



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

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Dame Caroline Dinenage MP
Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee
House of Commons
London
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Dear Dame Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 26 February regarding the research by Purcell into the repair and maintenance backlog in England's cultural sector, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's report on the research of 29 January entitled *England's cultural infrastructure: repair, maintenance and renewal*.

I welcome the points you have raised in your letter, and like you, agree that the implications of the findings in the report are significant. This government acknowledges that there are real challenges in maintaining and renewing the buildings and spaces that support our cultural life. That is precisely why we commissioned this research, to build a clear and comprehensive evidence base about the condition of the sector's infrastructure and the scale of the repair and maintenance needs it faces. This report enables government and partners across the sector to take a more strategic and coordinated approach to investment.

I understand that the capital needs of cultural infrastructure need to be treated as a serious, long-term policy issue in order to meaningfully address the issues outlined in this report. We are doing exactly that, and have recently committed to a five-year £1.5 billion capital investment package, supporting more than 1,000 arts venues, museums, libraries, and heritage buildings across England over the course of this Parliament. This investment package includes several capital funding streams dedicated to infrastructure investment across the expanse of the cultural sector so that a wide range of cultural organisations can benefit.

This includes up to £425 million for the new Creative Foundations Fund, supporting approximately 300 arts and cultural organisations across England to resolve urgent issues with their estates. Up to £230 million will fund heritage programmes, including support for at risk heritage, the Heritage Revival Fund, and a new Places of Worship Renewal Fund.

We also committed £160 million to support local and regional museums across the country, including the Museum Estates and Development Fund, helping museums tackle maintenance backlogs. £27.5 million will help public libraries upgrade their buildings and technology to better serve their communities, through the Libraries Improvement Fund.



Finally, we announced £80 million in capital funding over four years for National Portfolio organisations, part of a 5% uplift in 2026/27. This is the largest increase to an existing National Portfolio in decades. Together, these investments represent a significant step in strengthening the infrastructure that underpins our cultural sector.

While government has an important role to play in addressing these issues, and this £1.5 billion investment will indeed play a critical role, meeting these challenges will require collaboration across the whole cultural ecosystem. Investment will need to come not only from central government but also from philanthropists, local authorities, foundations and other partners. We are committed to playing our part in that collective effort, and the commissioning of this research is an important step in ensuring that future support is informed, targeted and effective.

We also recognise the skills and capacity issues within the sector that you rightly note. We are responding to this by working with Arts Council England, the delivery partner on several of the capital funds in this investment package, to introduce a capital advice service. This free-to-access provision will build expertise not just for those successful in their funding bids, but across the sector as a whole. It will provide support to any potential applicant needing to build their expertise in procurement, building management, the RIBA stages of work, and other essential skills for capital planning and long-term maintenance.

On 18 March, the Heritage Minister, Baroness Twycross, hosted a roundtable on heritage construction skills following up on a previous roundtable last year. This explored how key partners should work together, with the government's support, to improve the supply of heritage construction skills to enable growth, retrofit, housing and employment opportunities for young people.

The Purcell research was primarily commissioned to build a national evidence base, and we are using its findings to help shape future capital investment. Alongside this, we are working closely with sector partners and public bodies to better align repair and maintenance funding, share data on infrastructure needs, and support more coordinated approaches to building management and long-term sustainability across cultural venues in England.

Our research aimed to estimate the overall scale of the repair backlog across the sector, rather than provide a comprehensive list of every repair required. As a result, it is not possible to calculate the total remaining deficit from this study alone. To build a clearer picture, the department is commissioning an evaluation of the Creative Foundations Fund (CFF), which will look to estimate the remaining repair backlog among not-for-profit arts and cultural organisations that received CFF grants and organisations that were unsuccessful in their applications for CFF funding.

For too long, the UK's cultural heritage and artistic and cultural landscape have been underfunded and undersupported. This government is committed to supporting arts and culture, exemplified by our commission for this report to fully understand the problem and find meaningful, long term solutions.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport