This is particularly relevant in light of the continued, albeit modest,

increases in the Council's exchequer grant over the past number of years. This trend is forecast to continue if the current favourable economic climate persists and any increases in expenditure should be accompanied by strong evidence-based and outcome-led business cases.

- The Council's Grant Management System (GMS) has been identified as a critical tool for developing the Council's capacity to collect and analyse metrics relating to their programme spend. A review of the GMS is ongoing and this is to be welcomed. It is essential that the Council has clear objectives for programme expenditure and puts in place ways of measuring those outcomes.
- The Heritage Council should consider the administrative impact of any new policy or programme initiatives in order to maintain the ratio of admin costs to their grant, thereby ensuring that the Council remains resilient to any future financial shocks without the burden of large administration costs.

The review identified a number of findings that could be replicated in future evaluations. These are listed in the table below.

Key Findings for Future Evaluations

1. Recommendations made in reviews should have regard to capacity constraints within the implementing body and Department's should advise organisations on how to address those constraints. Training should be provided to agencies on their obligations under the Public Spending Code, with a focus on how to evaluate expenditure.

2. The full value of evaluations can only be realised if any findings or recommendations are followed up on in a timely manner. An evaluation without appropriate implementation arrangements will have limited value in the long-term. D/CHG finds the annual Quality Assurance Process to be a very useful tool to monitor implementation of recommendations on an annual basis thereby reinforcing the value of evaluations and ensuring high levels of compliance.

3. Monitoring of recommendations should be dynamic and provide for the fact that some recommendations may cease to be valid over time. Assessing the continued relevance of recommendations is necessary to avoid implementation for implementations sake. This could be done through the annual Performance Delivery Agreement process in place with the agencies, providing a mechanism to ensure compliance and a forum to discuss the continued relevance of individual findings.

4. Timelines for the implementation of recommendations arising from evaluations should be set out in reviews to ensure a high rate of compliance.

Chapter 1: Overview

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1 This paper is presented as part of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's (D/CHG) contribution to the 2019 spending review process. The purpose of spending review papers is to determine if existing policies and programmes are delivering on their stated objectives in an efficient and effective manner and to ensure that increases in funding are based on intended outcomes and not just incremental increases. This process is particularly important in a Department such as D/CHG where, in 2019, 71% of our total estimate is applied to grants to bodies under the Department's aegis. D/CHG is committed to embedding a culture of evaluation and evidence-based decision-making across the Department and the bodies under its aegis and timely assessments of implementation are critical in maximising the value of the review process. This paper assesses the implementation of the recommendations arising from a 2016 Spending Review of the Heritage Council.

1.2. Overview of the Heritage Council

1.2.1 The Heritage Council is a statutory body, established by the Heritage Act 1995 (amended by the Heritage Act 2018). Under the Act, the Heritage Council is tasked with the following functions:

- Promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage;
- Co-operate with, engage with, advise and support public authorities, local communities and persons in relation to the functions of the Council, and,
- Promote the coordination of all activities related to the functions of the Council.

1.2.2 The Heritage Council aims to ensure that Ireland's heritage is managed and conserved to enrich the lives of people now and for the future. The Council works in partnership with local communities, local authorities, voluntary groups, Government and various agencies to support heritage-related jobs, education, awareness and tourism. The Council provides grant funding to local authorities for the Heritage Officer Network and County Heritage plans, grants to communities for heritage projects and infrastructure, and supports a number of regularly funded organisations such as the Irish Landmark Trust and the National Biodiversity Centre.

1.2.3 Over the period 2010-2013 (see table 1.1), the Heritage Council, in common with all state agencies and the public sector as a whole, experienced a significant decrease in its annual funding allocation, with funding 47% lower in 2014 than 2010. There has been a sustained recovery in the Council's grant, with 2019 funding 48% higher than the 2013 level. This increase is linked to the economic recovery and subsequent improvement in public finances and could reasonably be expected to continue in line with forecasts for the Irish economy. However, the uncertainty around Brexit presents a significant downside risk. The Council's funding is provided from the Department's voted expenditure under Programme B – Heritage. The Heritage programme as a whole accounts for 22% of the Department's Vote. In 2019, the Council's grant represented 12% of the Heritage programme.

Table 1.1 Annual Heritage Council Voted Funding (2010-2019)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000
Heritage Council Exchequer Grant	8,482	5,992	4,811	4,446	4,493	4,743	5,243	6,254	6,377	6,588
% Annual Change		-29	-20	-8	+1	+6	+11	+19	+2	+3

1.2.4 Table 1.2 sets out the administration costs as a percentage of the total voted expenditure of the Council. It is notable that administration costs have remained stable, at approx. €1.9m per annum, despite increases in the Council's exchequer allocation since 2014. In addition, due to actuarial changes to the life expectancy of pensioners, the cost of pensions has increased in the past decade and despite this the Council have maintained their overall administration costs. This is largely due to a minimal increase in staffing of just one WTE¹ over the period. However, pressure for additional staffing may arise if voted expenditure continues to increase as forecast. The Heritage Council should consider the administrative impact of any new policy or programme initiatives in order to maintain the ratio of admin costs to their grant, thereby ensuring that the Council remains resilient to any future financial shocks without the burden of large administration costs.

Table 1.2 Annual Heritage Council Funding – Administration Costs (2010-2019)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Current Voted Expenditure	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000	€,000
Heritage Council	8,482	5,992	4,811	4,446	4,493	4,743	5,243	6,254	6,377	6,588
Administration² Costs	1,740	1,718	1,797	1,764	1,764	1,915	1,848	1,798	2,138	1,900
Pension costs	202	232	293	364	358	454	473	426	546	n/a
Admin as % of Total Voted Funding		29	37	40	39	40	35	29	34	29

¹ Whole Time Equivalent

² Includes pay, PRSI, pensions, allowances and non-pay current non programme expenditure.

Chapter 2: 2016 Review of the Heritage Council

2.1. 2016 Review of the Heritage Council

2.1.1 In 2016 D/CHG published a spending review of the Heritage Council which analysed the activities of the Council over the period 2010 to 2014. Undertaken by the Department's Evaluation Unit it was a wide-ranging evaluation which examined the income streams, operations, programme administration and outputs of the Council to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's operations. It also examined the consistency of the Council's strategic objectives with Government and Departmental policies.

2.2. Methodology and Limitations

2.2.1 The review used an Input-Output evaluation framework known as the Programme Logic Model (PLM), which, in addition to defining the inputs, activities and outputs of the Heritage Council, also includes its outcomes and core objectives (see Chart 2.1).

Chart 2.1 Programme Logic Model as applied to the Heritage Council

Strategic Objective 1	Strategic Objective 2	Strategic Objective 3	Strategic Objective 4
Supporting employment and job creation	Supporting education and awareness	Supporting heritage-based tourism	Supporting modern frameworks and mechanisms
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	
DAHG and other income	To promote the coordination of all activities relating to the functions of the Council.	Strategic Objective 1	
Administration and staff resources		Numbers of jobs created and maintained	
		Number of strategic partnerships developed/maintained CPD and Training and Development opportunities offered	
	To promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage.	Strategic Objective 2	
		Outputs from the Heritage in Schools scheme	
		Numbers of research/policy documents published Outputs from grant programmes and awareness raising initiatives e.g. Heritage Week	
	To co-operate with, engage with, advise and support public authorities, local communities and persons in the promotion of the functions of the Council.	Strategic Objective 3	
		Outputs from Irish Walled Towns Initiative	
		Number and scale of Community-led projects supported Membership numbers of Museum Standards Programme	
		Awareness in Irish Heritage Number and scale of County Heritage Plan projects supported	
	To propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage.	Strategic Objective 4	
		IT systems introduced to manage heritage infrastructure Participation in EU networks	
		Number of policy submissions to Government	

2.2.2 The PLM can help to identify a sequence of cause and effect concerning the intended, or unintended, benefits that can be attributed to a programme. The Heritage Council supports a wide range of diverse programmes and initiatives and therefore the model was specified at a broad level. The cause-effect relationships between inputs, activities, and outputs are not linear but are a series of complex interrelationships that are mutually reinforcing, similar to the objectives. The strategic objectives of the Heritage Council were derived from the Council's strategic plan (2012-2016) and these objectives were examined for consistency with the Heritage Act 1995, Government Policy and Departmental Policy in place in 2016.

2.2.3 Specifically, the review:

- Identified the Heritage Council's objectives and tested them for consistency with Departmental and Government policy;
- Assessed the efficiency of the Heritage Council in terms of its own running costs as well as the delivery of its annual programme of supports;
- Examined the effectiveness of the Heritage Council in achieving its objectives, and;
- Made recommendations on the future operation of the Heritage Council.

2.3. Conclusions of the 2016 review

2.3.1 The 2016 review concluded that the Heritage Council had, in general, performed well over a period of significant financial constraint and was able to demonstrate that it had largely achieved its stated strategic objectives and had achieved efficiency in its operations. The review recognised that the Heritage Council had delivered a significant programme of grants and activities over the period examined, despite the funding and resource constraints common across the public service at the time. Areas for improvement were identified in the management of the Council's annual funding programme and improved monitoring of performance and outcomes. The strategic plans that were in place during the period under review were found to be broadly in line with Government and Departmental policies, although the strategic links between individual grant schemes and activities and the wider objectives of the organisation were not always well defined. Other areas for improvement identified were in relation to the management of the annual grant programme which, it was found, could benefit from a strategic review and perhaps consolidation, more transparency around grant schemes and the assessment of applications, and an increased focus on community-led initiatives in addition to the confined or closed networks of previous grant recipients.

2.3.2 The review consistently identified the Council's strategic plan as a vehicle to address many of these recommendations. It was further recommended that the Heritage Council develop a robust performance management framework to measure the delivery and impact of the strategic plan. In general, the review found that the data collection and analyses undertaken by the Heritage Council were not at the desired level, possibly due to the limited staff resources available to undertake this work. The review considered that a comprehensive analysis of the annual grants and activity programme of the Council is essential to ensuring that resources are being used to maximum effect.

The review included twenty-five recommendations (see Appendix II for a full list) which fell into four broad categories:

- Strategic Planning and Orientation (6 Recommendations);
- Operational Arrangements (5 Recommendations);
- General Recommendations (7 Recommendations), and;
- Performance Management & Data Collection (7 Recommendations).

2.3.3 The following specific conclusions were noted in the review:

- The Council managed to operate a broad range of grant schemes to protect, conserve and promote national heritage during a period of restricted budgets and limited staff resources.
- Opportunities exist for the Council to enhance its ability to leverage funding from other sources including local government, through co-funding arrangements.
- The structure of the grants programme should be reviewed to ensure the Council's funding programme is accessible, transparent and delivers maximum output.
- The Council has consistently delivered outputs which contribute to the delivery of its strategic objectives of supporting employment and job creation, supporting education and awareness and facilitating heritage-based tourism.
- Opportunities exist to improve the delivery of the programme, including improving the diversity of organisations supported and encouraging regularly funded heritage organisations to be more financially sustainable.
- A comprehensive performance management system is required to ensure the outputs and outcomes of the State's investment are measured and analysed.

2.4 Assessing the level of Implementation

2.4.1 The objective of this paper was to assess the level of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2016 Review by the Heritage Council. It was done by:

- Conducting a review of each recommendation to assess implementation, through;
 - discussions with relevant stakeholders e.g. the Heritage Council and Departmental Heritage Division staff;
 - a literature review including the legal framework the Council operates under, which was amended in 2018, the Council's strategy statements and Departmental and Governmental heritage strategies in place in 2019;
 - a review of the programme for government, relevant research and policy documents and other relevant literature;
 - gathering up-to-date data on the Heritage Council's funding, programmes and expenditure, and;
 - Assessing the channels used to provide for implementation.
- Implementation was measured under three criteria (i) implemented, (ii) partially implemented, this is where progress was made towards full implementation through demonstrable actions on the part of the Heritage Council and (iii) to be implemented, where very little or no progress had been made by the Council in implementing the recommendation.

Chapter 3: Implementation of the Recommendations

3.1. Implementation Arrangements

3.1.1 Two main channels were identified to provide for implementation and oversight of the recommendations contained in the 2016 review:

(i) the Heritage Council's review of its Statement of Strategy, and;

(ii) D/CHG's oversight of implementation through the annual Quality Assurance Process (QAP) (see box 3.1). Annual updates on the implementation of the recommendations were sought from the Heritage Council for each year since 2017 as part of the QAP and D/CHG's formal corporate governance engagements with the Council.

3.1.2 In 2017 the Heritage Council launched a public consultation on its 2018-2022 strategy. The process sought feedback and advice from stakeholders, local and national government and all interested parties. Such a wide-ranging consultation represents best practice when developing strategic objectives for a public sector organisation. The resulting strategy, *Heritage at the Heart 2018-2022*, sets out the strategic objectives of the Council to ensure that Ireland's heritage is managed and conserved to enrich the lives of people now and for the future. The strategy incorporates many of the core principles of the 2016 review, particularly the enhanced alignment of the Council's strategic objectives with Governmental and Departmental policy. The Heritage Council intends to conduct a mid-term review of the plan in 2020; this ongoing commitment to reviewing the relevance of the Council's strategic objectives is to be welcomed. (See Appendix I for further details).

3.1.3 The enactment of the Heritage Act 2018 is also relevant to the implementation of the recommendations. The legislation realigned the functions of the Heritage Council and provided for an additional focus on engaging with local communities with the insertion of the following function for the Council: "To co-operate with, engage with, advise and support public authorities, local communities in relation to the functions of the Council".

3.2. Implementation Overview – Progress 2017 to 2019

Table 3.1 Recommendation category	Fully Implemented	Partially Implemented	To Be Implemented
Strategic Planning and Orientation	50%	50%	0%
Operational Arrangements	60%	40%	0%
General Recommendations	14%	86%	0%
Performance Management & Data Collection	14%	14%	72%
Total	28%	52%	20%

3.2.1 This paper concluded that the Heritage Council had either partially or fully implemented 80% of the review's recommendations. 28% of the recommendations have been fully implemented with a further 52% either in progress or partially implemented. 20% remain to be implemented. As illustrated in Table 3.1 the Strategic Planning and Orientation and Operational Arrangements categories saw the highest levels of full implementation at 50% and 40% respectively. The General Recommendations and Performance Management and Data Collection categories saw the lowest levels of full implementation at just 14% each. However, good progress was made in the General category with 86% of recommendations being partially implemented. The Performance Management and Data Collection saw the lowest levels of implementation with 71% of recommendations still to be implemented. The following sections deal with those recommendations which are either partially or to be implemented, while Appendix III presents fully implemented recommendations and the implementing actions taken by the Heritage Council which led to that assessment.

Box. 3.1 Monitoring Implementation of Evaluation Findings

The full value of evaluations can only be realised if findings or recommendations are followed up on in a timely manner. An evaluation without appropriate implementation arrangements will have limited value in the long-term. D/CHG has begun to utilise the annual Quality Assurance Process (QAP), a requirement under the Public Spending Code, as a means to provide for the ongoing monitoring of recommendations contained in Value for Money and Spending Reviews. Recommendations which have not been fully implemented are included in the QAP and remain there until they have been actioned. This process provides the Department with a mechanism to monitor the ongoing implementation of recommendations, thereby reinforcing the value of evaluations. D/CHG will also include implementation of recommendations as a Key Performance Indicator in the annual Performance Delivery Agreements (PDA's) between the Department and the bodies under its aegis. This will provide an additional mechanism to monitor recommendations on an annual basis through the line Divisions who have overall corporate responsibility for the bodies, thereby closing the feedback loop. While both the OAP and PDA's offer opportunities for ongoing monitoring the process of evaluation must also be dynamic and allow organisations to evolve. Some recommendations may cease to be valid over time due to developments in a body or the broader corporate governance context and assessing their continued relevance, through the PDA and QAP will prevent implementation for implementations sake. Finally, the 2016 Review of the Heritage Council did not provide deadlines for implementation of the recommendations; this may have led to a lower level of compliance than desired, particularly in the Performance Management and Data analysis category. It is recommended that all evaluations and reviews set deadlines for implementation of any findings in order to ensure high levels of compliance.

3.3. Implementation of Strategic Planning and Orientation Recommendations

3.3.1 Six recommendations, 24% of the total, were made in the 2016 review which related to the Heritage Council’s Strategic Planning and Orientation. This category saw the highest levels of implementation with 100% of the recommendations either fully or partially implemented. This is largely due to the development of the Heritage Council's new strategic plan *Heritage at the Heart* which refocused the Council's strategic objectives to more closely align them with their legislative remit and Government and Departmental heritage policy. The following paragraphs assess the implementation actions undertaken by the Heritage Council in relation to those recommendations which are not yet fully implemented. (See Appendix III for details of fully implemented recommendations). Table 3.2 shows each recommendation in the Strategic Planning and Orientation category which have not yet been implemented and the actions which the Heritage Council has undertaken to date.

Chart 3.2 Implementation of Strategic Planning and Orientation Recommendations

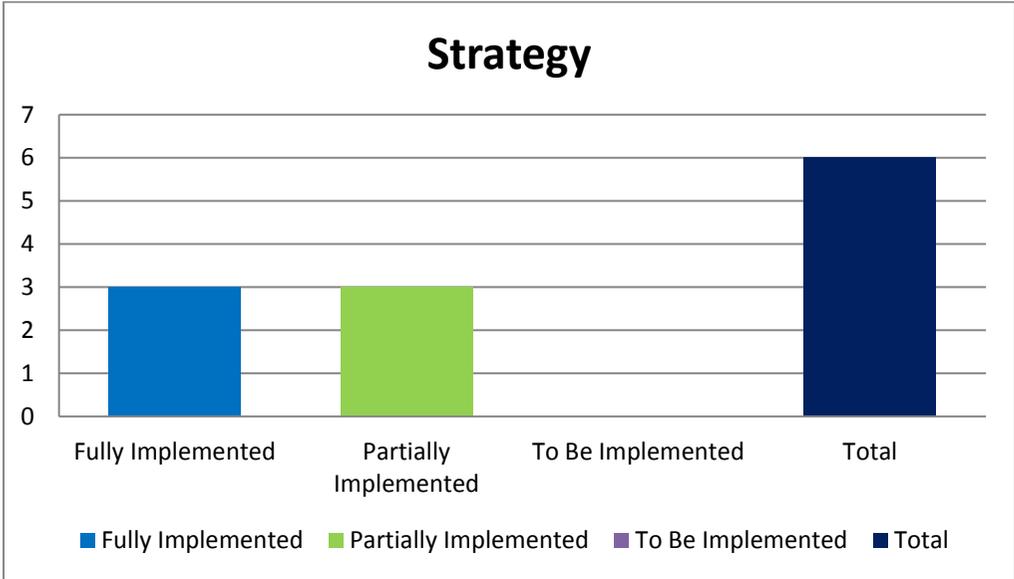


Table 3.2 Strategic Planning and Orientation Recommendations

Recommendation	Implementation Assessment	Implementation Actions
<p>The 2016 review noted that the Heritage Council was negotiating a strategic agreement with the City and County Management Association (CCMA), the results of which should be incorporated into the new strategic plan. As part of these processes, it was recommended that the Council may wish to consider examining options for the cessation, over time, of the co-funding arrangements of Heritage Officers and the introduction of matched funding for County Heritage Plan projects in order to maximise the utility of available funding and resources for the protection, conservation and promotion of national heritage.</p>	<p>Partially Implemented</p>	<p>The "Framework for Collaboration" agreement was signed by the Heritage Council and the CCMA in 2018. The framework agreement recognises the centrality of the relationship between the Heritage Council and Local Government and the importance of a shared vision for Ireland's heritage. The Heritage Council works closely with the Local Authorities across a number of areas. This activity is a useful means of leveraging the Council's funding and is to be commended and expanded where possible. Areas of co-operation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Officers, County Heritage Forums, County Heritage Plans • Biodiversity Officers, Field Monument Advisors • Irish Walled Town Network • Museum Standards Programme for Ireland • National Heritage Week • Irish Uplands Partnerships • Town Centre Health Check Programme, Community-led Village Design Statements and, Public Realm Plans • The Heritage Council's role as a statutory planning consultee <p>One of the Heritage Council's key strategic partnerships is its Heritage Officer co-funding arrangement with Local Authorities with the Council providing co-funding of 25% of the costs of these positions at an average annual cost to the Heritage Council of €515,750, (9% of the 2019 programme spend. Given that the positions are now well established within the local authority system such incentives may no longer be required, allowing the transfer of up to a tenth of the Council's annual programme</p>

		funding to other strategic priorities e.g. the same level of funding could be provided to the Local Authorities for heritage programme activities. A review of the Heritage Officers funding has not yet been completed but is on the agenda for discussion as part of the CCMA framework agreement.
The review recommended that the Heritage Council consider reviewing the structure and orientation of its annual grant programme to ensure that the programme's priorities are in alignment with the new strategic plan.	Partially Implemented	While there is ongoing review and discussion around grant programmes, no formal review of the grant programme outcomes' alignment with the strategic objectives in <i>Heritage at the Heart</i> has yet been undertaken. However, reviews of the National Biodiversity Data Centre, the Discovery Programme and the Museum Standards programme have been initiated in 2019.
Consider introducing a rolling-programme of in-depth evaluations to ensure that all schemes are relevant to the strategic plan and contribute to the delivery of the strategic objectives contained therein. Consider undertaking a needs assessment prior to introducing new schemes.	Partially Implemented	D/CHG is of the view that the Heritage Council should try to undertake 1-2 reviews per annum, as resources allow, to ensure a rolling evaluation of all grants is built into the Council's annual work programme and that a needs assessment and extensive business case are prepared prior to introducing new schemes.

3.4. Implementation of Operational Arrangements Recommendations

3.4.1 Five recommendations, 20% of the total, were made in the 2016 review which related to the Heritage Council's Operational Arrangements. 100% of these have either been fully (40%) or partially (60%) implemented. The following paragraphs assess the implementation actions undertaken by the Heritage Council in relation those recommendations which have not yet been fully implemented (See Appendix III for details of fully implemented recommendations). Table 3.3 examines the outstanding recommendations and any actions the Heritage Council has undertaken to date to provide for implementation.

Chart 3.3 Implementation of Operational Recommendations

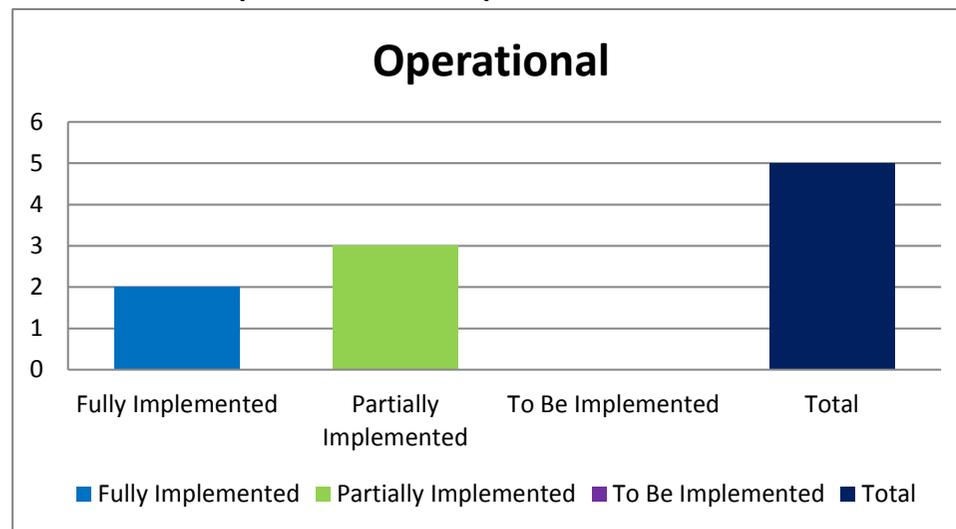


Table 3.3 Operational Recommendations

Recommendation	Implementation Assessment	Implementation Actions
To ensure that the opportunity of leveraging of Heritage Council funding through co-funding arrangements is fully explored in future years, it was recommended that the Heritage Council consider collecting and analysing data on co-funding with local authorities, and elsewhere in its programme, on an annual basis and amend its programme as necessary based on the analysis.	Partially Implemented	The Heritage Council have appointed consultants to carry out a review of their Grants Management System (GMS) to ascertain how the system can be used to improve upon reporting and how best to capture and utilise the information contained in the database. However, no formal review of the co-funding arrangements and leveraging opportunities has yet been undertaken. The framework agreement with the CCMA is to be welcomed and is considered a useful means of obtaining relevant data on co-funding from the local authorities. It is recommended that the Heritage Council seek to add this to the agenda for CCMA Steering Group meetings.
The Heritage Council review its pay and	Partially	It is notable that administration costs have remained stable, at approx. €1.9m

<p>non-pay administration costs to ensure that they are maintained at as low a level as possible in order to maximise the funding available for the annual programme.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>	<p>per annum, despite increases in the Council's exchequer allocation since 2014. This is largely due to a minimal increase in staffing of just one WTE³ over the period. However, pressure for additional staffing may arise if voted expenditure continues to increase as forecast. The Heritage Council should consider the administrative impact of any new policy or programme initiatives in order to maintain the ratio of admin costs to their grant, thereby ensuring that the Council remains resilient to any future financial shocks without the burden of large administration costs.</p>
<p>Ensure that all posts in partner organisations contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic plan and that there is no overlap or duplication in functions between the Heritage Council and the organisations supported.</p>	<p>Partially Implemented</p>	<p>Service Level Agreements or contracts are in place with partner organisations to ensure no duplication in functions and to tie funding into the Council's strategic objectives. Reviews of the Discovery Programme and the National Biodiversity Data Centre are planned.</p>

3.5. Implementation of General Recommendations

3.5.1 Seven general recommendations, 28% of the total, were made in the 2016 review, of these one has been fully implemented (14%) and 6 (86%) have been partially implemented. These recommendations continue to require monitoring and vigilance on the part of the Heritage Council. The Department is cognisant that the significant budgetary reductions, suffered by all public sector organisations during the economic crisis, (in 2011 the Council received 38% less in funding than in 2019) has contributed to some capacity constraints in the Heritage Council. Constraints such as limited staffing resources, a lack of evaluation expertise and limited funding to outsource the type of ongoing reviews required has meant that the implementation of these general recommendations has been slower than desired. It should be noted that three reviews were initiated in 2019 of the Discovery Programme, the National Biodiversity Centre and the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland and this is to be welcomed, the Council is committed to continuing with that process over the coming years. Table 3.4 shows each recommendation in the General category which have not yet been implemented and the actions which the Heritage Council has undertaken to date to progress implementation (See Appendix III for details of fully implemented recommendations).

³ Whole Time Equivalent

Chart 3.4 Implementation of General Recommendations

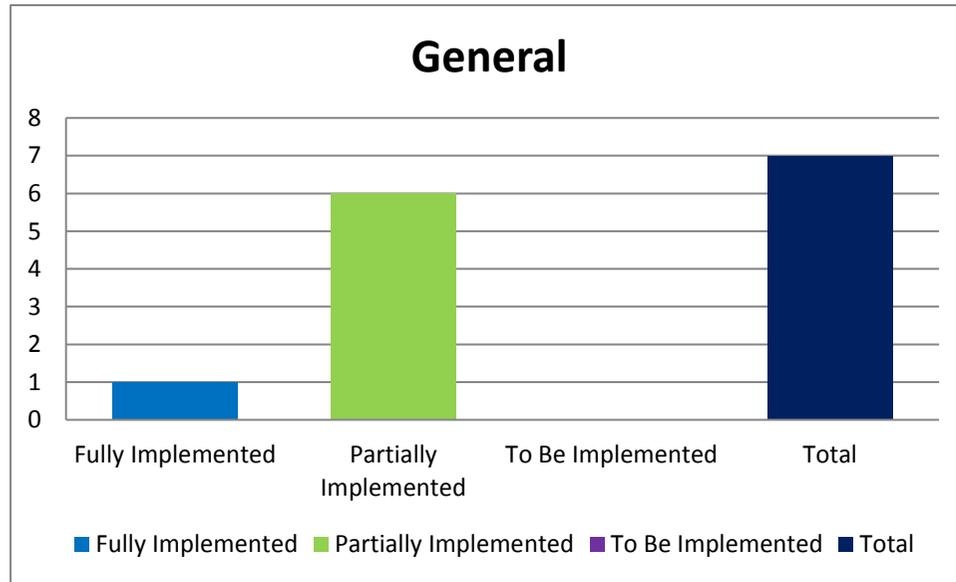


Table 3.4 General recommendations		
Recommendation	Implementation Assessment	Implementation Actions
Onward grants should comply with the requirements of DPER's circular 13/2014.	Partially Implemented	The annual PDA with the Heritage Council provides oversight on the implementation of D/PER Circular 13/2014 – Management and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds. Compliance has improved in recent years, e.g. for 2019 Service Level Agreements (SLA's) or contracts, as appropriate, are in place with regularly funded organisations. However some work in relation to onward grants is required. Monitoring and control systems need to be in operation to allow for the provision of details of onward grants to the Department. Some schemes' guidelines e.g. community grants, reflect the circular, vigilance needs to be exercised to ensure full compliance across

		all onward grant funding provided. Council staff should receive training on the circular and the Public Spending Code.
Ensure that information on all grant schemes, including scheme objectives, eligibility and assessment criteria, scoring matrices, maximum grant levels and co-funding requirements, are easily accessible through its website. It should also make public its appeals process.	Partially Implemented	Information on an appeals process and lists of all previous grant awards are available on the website. However, the guidelines and application forms for previous grant award schemes are not available. These should be made available on the website, where relevant. This would help future applicants to understand fully the objectives of each scheme, what scoring matrix applies and what types of information the Heritage Council seeks when making grant awards. The Heritage Council engaged the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) in 2017 to review and ensure that grants information was clear. NALA awarded a "Plain English" mark to the information for the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage grant scheme. Such partnerships to improve the accessibility of the Heritage Council's funding are to be welcomed.
Expand arrangements for using expert panels to all grant schemes.	Partially Implemented	Expert panels are used in the European Year of Cultural Heritage Community grants, GLAS scheme evaluations and Heritage Town Initiatives. Conflict of interest policies have been put in place. However, the use of expert panels should be used for all schemes and there should be no assessments only by individuals apart from screening assessments which examine the eligibility of an application but do not assess the quality of the application which should be left to the expert panel or the Council board.
Ensure that the grants programme does not include schemes with duplicate or overlapping objectives so as to ensure that a single application for each project is all that can be made.	Partially Implemented	The Heritage Council operates a small number of grant schemes and is of the view that there is little potential for duplication of objectives. However, it is recommended that a review is conducted to ensure no duplication exists, as part of the implementation of the strategic plan. The review should also ensure that there is no duplication with infrastructural grants offered by the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht and the Department of the Environment and those offered by the Heritage Council.
Consideration could also be given to opportunities to open up confined and	Partially Implemented	The majority of the Heritage Council's funding is provided to either Local Authorities or regularly funded organisations (RFO's). The Council operates a

<p>heritage infrastructure support schemes to new organisations, albeit on a partial basis in order to maintain the focus of the existing schemes.</p>		<p>small number of open grant schemes and this should be kept under review as increasing community grant schemes is critical in the context of the Council's amended statutory responsibilities under the Heritage Act 2018. It is noted however, that funding to the RFO's would be difficult to reduce as, without the support of the Heritage Council, many of the RFO's would not be in a position to operate or the quality of the organisations operations would be severely diminished e.g. the Irish Landmark Trust, the National Biodiversity Centre etc..</p>
<p>For regularly funded organisations, a three-yearly review is recommended to avoid overdependence on Heritage Council funding. In general, the provision of core funding should only be provided in exceptional cases to avoid developing a network of heritage organisations which are wholly or significantly dependant on Heritage Council funding.</p>	<p>Partially Implemented</p>	<p>As required under circular 13/2014 Service Level Agreements, or contracts as appropriate, are in place with the largest regularly funded organisations, setting out the objectives of the funding and the outputs required, and this is to be welcomed. Reviews of the Discovery Programme, the National Biodiversity Centre and the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland were initiated in 2019. Much work has been done to improve on compliance in recent years, however further efforts are required to ensure that onward grants are appropriately managed. Monitoring and control systems need to be in operation in relation to any onward grant funding to allow for the provision of details to the Department, along with details of the terms and conditions applying to such onward grants. While some schemes' guidelines, e.g. community grants, reflect the circular, vigilance needs to be exercised to ensure full compliance across all onward grant funding provided by the Council. It is recommended that Council staff dealing with grants should receive training on the circular and the Public Spending Code generally</p>

3.6. Implementation of Performance Management and Data Collection Recommendations

3.6.1 Seven recommendations, 28% of the total, were made around performance management and data collection. Of the seven recommendations one has been fully implemented (14%), five (72%) have yet to be implemented and one (14%) is partially implemented. The following paragraphs assess the extent to which the outstanding recommendations have been implemented, (see Appendix III for details of the

fully implemented recommendation). Table 3.5 shows each recommendation in the Performance Management and Data Collection category which have not yet been implemented and the actions which the Heritage Council has undertaken to date.

3.6.2 The 2016 review consistently noted that data collection and analyses undertaken by the Heritage Council was not at the desired level, possibly due to limited staff resources/expertise to undertake this work, hence the large number of recommendations made in this category. This is particularly relevant in light of the continued, albeit modest, increases in the Council's exchequer grant over the past number of years. This trend is forecast to continue if the current favourable economic climate persists and any increases in expenditure should be accompanied by strong evidence-based and outcome-led business cases. The purpose of these recommendations was to improve the data collection and policy analysis capabilities of the Heritage Council to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's programme spend. While the Department is cognisant of the capacity constraints, it is essential that the Council has clear objectives for programme expenditure and puts in place ways of measuring those outcomes.

Chart 3.5 Implementation of Performance Management and Data Collection Recommendations

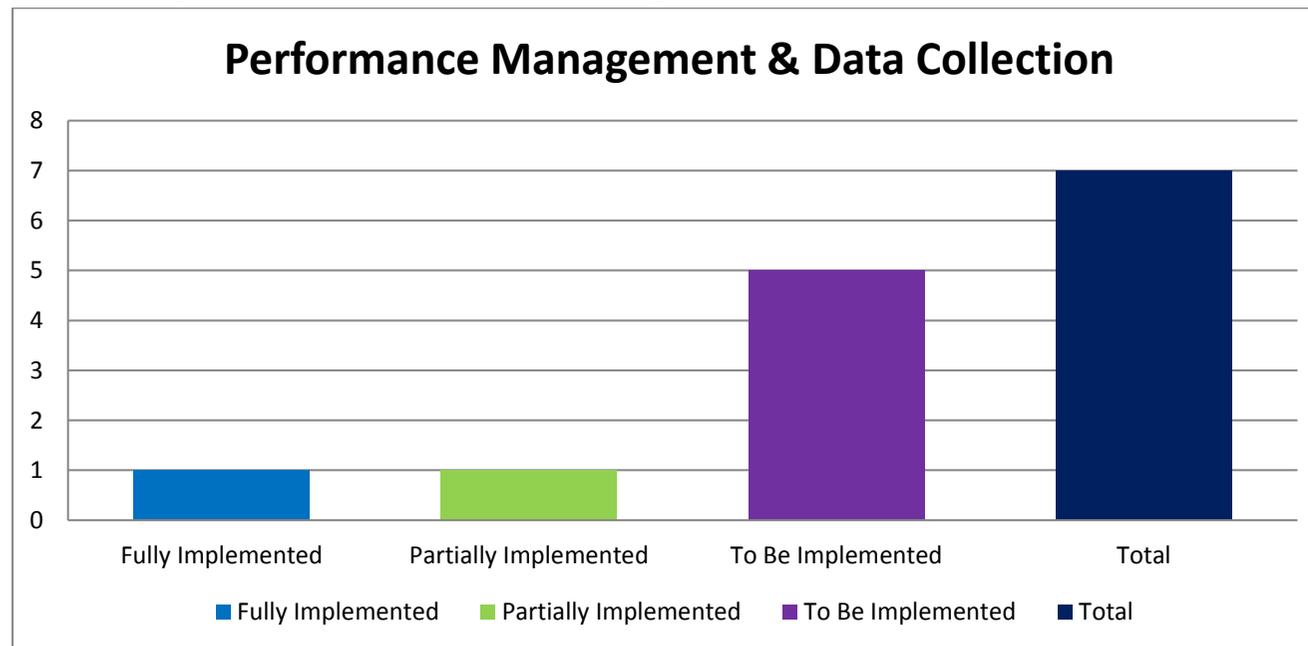


Table 3.5 Performance Management and Data Collection recommendations

Recommendation	Implementation Assessment	Implementation Actions
<p>Undertake periodic reviews of schemes, including outputs generated to assess the value for money achieved and the impact of the scheme in delivering on the organisation’s strategic objectives. In relation to research grants, introducing a peer-review process could be considered. Reviewing data on applications may give useful insights into where the demand for heritage supports lies with a view to reorienting, where necessary, the grants programme in response.</p>	<p>Partially Implemented</p>	<p>A review of the Discovery Programme is underway in 2019 and reviews of the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland initiated. While a number of reviews have taken place in the past number of years, e.g. procurement, strategic plan and a review of the Council's grant management scheme is being undertaken, these reviews have largely concentrated on governance and operational matters rather than policy analysis. It is considered that upcoming reviews should focus on funding provided by the Heritage Council in order to evaluate outputs and outcomes of the funding. The review of the INSTAR programme (Cunliffe, Barry (2010) – <i>The Irish Strategic Archaeological Research Programme – A Review of the first two years of its operation and future development</i>, Oxford) serves as a useful template for the type of programme research envisaged. A commitment to 1-2 annual programme reviews is recommended to ensure that a culture of evaluation is embedded in the organisation. In terms of peer review of research grants, the Heritage Council has initiated discussions with the Irish Research Council with regard to that organisation providing assistance with the research grant programme and building in a peer review model. Such an approach is to be welcomed and would provide the necessary rigour envisaged in terms of academic peer review.</p>
<p>A retrospective review of the total costs of each project, including any additional funding secured by the grant recipients, should be undertaken to better understand the costs involved and, as appropriate, to use this information to set a maximum grant level for future</p>	<p>To be implemented</p>	<p>No such review has been undertaken to date. However, consultants have been appointed to carry out a review of the Council's Grants Management System (GMS). It would be desirable that any new or updated GMS would have adequate reporting and data analytics. This would provide the Council with the technical resources to accurately collect and analyse data on its grant programmes including, but not limited to, matching funding, jobs leveraging, geographical spread, outputs, audiences etc. The update of the</p>

<p>iterations of grant schemes.</p>		<p>GMS system offers the Heritage Council a unique opportunity to both manage its grants and develop a rich source of metrics upon which the Council can evaluate the grants and funding supports it offers and to ensure value for money basing funding on intended outcomes.</p>
<p>Consideration of regional distribution, both in terms of funding and projects, should form part of the annual analysis of the grant programme.</p>	<p>To be implemented</p>	<p>No such review has been undertaken to date. However, as previously mentioned, a review of the Council's Grants Management System (GMS) is being undertaken. It would be advantageous to include spatial and regional metrics in the new system to allow the Council to measure the impact of their activities on a geographical basis. In addition, the new agreement with the CCMA, offers the Council the opportunity to collect geographical information and it is recommended that the Council consider that as part of their framework agreement with the CCMA.</p>
<p>Understanding of the profile of grant recipients, both at individual scheme level and across the whole grant programme, is considered useful in ensuring that funding and supports are as broadly distributed as possible to ensure maximum impact.</p>	<p>To be implemented</p>	<p>No such review has been undertaken to date. However, as previously mentioned, a review of the Council's Grants Management System (GMS) is being undertaken. It would be desirable that any new or updated GMS would have adequate reporting and data analytics. This would the Council with the technical resources to accurately collect and analyse data on its grant programmes and gain a deeper understanding of the profile of the Council's grant recipients, to ensure fair and adequate distribution of funding.</p>
<p>The grant application process invites applicants to submit information on the estimated staff and labour costs associated with the application. This information presents an important opportunity to gain valuable insight into the jobs leveraged by the funding. It is recommended that the Heritage Council consider routinely analysing this information at application stage and</p>	<p>To be implemented</p>	<p>No such review has been undertaken to date. In advance of the GMS being updated the Council could consider using application forms as a means of collecting and collating data on job leveraging and, perhaps, include a mandatory survey as part of the grants process if recipients were successful. The grant application process offers the Heritage Council with a valuable means of obtaining a number of relevant metrics.</p>

<p>compare it with the same information following the completion of the project or initiative to determine the employment impact of its annual funding programme.</p>		
<p>Give consideration to the merits of introducing a formal performance management system as part of its new strategic plan.</p>	<p>To be implemented</p>	<p>No structured data collection and performance management framework in place. Consultants have been appointed to carry out a review of the Council's Grants Management System. It would be desirable that any new or updated GMS would have adequate reporting and data analytics to provide the Council with the technical resources to accurately collect and analyse data on its grant programmes. In addition, the grant application forms and grant awarding processes should be fully exploited to provide a means of data capture which in turn would allow for additional impact and efficiency analysis to be undertaken.</p>

Chapter 4: Conclusions

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 There are three strands to the conclusions of this paper:

- (i) those relating to the Heritage Council's implementation to date of recommendations contained in the 2016 review;
- (ii) additional recommendations for the Heritage Council arising from the analysis contained in this paper, and;
- (iii) lessons learned with could be applied to future evaluations across all Government Departments.

4.1.2 The ongoing efforts of the Heritage Council to work towards full implementation of recommendations contained in the 2016 Review are noted. D/CHG, through the Heritage Division's corporate governance monitoring and, the Evaluation Unit's annual QAP, will continue to work in partnership with the Council to monitor outstanding recommendations.

Table 4.1 Heritage Council Implementation of 2016 Review Recommendations
The Heritage Council made good progress on implementation of the recommendations with 80% assessed as either fully or partially implemented. 28% were fully implemented, 52% were partially implemented and 20% remain to be implemented.
Recommendations relating to strategic orientation and planning had the highest level of implementation with 100% either fully or partially implemented. This was largely due to the development of the Council's new Statement of Strategy 2018-2020 <i>Heritage at the Heart</i> , which more closely aligned the Council's strategic orientation with Governmental and Departmental Heritage policy.
Recommendations relating to Performance Management and Data Collection had the lowest level of implementation with 71% remaining to be implemented. This finding reflects a capacity constraint in the Council around its internal analytical capacity and it is recommended that they focus on developing in-house expertise to evaluate expenditure. This is particularly relevant in light of the continued, albeit modest, increases in the Council's exchequer grant over the past number of years. This trend is forecast to continue if the current favourable economic climate persists and any increases in expenditure should be accompanied by strong evidence-based and outcome-led business cases.
The Council's Grant Management System (GMS) has been identified as a critical tool for developing the Council's capacity to collect and analyse metrics relating to their programme spend. A review of the GMS is ongoing and this is to be welcomed. It is essential that the Council has clear objectives for programme expenditure and puts in place ways of measuring those outcomes.
The Council should consider the administrative impact of new initiatives to maintain the ratio of admin costs to their grant, allowing the Council to remain resilient to any future financial shocks without the burden of large administrative costs.

4.1.3 This paper makes some additional recommendations as well as identifying ongoing issues from the 2016 review. Table 4.2 lists these by reference to the original recommendation category.

Table 4.2 Additional Recommendations	
Strategic Planning and Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Heritage Council should consider introducing a programme of 1-2 reviews per annum to ensure a rolling evaluation of all grants is built into the Council's annual work programme. • A needs assessment and business case should be undertaken prior to the introduction of any new schemes.
Operational Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CCMA agreement is considered as a useful means of obtaining relevant data on co-funding leveraging from local authorities. The Council should consider having this included on the agenda for CCMA Steering Group meetings. • Administration costs should remain under constant review to ensure that they do not become a burden to the effective operation of the Council. • An update on compliance with procurement regulations and DPER Circular 13/2014 should be added to agenda for the quarterly liaison meetings between the Council and D/CHG.
General Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and control systems need to be in operation in relation to onward grant funding and specifically compliance with Circular 13/2014. Staff dealing with grants should receive training in this regard.
Performance Management & Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council needs to increase its focus on developing in-house expertise to evaluate the Council's baseline expenditure, to ensure that value for money for the exchequer is being delivered. • The Council should consider using application forms to obtain metrics and perhaps include a mandatory survey for applicants. • The Council should consider more routine analysis and the development of a performance indicator set for grants.

4.1.4 The review identified a number of findings that can be usefully implemented across the Department, and government as a whole. These are listed in the table below.

Table 4.3 Key Findings for Future Evaluations
1. Recommendations made in reviews should have regard to capacity constraints within the implementing body and Department's should advise organisations on how to address those constraints. Training should be provided to agencies on their obligations under the Public Spending Code, with a focus on how to evaluate expenditure.

2. The full value of evaluations can only be realised if any findings or recommendations are followed up on in a timely manner. An evaluation without appropriate implementation arrangements will have limited value in the long-term. D/CHG finds the annual Quality Assurance Process to be a very useful tool to monitor implementation of recommendations on an annual basis thereby reinforcing the value of evaluations and ensuring high levels of compliance.

3. Monitoring of recommendations should be dynamic and provide for the fact that some recommendations may cease to be valid over time. Assessing the continued relevance of recommendations is necessary to avoid implementation for implementation's sake. This could be done through the annual Performance Delivery Agreement process in place with the agencies, providing a mechanism to ensure compliance and a forum to discuss the continued relevance of individual findings.

4. Timelines for the implementation of recommendations arising from evaluations should be set out in reviews to ensure a high rate of compliance.

4.2 Ongoing Implementation

4.2.1 Recommendations that this paper assessed as being either partially or to be implemented will continue to be monitored as part of the Department's QAP and will remain there until fully implemented. The Department will also include implementation of the outstanding recommendations as a performance indicator in the annual Performance Delivery Agreement with the Heritage Council. As part of both of these monitoring processes the outstanding recommendations will be examined for their ongoing validity to avoid implementation for implementation's sake.

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Appendix I: Heritage at the Heart Strategic Goals.

Strategic Goal	Actions to Achieve the Goal
Goal 1	The Heritage Council will:
Advance National Heritage Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Fulfil the statutory responsibilities set out in the Heritage Act 1995 and, where necessary, seek improvements in the legislative framework to advance national heritage priorities; ii. Provide leadership in delivering evidence-based policy advice in areas such as vernacular architecture, measuring the social and economic value of heritage, as well as policies on landscape, biodiversity and urban regeneration; iii. Assist in the formulation and implementation of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2018-2027 known as Project Ireland 2040; iv. Support the development of programmes that monitor change to heritage and devise programmes that care for natural, built and cultural heritage in Ireland; v. Contribute to the development of a National Heritage Plan with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; vi. Develop policies and programmes to promote the sustainability of rural communities and landscapes; vii. Work in partnership with Creative Ireland programming; viii. Ensure that the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (EYCH) promotes the significance of Ireland's heritage in a European context and that the year generates a heritage legacy, and; ix. Engage with local and European networks to identify their benefits for Ireland.
Goal 2	
Nurture Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Advocate for the strong contribution heritage can make in the regeneration of urban and rural landscapes; ii. Assist in improving the housing situation by developing strategies with local authorities that deal with unused historic buildings; iii. Respond to the challenges of Brexit by addressing any resulting identity issues and by focusing on areas where heritage has a relevance so as to minimise any potentially negative impacts; iv. Implement programmes and initiatives, through grants, Heritage Week, Heritage in Schools and many others, that reward creative ways of promoting a sense of belonging and that also celebrate diversity within communities; v. Encourage the involvement of culturally diverse groups in heritage-related activities;

Goal 3
Ensure a
Vibrant
Heritage
Sector

- vi. **Contribute** to the National Landscape Strategy by investing in landscape partnerships and by encouraging new collaborations;
 - vii. **Work** with central and local government and local communities to examine the access and indemnity issues associated with places of special cultural or natural interest;
 - viii. **Develop** proposals to improve the quality of heritage management including, for example, in areas such as conservation and invasive species;
 - ix. **Endeavour** to create more opportunities for young people to participate in and to lead heritage projects, and;
 - x. **Support** projects that celebrate the Irish diaspora and the heritage of new communities in Ireland.
-
- i. **Support** the local authority Officer Network and assess how the range of local heritage services can be expanded to maximise the leadership role of local authorities.
 - ii. **Involve** local communities in caring for heritage by providing supports such as grants, training and capacity building opportunities as well as community archaeology and citizen science initiatives;
 - iii. **Develop** the digital platform for Irish heritage by building on the Heritage Council's Heritage Maps initiative (www.heritagemaps.ie) which being alert to the vulnerability of digital heritage assets;
 - iv. **Support** the generation and communication of information on natural and cultural heritage;
 - v. **Increase** the quality of online information to advocate for heritage, to provide a comprehensive national resource and to connect heritage groups and interests;
 - vi. **Foster** the heritage sector by supporting a range of heritage organisations, which currently include the National Biodiversity Data Centre, the Discovery Programme, the Irish Landmark Trust, and the Wicklow Upland Council;
 - vii. **Provide** support for Ireland's museums and collections through initiatives like the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) and initiate a review of the MSPI;
 - viii. **Promote** the educational & leisure benefits of community heritage projects;
 - ix. **Provide** support for future generations in their appreciation of heritage through schools programmes;
 - x. **Examine** the integration of heritage in the formal education system with a view to using new and emerging curricula to showcase the value of heritage research, and;
 - xi. **Develop** heritage research programmes that nurture innovation and foster communication among stakeholders.

Appendix II: Assessment of 2016 Review Recommendations

Strategic Planning and Orientation Recommendations	
Although the Heritage Council's strategic plans and objectives were found to be largely consistent with Government and Departmental policy as well as with its statutory functions, the review considered that there were opportunities to improve this consistency in the forthcoming strategic plan, particularly in relation to the establishment of an evidence-base to inform policy making.	Fully Implemented
The review recommended that the new strategic plan should have particular regard to the commitments in the Programme for Partnership Government (2016) and, where possible, align its objectives with that programme including in relation to supporting heritage-based tourism, enhancing its strategic partnership with local government and other agencies, and on contributing evidence-based policy advice to the development of the new National Heritage Plan as co-ordinated by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.	Fully Implemented
The review noted that the Heritage Council was negotiating a strategic partnership agreement with the City and County Management Association the results of which should be incorporated into the new strategic plan. As part of these processes, the Council may wish to consider examining options for the cessation, over time, of the co-funding arrangements of Heritage Officers and the introduction of matched funding for County Heritage Plan projects within a new agreement on how local government and the Heritage Council can maximise the utility of available funding and resources for the protection, conservation and promotion of national heritage.	Partially Implemented
The review also recommended that the Council's staff structure be examined in the context of the new strategic plan to ensure it remains fit for purpose, and that consideration be given to the ways in which posts in partnership organisations, supported by the Heritage Council, may be mobilised to complement the work of the Council in delivering on its strategic objectives.	Fully Implemented
The review recommended that the Council consider reviewing the structure and orientation of its annual grant programme to ensure that the programme's priorities are in alignment with the new strategic plan.	Partially Implemented
The Council consider introducing a rolling-programme of in-depth evaluations of individual grant schemes to ensure that all schemes are relevant to the strategic plan and contribute to the delivery of the strategic objectives contained therein. The Council should consider undertaking a needs assessment prior to introducing	Partially Implemented

new schemes and ensure new schemes are explicitly identified as a priority within its Strategic Plan.	
Operational Arrangements Recommendations	
Leveraging of Council funding through co-funding arrangements should be explored, the Council should consider collecting and analysing data on co-funding with local authorities, and elsewhere annually.	Partially implemented
Review pay and non-pay administration costs to maximise the funding available for the annual programme.	Partially Implemented
Rigorous procurement processes, including fixed price contracts, should be used to ensure costs are managed.	Fully Implemented
Ensure contract posts have clearly defined roles, targets and timelines linked to the organisation's strategic objectives and comply with DPER's guidance on the management of fixed-term contracts.	Fully Implemented
Posts in partnership organisations supported by the Heritage Council should be reviewed to ensure that they contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic plan and that there is no overlap or duplication in functions.	Partially Implemented
General Recommendations	
All grants should comply with the requirements of DPER circular 13/2014 on the management of grants.	Partially Implemented
Ensuring that information on all grant schemes, including objectives, eligibility criteria, assessment criteria, scoring matrices, maximum grant levels, co-funding requirements and appeals process are accessible online.	Partially Implemented
Expand arrangements for using expert panels to all grant schemes, rather than assessments by individuals. The existing arrangements for dealing with conflicts of interest which apply to Council members should apply also.	Partially Implemented
Review the current practice of retrospective noting by the Heritage Council of ad hoc grants awarded by the executive.	Fully Implemented
Consider ways of ensuring that the grants programme does not include schemes with duplicate or overlapping objectives so that only a single application for each project can be made.	Partially Implemented
While number of open grant schemes has been reduced in line with the availability of resources, the Council should exercise caution in continuing this trend in light of the new policy focus on community initiatives to avoid any negative perceptions about limited public access to Council funding. Opening up confined and heritage infrastructure support schemes to new organisations should be considered.	Partially Implemented
Grants awarded to regularly funded organisations should define the objectives of this scheme, the outputs required and any conditions attached to the grant e.g. governance, reporting, outputs. Grants awarded under these schemes should be underpinned, in all cases, by a robust Service Level Agreement and comply with	Partially Implemented

Circular 13/2014. In cases of multi-annual grants, a three-yearly review is recommended to avoid overdependence on Heritage Council funding to avoid developing a network of heritage organisations which are wholly or significantly dependant on Heritage Council funding.	
Performance Management and Data Collection	
Undertake periodic reviews of schemes, including the outputs generated, to assess the value for money achieved and the impact on the organisation’s strategic objectives. A peer-review process for research grants should be considered and reviewing data on applications to give insight into the demand for heritage supports.	Partially Implemented
Undertake retrospective review of the total costs of each project, including any additional funding secured by the grant recipients, to better understand the costs involved and, as appropriate, to use this information to set a maximum grant level for future iterations of grant schemes.	To be implemented
Consideration of the regional distribution both in terms of funding and projects should form part of the annual analysis of the grant programme.	To be implemented
Gain an understanding of the profile of grant recipients across the whole grant programme, to ensure that funding and supports are as broadly distributed as possible maximising impact for the Council’s resources.	To be implemented
The Council should analyse information gathered in the grant application process e.g. estimated staff and labour costs etc. This information presents an important opportunity to gain valuable insight into the jobs leveraged by Council funding. The Council should compare the application stage information with the same information following the completion of the project to determine impact of the funding.	To be implemented
The Council should consider undertaking regular research into the public’s awareness and understanding of national heritage. The possibility of utilising omnibus research vehicles which may provide a way of undertaking some elements of previous commissioned surveys more regularly at a lower cost than bespoke surveys.	Fully Implemented
While there is a cost involved in introducing new data collection methodologies and a performance management framework, it is considered vital that the Heritage Council give close consideration to the merits in introducing a formal performance management system as part of its new strategic plan.	To be implemented

Appendix III: Fully Implemented Recommendations.

Recommendation	Implementation Actions
Strategic Planning and Orientation	
<p>The Heritage Council’s strategic objectives were found to be largely consistent with Government and Departmental policy, as well as with its statutory functions, the review considered that there were opportunities to improve this consistency in the forthcoming strategic plan, particularly in relation to the establishment of an evidence-base to inform policy making.</p>	<p>The Heritage Council 2018-2020 "<i>Heritage at the Heart</i>" strategy largely addresses this recommendation by aligning itself with both Government Policy and the Department's strategic objectives for the Heritage Sector. In addition, the strategy also addresses the statutory intent of the Heritage Act 2018, including the updated function to engage with communities. The Programme for Government "<i>Programme for a Partnership Government 2016</i>" also contains a number of references to heritage as set out in table 1a and Departmental Strategic Objectives and the alignment therewith of the Heritage Council strategic goals are illustrated in Table 1b.</p>
<p>The new strategic plan should have particular regard to the commitments in the Programme for Partnership Government (2016) and align its objectives with that programme including in relation to supporting heritage-based tourism, enhancing its strategic partnership with local government and other agencies, and on contributing evidence-based policy advice to the development of the new National Heritage Plan.</p>	
<p>Examine the Council's staff structure to ensure it remains fit for purpose, and that consideration be given to the ways in which posts in partnership organisations may be mobilised to complement the work of the Council in delivering on its strategic objectives.</p>	<p>The Heritage Council is delivering an extremely broad service with a staff of fifteen⁴ employees. This has been achieved with only one additional FTE since 1995. The Council has engaged with the annual Workforce Planning (WFP) process with the Department and has been flexible in its approach to meeting its statutory responsibilities to deliver quality services within resources. An implementation plan, to assist with delivery of the strategic objectives contained in the Council's strategic plan "<i>Heritage at the Heart 2018-2022</i>", which will</p>

⁴ Only fourteen of the staff are paid from the D/CHG grant, the fifteenth post is paid for by the Department of Agriculture who fund the traditional farm buildings coordinator.

	<p>include a review of the staffing required, is currently being drafted which will specify the resources required to adequately deliver on the Council's new strategic plan. Any proposed new posts and their prioritisation in line with the Council's strategic objectives will be considered by the Department and will be subject to the usual delegated sanction arrangements.</p> <p>The Heritage Council has implemented Service Level Agreements with partnership organisations to ensure that duplication of roles with the Heritage Council is avoided and to provide opportunities to leverage the funding to those organisations and provide synergies with the work of the Council.</p>
Operational Arrangements	
<p>Rigorous procurement processes, including fixed price contracts, should be used to ensure costs are well-managed.</p>	<p>An independent Internal Audit Review of procurement was commenced by the Heritage Council and was completed in 2018. An action plan was put in place to ensure the internal procurement approach is aligned to National Guidelines and EU procurement regulations. A further review of the Council's procurement was carried out by the Heritage Council's Internal Auditors.</p>
<p>In relation to the management of temporary staff, the review recommended that the Council ensure that all contract posts have clearly defined roles linked to the organisation's strategic objectives, have clear targets and timelines for delivery and comply with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's guidance on the management of fixed-term contracts.</p>	<p>The Council does not currently employ temporary staff. The Council does contract out some discrete projects to external contractors. The Council has begun to manage many of these contracts on the basis of an OGP framework document and a contract management system has been introduced to assist with this. The Heritage Council is considering, as part of the implementation plan for the strategic plan <i>Heritage at the Heart</i>, mainstreaming some of those activities in the Heritage Council's programme. This is due to the fact that some of those projects, which have been successful, could be usefully expanded to deliver on the Council's strategic objectives and developed more successfully as in-house programmes with dedicated</p>

	programme staff. An implementation plan, which will include a review of the staffing required, is currently being drafted which will specify the resources required to adequately deliver on the Council's strategic plan.
General	
Review the practice of retrospective noting by the Heritage Council of <i>ad hoc</i> grants awarded by the executive.	This matter has been considered by the Heritage Council executive and the CEO has confirmed to the Department that the practice of ad hoc grants has been eliminated since the start of the CEO's tenure in January 2019 and no further ad hoc grants will be awarded.
Performance Management and Data Collection	
Consider the possibility of undertaking regular research into the public's awareness and understanding of national heritage. The possibility of utilising omnibus research vehicles which may provide a way of undertaking some elements of previous Heritage Council commissioned surveys more regularly at a lower cost than a bespoke survey should be explored.	The Council has undertaken a number of attitudinal surveys of the public on various issues; e.g. 2010 Wild Child survey, 2010 Biodiversity Understanding survey, 2015 Heritage Awareness Survey, 2018 Public Perceptions of Archaeology survey. However, conducting individual surveys is expensive and other means, such as utilising omnibus surveys or, making survey responses a condition of grant awards, might be utilised in addition to the existing survey process at the Council.

Table 1a Alignment with Governmental Heritage Strategic Objectives

Government Strategic Objective	Heritage Council Implementing Actions
<p>We will expand the Historic Towns Initiatives to include more towns.</p>	<p>In both 2018 and 2019, following a competitive process, the Heritage Council, in conjunction with D/CHG, announced €1m in funding for the Historic Towns initiative. Six towns were awarded grants in both years to provide for heritage-led regeneration This scheme follows on from a successful pilot scheme run in 2014/2015.</p>
<p>In conjunction with the Oireachtas, we will examine new incentives to regenerate derelict and underused buildings in urban areas.</p>	<p>Strategic Goal 2 – Nurture Belonging – implementation actions (i) & (ii) relate directly to this Government objective.</p>
<p>We will develop and publish an updated National Heritage Plan that sets out polices for the protection and promotion of our built and natural heritage and responds to challenges within the heritage sector.</p> <p>Heritage Ireland 2030 is the Government’s commitment to a revitalised and refreshed National Heritage Plan. The Heritage Council has been heavily involved in this process. Heritage Ireland 2030 will establish a framework for the next decade along three themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Leadership and Heritage 	<p>Strategic Goal 1 – Advance National Heritage Priorities - implementation action (v), relates directly to this Government objective.</p> <p>In the consultation process for Heritage Ireland 2030 the Department noted the vital role the Heritage Council will play in the development and implementation of the strategy. The publication <i>Heritage Ireland 2030</i> during the lifetime of the Heritage Council's <i>Heritage at the Heart</i> strategy will provide a detailed policy environment in which the Council can work to advance national heritage priorities. The Heritage Council has been a key stakeholder in the development of the strategy both in terms of providing detailed input and also facilitating three workshops in 2019 during the consultation process for public and private sector heritage practitioners to feed into the strategy.</p> <p>All three of the Heritage Ireland 2030 key themes are addressed in the Heritage Council's current statement of strategy, as follows:</p> <p><i>National Leadership and Heritage</i>, Strategic Goal 1 Advance National Heritage, actions (i) & (v)</p> <p><i>Heritage Partnerships</i>, Strategic Goal 1 Advance National Heritage, Actions (iii), (vii), (viii) & (ix), Strategic Goal 2 Nurture Belonging, Actions (ii), (iv), (vi) &(vii) and, Strategic Goal 3 Ensure</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Partnerships • Communities and Heritage. 	<p>a Vibrant Heritage Sector, Actions (i) (vi) (vii)</p> <p><i>Communities and Heritage</i>, Strategic Goal 1 Advance National Heritage, Actions (vi) & (ix), Strategic Goal 2 Nurture Belonging, Actions (ii), (iv), (v), (vii) & (x), Strategic Goal 3 Ensure a Vibrant Heritage Sector, Actions (ii), (v), (vii) & (ix)</p> <p>In addition, in 2019 the Heritage Council provided funding for the following community engagement programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irish Walled Town Network (IWTN) programme, in 2018, the Heritage Council's IWTN was acknowledged by the EU European Committee of the Regions as being an exemplar of good practice in the use of culture to enhance local competitiveness. - Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme - Adopt a Monument - Heritage Week - Heritage in Schools Week - Heritage Maps
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Table 1b Alignment with Governmental Heritage Strategic Objectives

Departmental Strategic Objective	Heritage Council Implementing Actions
Provide a policy, legislative and administrative framework to protect architectural heritage as a national resource	<p>Strategic Goal 1 Advance National Heritage, Actions (i), (iii), (iv) & (v)</p> <p>Strategic Goal 2 Nurture Belonging, Action (ii)</p> <p>Strategic Goal 3 Ensure a Vibrant Heritage Sector, Actions (iii), (v) & (xi)</p> <p>In addition, the Heritage Council has taken into account the expanded statutory functions in the Heritage Act 2018, which provides for engagement with communities.</p>

<p>Promote increased public awareness and appreciation of architecture and our national built heritage</p>	<p>Strategic Goal 1 Advance National Heritage, Actions (v), (vi), (vii), (viii) & (ix)</p> <p>Strategic Goal 2 Nurture Belonging, Actions (iii), (iv), (v), (vii), (ix) & (x)</p> <p>Strategic Goal 3 Ensure a Vibrant Heritage Sector, Actions (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi), (viii), (ix) & (xi)</p>
<p>Ensure the sustainable management of our built heritage resources</p>	<p>Strategic Goal 1 Advance National Heritage, Actions (iii), (iv), (v) & (vi)</p> <p>Strategic Goal 2 Nurture Belonging, Actions (ii), (vi), (v) & (viii)</p> <p>Strategic Goal 3 Ensure a Vibrant Heritage Sector, Actions (i), (ii), (iv), (vi), (vii) & (xi)</p>
<p>Creative Ireland ⁵ is the Government's culture-based programme states that partners should work together to help place our heritage and its potential at the centre of our lives. To ensure wider understanding of heritage as a shared resource – locally, nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>Strategic Goal 1 Advance National Heritage, Action (vii)</p>

⁵ Contained in the Government foreword to Creative Ireland, December 2016.

Quality assurance process

To ensure accuracy and methodological rigour, the author engaged in the following quality assurance process.

Internal/Departmental

Line management

Spending Review Steering group

Other divisions/sections

Peer review (IGEES network, seminars, conferences etc.)

External

Other Government Department

Steering group

Quality Assurance Group (QAG)

Peer review (IGEES network, seminars, conferences etc.)

External expert(s)

Other – Heritage Council