THE PRINCE'S REGENERATION TRUST

Response to call for evidence on the government's review of the balance of competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union

Culture, Tourism and Sport

31st July 2013

About the Prince's Regeneration Trust (PRT)

PRT is a charity set up by HRH The Prince of Wales in 1996 whose objects are:

- The preservation for the benefit of the public of buildings, monuments, structures or sites in the United Kingdom of particular beauty or historical, architectural or constructional interest; and
- The promotion for the benefit of the public of urban and rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation throughout the United Kingdom.

What We Do:

We rescue buildings that have been left in a state of decay, possibly at risk of demolition and provide them with a viable new use that benefits local people. Our projects unlock an area's potential for growth through new employment, training and educational opportunities and by simply allowing the community to actively engage and enjoy their surrounding environment.

How We Work:

We work collaboratively with community groups, building owners, developers, local authorities and other organisations to save British heritage. We form cross-sector partnerships with schools, universities, charities and businesses to ensure local regeneration is cross-sector and inclusive.

We operate as advisor, enabler, facilitator, partner and advocate. Our in-house expertise provides people with the support necessary to ensure projects are viable and a success for the local community. In a small number of cases, we fundraise in order to buy the building and undertake the project ourselves in order to ensure its survival and reuse.

Culture Questions

1. *How important is EU funding to the UK Cultural sector? And how beneficial to the UK is the EU's focus on a shared cultural heritage?*
   We recently produced a guide to business planning for heritage projects, 'How to: make the business case for your project', in partnership with The Churches Conservation Trust, who had received funding through the Interreg 2 Seas programme. In our experience of working with community groups across the UK, European funding is not widely understood, however as

pressure increases on UK sources of funding there appears to be a growing interest and appetite to understand the funding streams available through the European Union.

2. *Are EU cultural programmes effective and how can they be improved?*
Overall the EU's cultural programmes are impaired by their complexity. Finding information online is extremely challenging due to the multitude of different websites, programmes and initiatives. It is therefore highly likely that many cultural organisations such as PRT and the community groups we work with are failing to take advantage of EU cultural programmes and funding opportunities.

General Questions

3. *What evidence is there that EU action in the areas of Culture, Tourism and/or Sport benefits or disadvantages the UK?*

From the perspective of PRT, the greatest visible benefits of EU action in culture have been the European Heritage Open Days initiative and European Cities of Culture, which have provided a focus for investment and lead to wide scale regeneration. Open days have increased local interest in heritage by allowing people to explore some of the fabulous built heritage that makes up our towns and cities, normally only accessible to a small number of individuals who have the privilege of working in these buildings on a daily basis. These benefits would be even greater if the programme were better resourced, which limit's its impact.

Whilst there are a number of EU cultural grant programmes open to heritage projects, they appear to have limited impact, as described above in question one. Schemes such as Interreg are complex and therefore off-putting to all but the larger and more established heritage organisations.

Although recent European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) schemes have included heritage, the revised programme does not appear to be open to heritage projects. Two PRT projects have been successful in securing ERDF funding. The Old Duchy Palace, the most significant secular medieval building in Cornwall, received £310,195 - the largest single source of project funding. The Palace has now re-opened, providing much needed retail and business space in Lostwithiel. Over £1m ERDF funding has been vital to the regeneration of Middleport Pottery in Stoke on Trent; this project has enabled the unique production of Burleigh to continue on site, saving over 50 jobs, whilst opening up the pottery from 2014 for the public to enjoy.

4. *Do you think the EU should do more, or less in relation to Culture, Tourism and Sport, and why?*

More access to funding is needed to preserve the diversity of EU cultural heritage, whether it is buildings, places, languages or art and crafts. EU funding should also be easier to find and apply for, particularly if the EU wishes to encourage applications from a variety of sources, including small community groups. Beyond providing funding, the EU could do a lot more to promote

'shared cultural heritage'. Initiatives such as Heritage Open Days have been a great success and enabled the public to really engage with their local heritage; however the EU could do more to share learning between the organisations working to preserve and promote European heritage. For example, it would be interesting and beneficial for the EU to facilitate learning between built heritage projects in different countries. Through the experiences of the individual organisations learning could be fed through to national governments to suggest how the public can be encouraged and enabled to play an active role in their local heritage. This could be achieved through exchange or partnership programmes.

5. *What are the benefits or disadvantages of directing funding through the EU rather than national arrangements?*

Whilst European Funding is a needed and worthwhile source of funding for PRT projects the procedure is extremely complex and regulations are lengthy compared to other UK funders.

The main issue with funding through the EU is that there is no one resource to search for funding. It is difficult to find a programme that suits a project and then it is challenging to see if the funding is still available. As there is no one website directory it seems that successful projects are not celebrated and as an applicant/recipient you can't learn from other organisations. This differs hugely from national arrangements where the programme is usually a lot clearer and outputs are often more widely celebrated. EU funding isn't a 'nightmare' to manage, however it is a drain on much needed resources as the process is very slow – a lot of time has to be spent on the management of funds, a consideration which can often be overlooked by applicants. It is difficult to co-ordinate the deadlines and required outputs of EU funding streams with those of the match funders. Greater flexibility is necessary to allow community groups to put together a cocktail of funding; rigid deadlines are likely to lead to missed opportunities.

6. *Have you noticed any change in EU activity or emphasis since the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon and is this welcome?*

We have not noted significant changes since the 2009 Treaty other than a slight increase in focus on cultural programmes.

7. *What other areas of EU competence or activity impact on your sector and how?*

We have been affected by State Aid regulations; however we are aware that State Aid is to be covered by another call for evidence later this year.

European health and safety legislation does conflict in some instances with the conservation of our heritage by requiring alterations to historic interiors. For example, in butcher's shops, legislation has forced the covering or removal of historic tiles and furnishings.

8. *What international bodies or arrangements are important to your sector beyond the EU?*

Other organisations important to PRT include Europa Nostra (of which we are a member), the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions, UNESCO and funder organisations such as the World Monuments Fund.

9. *How could the EU co-ordinate its activity in these areas of competence to greater effect?*

To help groups access EU funding, the simplest solution would be to have readily accessible information and support, managed by a team in each country. The team could have a designated 'heritage' sub-team to improve awareness and access to EU funding in this area. Currently there are a number of teams in existence to manage EU Structural Funds:

- BIS EU Structural Funds negotiations team
- Welsh European Funding Office
- EU Structural Funds within Business Support, Business, Industry and Energy
- Northern Irish European Division, Department of Finance and Personnel

However, each of these teams or divisions has EU structural funds as their primary focus, negotiating with the EU to manage and deliver EU Structural Funds. In addition to this high-level European facing role, each team could be expanded to provide assistance and a central point of call for potential recipients of EU funding, particularly smaller organisations that lack the capacity to manage complex application and grant management processes.

Alternatively, this role could be taken on by the European Commission representation offices in London, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Of these, the Northern Irish office appears to have made the most support available to the public to help them access the benefits of EU membership.

http://www.europe.org.uk/ - This site does not contain information to help cultural organisations get the most out of EU cultural programmes; content is informal and mostly aimed at schools and other potential consumers.

http://www.the-eu-and-me.org.uk/ - This site does not have any informative content about EU activity in culture, tourism and sport, however it does list some cultural projects that have been EU funded.

http://www.culturefund.eu - This site does provide some guidance on EU funding and programmes, however due to the multitude of websites, it does not appear to be easily accessible.