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Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
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100 Parliament Street  
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Dear Ed

### **UK WORLD HERITAGE TENTATIVE LIST: EXPERT GROUP**

As you know, I chaired a meeting of the Expert Group on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013 to assess the Technical Evaluations that had come forward from sites on the UK's Tentative List. Six sites wished to be considered for nomination to UNESCO for world heritage status: Chatham Dockyard and Defences, the Crucible of Shetland, the English Lake District, the Flow Country, Jodrell Bank and the Twin Monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow. Chatham and the Lake District had submitted Technical Evaluations to the assessment in May 2012.

The meeting was attended by Sue Cole (English Heritage), Michael Coulter (Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland), Susan Denyer (ICOMOS-UK), Alison Hems (Bath Spa University), Lesley MacInnes (Historic Scotland), Adrian Phillips (IUCN UK), Kathryn Roberts (Cadw), Sam Rose (Jurassic Coast WHS) and Tony Weighell (Joint Nature Conservation Committee). Helen Maclagan (UK National Commission for UNESCO non-executive director-elect, who replaces me as the non-executive director responsible for Culture in December) attended as an observer. Francesca Conlon, Head of Heritage Policy at DCMS, provided secretariat support to the Group.

The Group considered each of the bids on its individual merits, drawing on the Guidance on Technical Evaluations which DCMS issued. Once that process was complete, we took stock of our comments across each of the bids to check that we had treated them consistently. We then compared the bids to one another in order to develop our recommendations for which sites should go forward for nomination, if any, and when.

We were very clear that our role was to assess the technical evaluations rigorously and scrupulously in order to ensure that only those sites that would have the best chance of success in the nomination process should be recommended to go forward. Our recommendations reflect that robust and rigorous approach.

I am attaching feedback forms for each of the six sites. These record the Group's conclusions and recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

In summary, our recommendations are as follows:

- The English Lake District should be nominated in January 2016.
  - However, if the Lakes Partnership is absolutely confident it could make all necessary revisions and prepare a good nomination dossier to meet the original 2012 recommendation of nomination in 2015, then they should be allowed to proceed.
- Chatham Dockyard and its Defences should not go forward for nomination

- The Crucible of Iron Age Shetland is not suitable for nomination at this stage
- The Flow Country is not suitable for nomination at this stage
- Jodrell Bank is not suitable for nomination at this stage
- The Twin Monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow should not go forward for nomination
  - However, Wearmouth-Jarrow may wish to investigate an application to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

The Group is clear that the process that has been put in place for requiring sites to submit Technical Evaluations before they go on to develop full nominations is sensible and appropriate. It is noteworthy that the new UNESCO WHS Operational Guidelines also now include a similar [but less well-developed] process. We are pleased to note the UK leads the way in this process.

Nevertheless, the Group felt that there is room for improvement. For example, one issue that we faced again throughout our discussion was the difference between “style” and “content” – i.e. the difference between the quality of the site itself and its potential for OUV, and how well the Technical Evaluation was presented. We have therefore suggested a number of recommendations for you to consider on improving the technical evaluation and nomination processes. These include, for example, that revisions to Guidance should be considered, that a system of formal reporting during Technical Evaluation preparation should be considered and that support for potential applicants during Technical Evaluation preparation should be strengthened.

I also recommend that the deadline for the next round of Technical Evaluations should be set now, for autumn 2015, so as to ensure that sites may plan the development of their bids with greater certainty.

I know that you will now wish to reflect on our recommendations and consult with your colleagues in Government before making decisions about future nominations.

I would like express my gratitude to all the members of the Group for making such valuable contributions and ensuring, I believe, that we have been able to make strong and well-informed recommendations. I would also like to thank you and DCMS Staff for your support during the process.

Yours sincerely



**SUE DAVIES OBE BA FSA HONMIFA**  
**CHAIR**  
**UK TENTATIVE LIST EXPERT GROUP**