



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

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ALBA

How are we spending our money?

Grants Funding Report 2024-25: Data Review



1 Executive Summary

Following on from our first Grants Spending Report for 2023-24, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is pleased to present our Data Review covering the financial year 2024-25. This Data Review forms the first part of our Grants Funding Report: the second part is our Impact Review, available as a short film to download from the Grants section of the Historic Environment Scotland website. In creating a two-part report, our ambition is to evidence our funding from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, so that we can present a comprehensive picture of our funding.

All of the data presented in this report is available for public access via the 360giving website, where users can draw comparators between our funding and that available in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Alongside our standard reporting on key areas of interest for the sector, this year we have focussed on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the historic environment, by asking our core-funded organisations to provide us with more detailed information on this theme.

We have completed our Internal Review of our funding of City Heritage Trusts this year, and the report on this process is available from our website. What is clear from the Review is that complex projects in our cities take time, dedication, and long-term support to achieve, and HES is committed to the process.

Our access to funding data provides new insights into how and why people access our funding, and as a result, prompts further questions as to how we apportion our budget. We will consider this further during 2025-26.

We will continue to publish a report on our funding each year, to provide transparency on our spending and to highlight trends we see emerging in the sector. If there are themes that you feel would benefit from our analysis in future years, please contact us: grants@hes.scot

2 Background

Historic Environment Scotland grant aids projects relating to Scotland's tangible and intangible heritage on behalf of the Scottish Government. As the second-largest funder of heritage in Scotland, we are pleased to publicly provide data on how we spend this funding, as well as insights into how we make our funding decisions.

3 Data Reference

The data used for this report is drawn from HES Grants Team's records. Where relevant as a comparator, we have drawn data from the past six years to allow for inconsistencies caused by the ongoing impact of the pandemic to be smoothed. In some cases, we have only used data from 2023 onwards, as this correlates to the introduction of our new Historic Environment Grants programme and associated digital management system, which has given us greater access to accurate information. In each case, we have indicated the scope of data we are referencing.

4 Update on Our 2023/24 Commitments

In last year's report, we made a series of commitments based on our findings. Below is an update on actions taken:

- **We will consider simplifying some of our grant application processes and supplying additional support to our applicants who may find funders daunting:** in 2024, we reviewed our Small Grants Process and made key simplifications to allow applicants to access our technical support earlier in the process, providing more guidance in the early stages of project development.
- **Where local authority areas are underrepresented in our funding, we are always pleased to offer guidance in the early stage development of projects that might be eligible for support. We will increase our efforts to engage with organisations who are less experienced in heritage:** we have made proactive efforts to work with local authorities who do not frequently access our funding, through supporting them in project development, making introductions to other funders, and providing them with early stage guidance on potential projects.
- **We will aim to increase the number of our projects located within the most deprived quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation:** last year, 6.34% of our funding was committed to projects in the most deprived quintile. This year, 20.9% has been committed in these areas. We remain focussed on building upon this year on year.
- **We will make our data available via 360giving, where possible within the constraints of GDPR UK:** the data used for our 2023-24 and 2024-25 reports is now available.
- **We will further interpret our data to share new insights in 2024-25:** we have expanded a number of topics covered in last year's survey and introduced a new theme this year, examining Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.



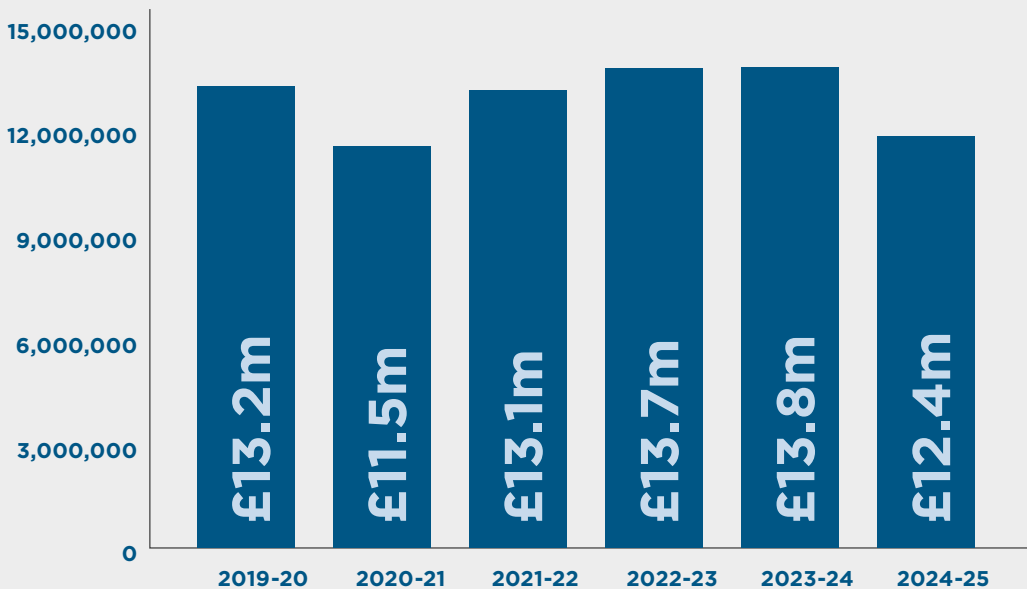
5 Our Funding

5.1 What are we funding?

We spent £12.4 million on Scotland’s historic environment in 2024-25, entirely funded by the Scottish Government. This is lower than the £13.7 budget available for grant making from our overall grants budget of £14.5 million, the remainder being used for operational grant making costs. This spend relates to a slowing-down of capital project delivery on the ground: shortages of materials and workers have meant that some of our largest projects have progressed less quickly than planned.

As can be seen from the table below, our funding for grants has remained consistent for the past six years, with a dip in 2020-21 related to the pandemic.

Total spend over the last six years



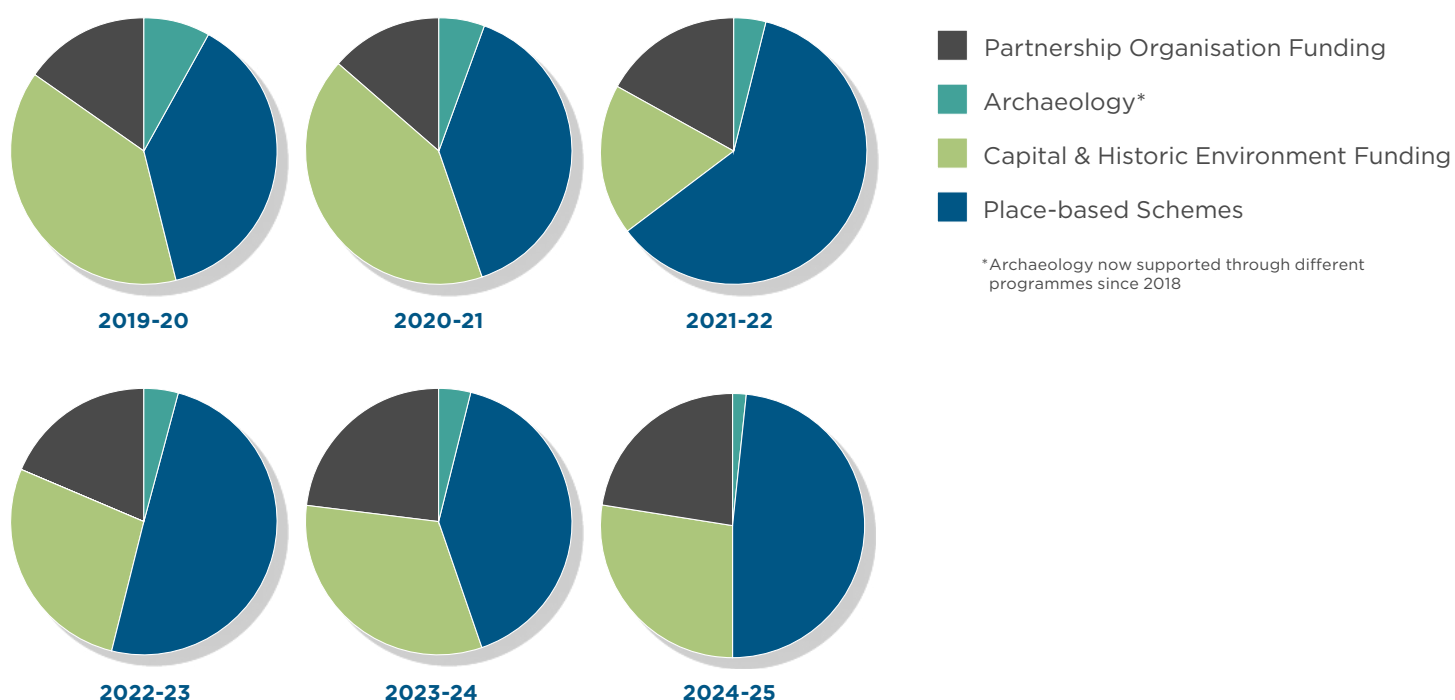
The Expressions of Interest we receive also provide us with data on what the overall financial ask is for our funding. Last year, we were asked for £23.74 million through applications, and spent £13.76 million on live projects. This year, we were asked for £17.8 million through applications, and spent £12.4 million on live projects. The demand continues to far outstrip the funding available, which means that grant-giving remains highly competitive, although less so than in previous years. We consider it likely that the reduction in ask is linked to a reduction in capacity to develop large-scale regeneration projects at local authority level.

In addition to our actual spend, we have committed a further £9.16 million to projects in our pipeline, allowing our grantees to use our secured funding as a match for other funders and increasing its potential for leveraging in further support. As a funder, we are open to being the first confirmed funder of any project, and indeed, for large capital projects, this can be of benefit in allowing an extended timeframe to complete our award processes.

In the first year of the Historic Environment Grant programme we awarded 16 grants; in this, the second year, we have awarded 25 grants. These awards are in addition to awards made through our Partnership and Heritage & Place Programme.

We have spent the following amounts on each of our themed programmes over the course of the last six years:

Breakdown of spending on themes



In 2024-25, we spent more on place-based initiatives than any other theme – 48.49% went towards projects focussing on area-based regeneration. This is in line with Priority 2 of the sector strategy [Our Past, Our Future: empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places](#). Our spend on Archaeology appears to be minimal – just 1.48% of our investment – however most of our investment in this area is now offered through the Partnership fund and is accounted for accordingly.

5.2 Who are we funding?



We continue to commit more money to charities than any other type of organisation; 69% of our funding has been awarded to these kinds of organisation. We also awarded 4.73% of our funding directly to church projects - a relatively large proportion for a building typology that has seen a number of challenges over the past few years. Our funding to universities is largely towards projects involving archaeology, as they continue to be the main delivery agents for fieldwork and publication.

We are pleased to have simplified our grants processes for projects under £100,000 to make it simpler for smaller organisations to work with us, and receive the right kind of advice at the appropriate time for their project.

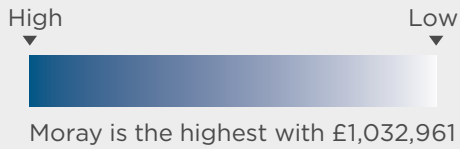


6 Geographic Spread of our Committed Funding

Shetland Islands



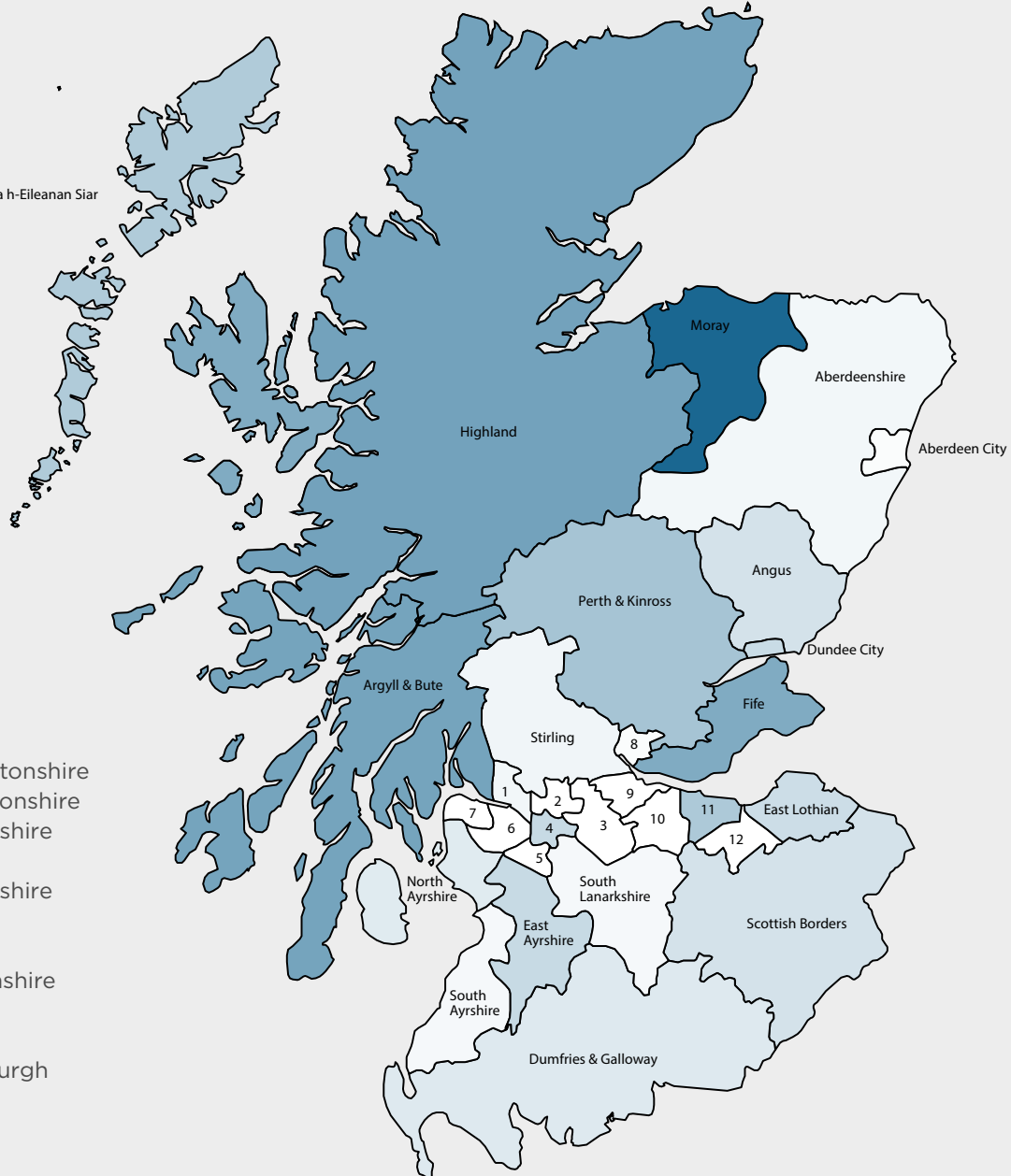
Grants Commitment by Local Authority 2024-2025



Orkney Islands



Na h-Eileanan Siar



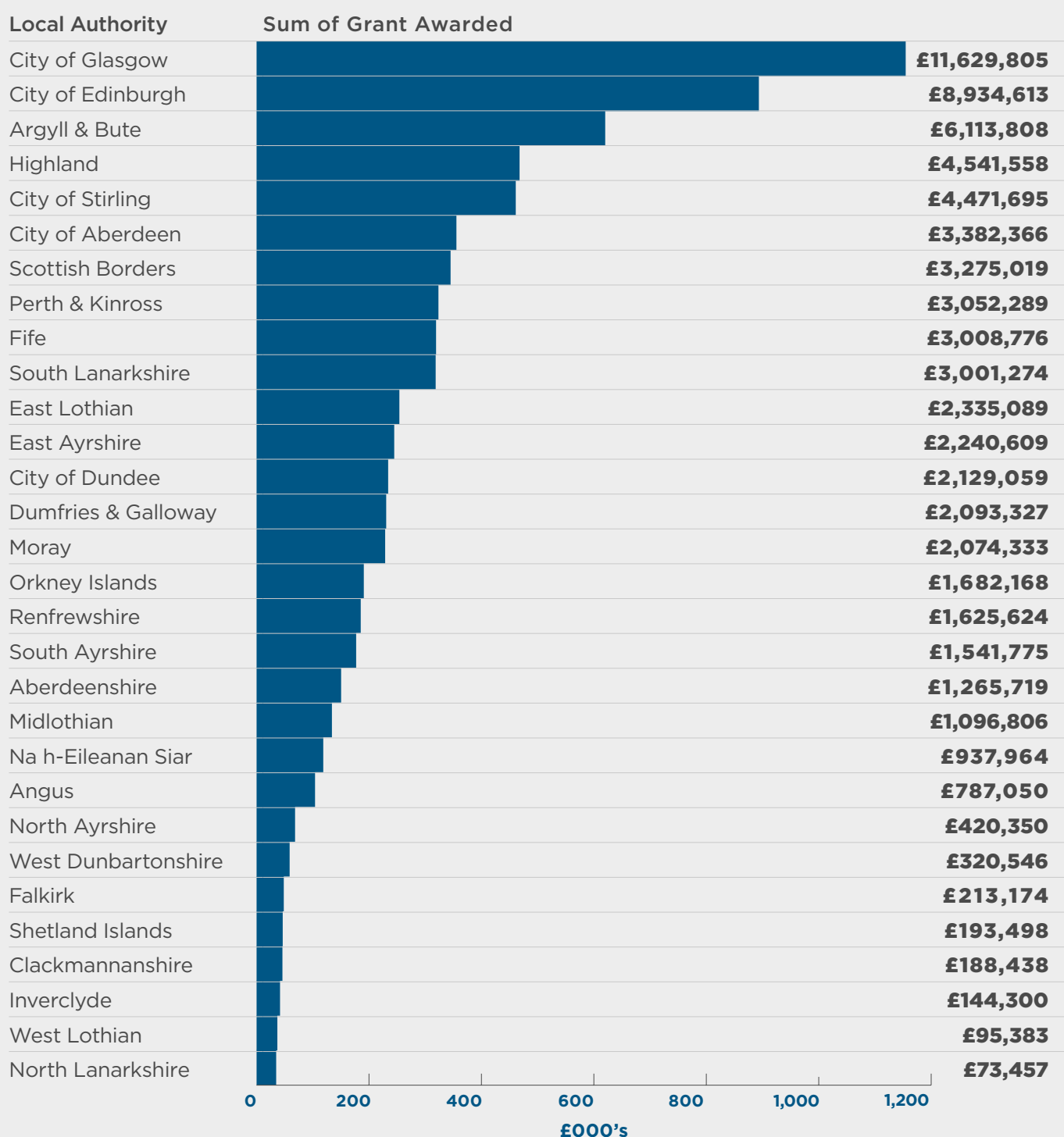
1. West Dunbartonshire
2. East Dunbartonshire
3. North Lanarkshire
4. Glasgow City
5. East Renfrewshire
6. Renfrewshire
7. Inverclyde
8. Clackmannanshire
9. Falkirk
10. West Lothian
11. City of Edinburgh
12. Midlothian

As can be seen from the graphic above which tracks our funding commitments for 2024/25, our committed funding in each of Scotland's local authority areas, and per head of population therein, is not equal. This is due to a range of factors relating to how well applications meet our [Grants Priorities](#).

The table below shows our funding commitments per local authority since 2018.

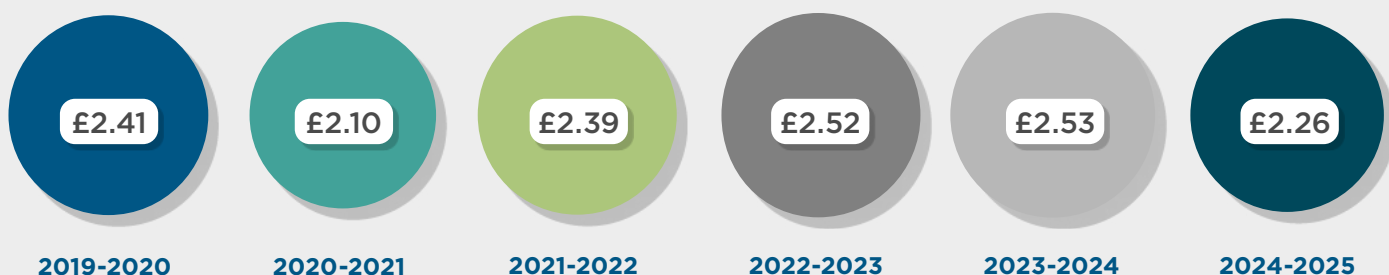
We note that we have awarded more to the Moray local authority for the first time this year, followed by Highlands and Islands, and are pleased to note this shift away from the traditional focus on Central Belt locations.

Where local authority areas are underrepresented, we are always pleased to offer guidance in the early stage development of projects that might be eligible for our funding. Please email grants@hes.scot to set up a meeting.



Overall, this year we have spent £2.26 on the historic environment for each person in Scotland, which is broadly consistent with our spending in recent years, as shown below. This lower figure relates to the slow down in project delivery noted above, and is likely to increase next year as projects correct course. Note the figures below show a small dip in 2020-21, relating to the pandemic.

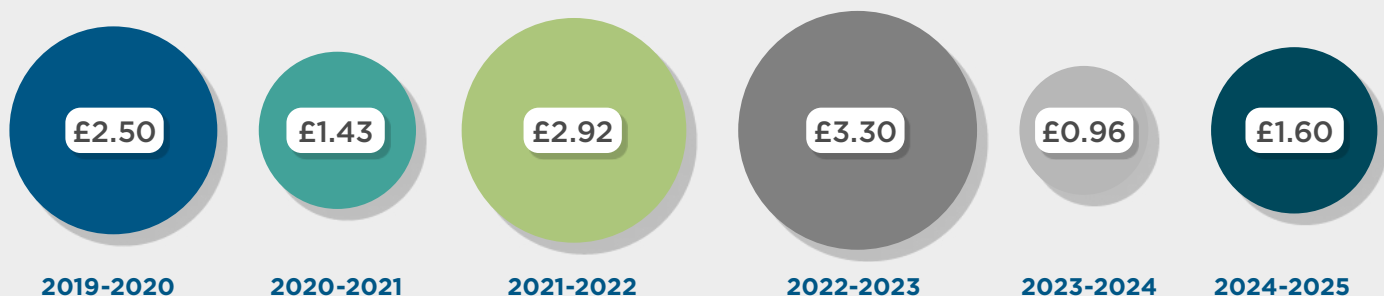
Spend per person



This compares very favourably with other regions of the United Kingdom and illustrates the Scottish Government’s ongoing commitment to our shared heritage.

In addition to the amount we have spent on heritage, through our grant offers we have committed a further £1.60 per head of population. This can be compared with previous years:

Commitment per person



Our figure for this year is higher than last year, as it varies to reflect when we have made offers that will be spent over multiple years, such as awards relating to the Partnership Fund, which supports national initiatives, including those that provide expert early project development support, guidance and engagement opportunities on themed issues, and Scotland-wide training initiatives.

7 The Impact of our Funding

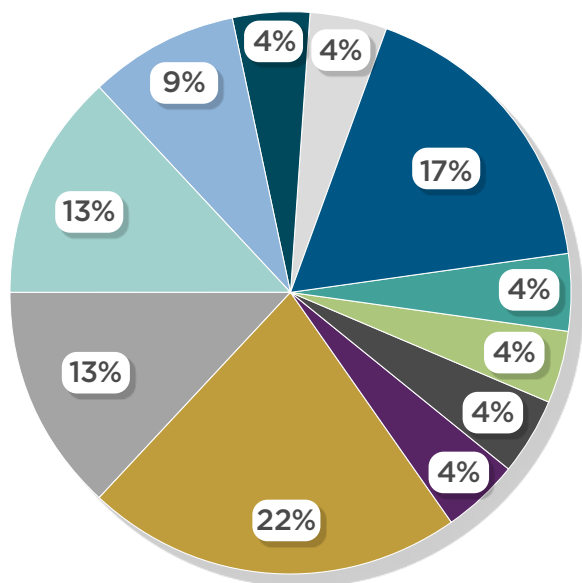
Over the course of the last six years, we have been able to support 353 organisations working in Scotland's historic environment. Our funding has considerable leverage power – for each pound of HES funding committed in 2024-5, our grantees activities and projects have been able to attract a further £5.24 investment into the historic environment and sector. This figure is larger than in previous years, as a result of our involvement in a small number of very high-value projects.

Our commitment to projects in the most deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation has been an area of focus for us over the past few years and we have been working to improve the percentage of our funding that goes to these groups. In the last year, we have committed to investing £1.74 million of our total funding to projects in the most deprived quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. This translates to 7.56% over the last six years, an improvement on last year's 6.34% position. The change in position is a result of both better recording via our new grants management system, and the efforts of our team to support a broader range of projects. We remain committed to supporting projects that include a wide variety of people in decision-making about the historic environment.

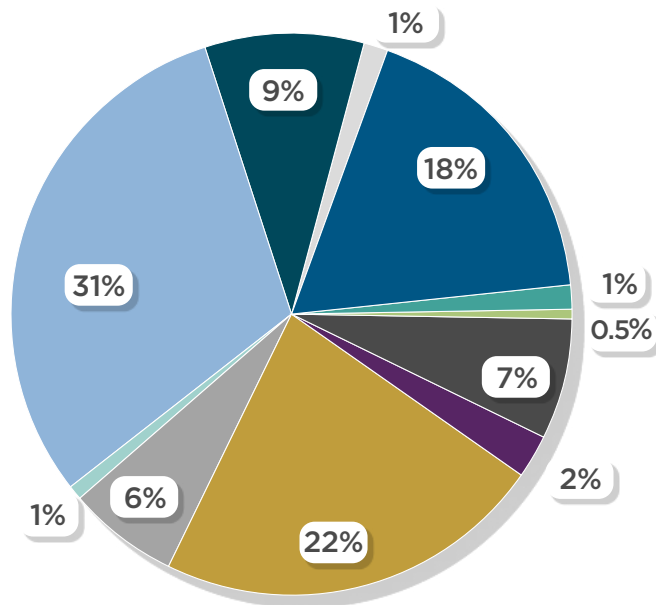


What built asset type are we funding most for capital works?

% of projects awarded grant funding



% of grant funding awarded



- Community Asset
- Fountain
- Inn
- Market Hall
- Mausoleum
- Place of Worship
- Scheduled Monument
- Thatch
- Theatre
- Bridge
- Listed Building

As can be seen from the illustration above, we fund a wide range of built environment assets for capital works. Of all the capital works projects committed to funding over the past year, 48% involved A-listed buildings and similarly, 48% involved B-listed buildings, with the remainder committed to works on Scheduled Monuments. This reflects our interest in funding projects that involve the most significant of Scotland’s architecture.

We have funded more Places of Worship than any other type of building, but often our awards for these types of buildings are more modest than our major grants schemes: such capital projects are usually for roof and window works, as well as repointing. While substantial undertakings for the applicants, they do not constitute a complete overhaul of the structure.

In terms of amount awarded, theatres are our biggest investment typology this year. There have been a number of large-scale projects reaching the high point of their capital expenditure this year, and this is reflected in our funding.

Funding for Skills

In 2024-25, we offered £2,807,175 to 25 projects which have identified skills as part of project delivery, either by way of being skills projects or in having skills outcomes embedded in the delivery of a wider project. HES has identified skills training as a key area for sector investment, and we are actively working to improve and diversify our funding. Our [Skills Investment Plan](#) gives more information on how we define historic environment skills and where we understand the gaps in provision to be.

8 Themes in Scottish Heritage

Climate Change and Resilience are the most prominent themes emerging from applications this year, with 51 and 36 applications referencing them respectively. This reflects a strong focus on environmental sustainability and strengthening the resilience of historic sites and communities. Wellbeing, Diversity and Inclusion also all feature prominently across applications, showing a focus on making the historic environment more accessible to all. A more detailed assessment of the sector's interest in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is given in Section 10 of this report.

We are also interested in tracking how often certain key words from the sector strategy Our Past, Our Future have been appearing in our correspondence since its launch in June 2023. This year, we have noted 10 references to Net Zero, 18 to Wellbeing and 21 to Participation across applications.

9 Our Processes

We ask all those interested in applying for our funding to complete an Expression of Interest form in the first instance – a simple, brief document that can be filled out via our website in a short amount of time. This allows us to get an early sense of what the application may entail, and provide tailored advice that can support a better application. In some instances, projects will not be suitable for our funding, and the Expression of Interest process ensures that we can inform interested parties of this as early as possible.

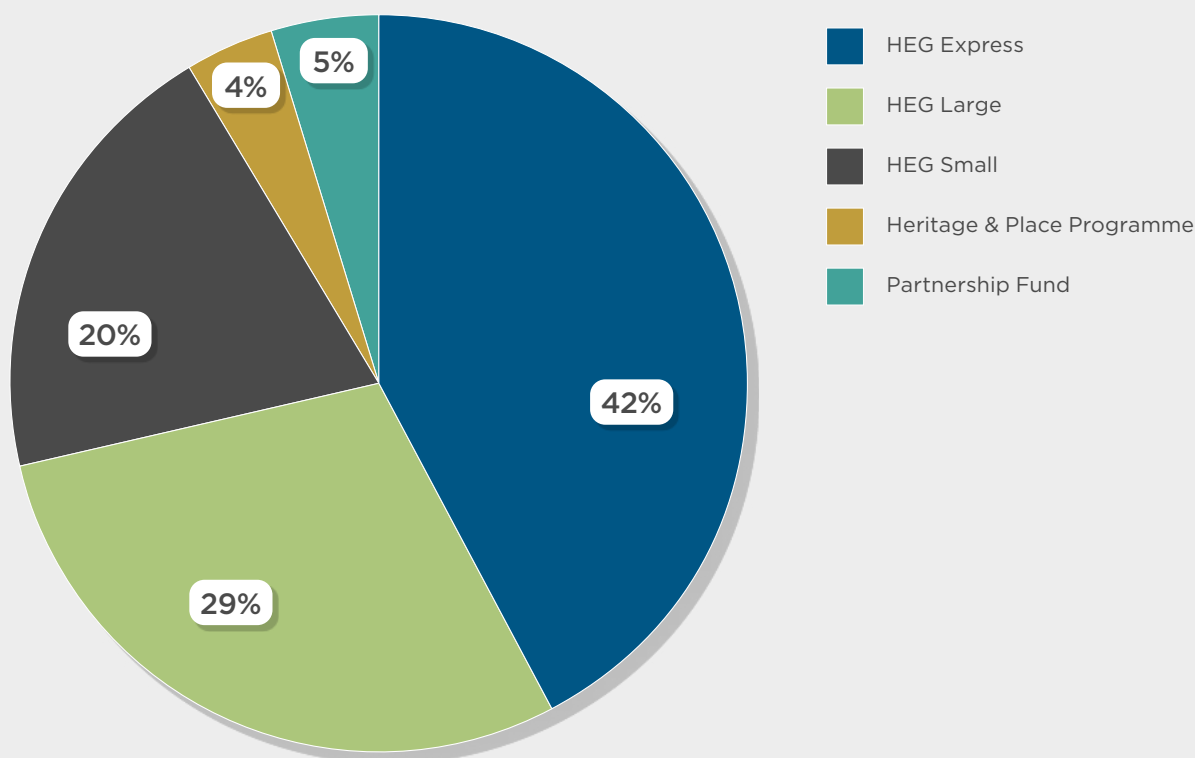
In 2024-25, we received 201 Expressions of Interest, of which 100, or 49.75%, were successful in being recommended to submit a full application. Of the completed applications we received this year, 52% have been made an offer of award.

This compares to 202 Expressions of Interest in 2023-24, of which 107, or 53%, were successful in being recommended to submit a full application, of which 40% were successful. This demonstrates very consistent application numbers and success rates for our grant-giving.



The spread of interest in our programmes has remained largely consistent in the second financial year of our refreshed grant funding programme, as follows:

Our processes



Express Grants, which are our smallest grants of a value of up to £25,000 and are determined within 6-8 weeks following application, continue to attract the most interest from the sector. There are relatively few small-scale grants programmes available within the historic environment sector, and it may be that its popularity reflects this need. Some of the Express Grants we have awarded this year include:

- Tam O’Shanter Inn, Ayr**

We funded Shanter Inns Ltd in August 2024 for the renewal of the reed thatch roof of the B-listed Tam O’Shanter Inn, Ayr High Street. We visited the site with HES’ thatching in-house experts to provide additional support and advice. Unusually for a thatched building, it is an urban pub with significance locally through association with Robert Burns.
- ‘Rock, paper, chisels’ – A celebration of Luining’s slate heritage past**

The project engaged the population of Luining, and surrounding areas, with the slate-quarrying heritage of the island, together with forward-looking plans to revive this activity. The project raised awareness and appreciation of this industrial history through engagement activities, including guided tours, art demonstrations, multilingual song, and storytelling.

- **Kilkivan, Killean and Kilchenzie Churches – Emergency works**

The emergency stabilisation project for three medieval church ruins (Killean, Kilchenzie, and Kilkivan) that are located in the Kintyre peninsula completed in November 2024. The eight-week programme of works also included the removal of the historically significant West Highland Graveslabs from Kilkivan to have their condition be assessed.

This project was a precursor to a full repair scheme for all three churches. A heritage trail, with new signposting and interpretation panels, will connect all three churches.

- **Duncansby Head Lighthouse Centenary Celebrations**

Lyth Arts Centre delivered an engagement project to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the opening of the Duncansby Head Lighthouse and the people that worked at the lighthouse and lived in the surrounding area. The main attraction of the project was the film, light and sound projection show, Duncansby Light at Night. All six sold out, reaching over 700 people. The celebration, which included live pop-up performances, exhibitions, and arts workshops, spanned February and March 2024 and reached over 1,200 people.

- **Whithorn and the Machars Pilot Archaeology Field School**

A £13,104 grant to the Whithorn Trust was made towards a year-long pilot Archaeology Field School, on the lands of Sinniness, Dumfries & Galloway. The field school was completed on Friday 14th March 2025: circa 30 individual adult volunteers attended and provided with skills training and skills training passports. 51 pupils and six staff attended from Whithorn Primary, who were engaged with excavating in one of the de-turfed areas.

The Grants Team takes a proactive approach to supporting our applicants and grantees, providing support throughout the process from our Grants Managers and Team Leaders, and also from our Conservation Advisor, who supports on technical matters. In particular, we place a high priority on supporting applicants and grantees who are new to our processes, or who may not have access to a large team of professional advisors. We do this through digital means, and by making site visits where we can, as we understand the value of physical presence in helping people to feel supported, and allowing us to develop a deeper understanding of the project. Our team spent 67 days on site visits in 2024-25; an increase of five days on the previous year.

Over the course of 2024-25, we completed an internal review of our funding of City Heritage Trusts (CHTs), considering their achievements, how we have funded them and where there might be opportunities to improve our support. For the next cycle of CHT funding, we look forward to extending their programme period from three to five years, to allow them to focus on delivering more complex problems in their cities that have proved difficult to resolve. This and other changes to the programme are explained in more detail in the report on the Review process, available from the HES website.

10 Annual Theme: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Scotland's Historic Environment

Each year, it is our intention to examine a particular theme in heritage. This year, we asked our organisations that receive core funding to reflect on the actions in relation to improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the sector.

We asked about the measures they had in place to encourage the diversity and inclusion of the people the organisations worked with, including in both decision-making and participation. We received a wide variety of responses – from organisations where this was a core focus of delivery, for example through the Make Your Mark volunteering campaign or through Women in Construction programmes, to smaller organisations, where EDI issues are regularly discussed at officer level and/or by the Board of Trustees.

We also asked if they provided training opportunities for staff and volunteers on EDI issues and were pleased to note the response was a resounding yes, at a scale relative to the size of the organisation.

We asked organisations if they collected data particularly relevant to this area, and the answer was more mixed. Some organisations collect quite detailed information, while others do not directly seek out EDI data. This is an area where there is a need for additional guidance and support, that could be scaled proportionate to the organisation.

Finally, we asked organisations what additional support would help their efforts in this area. Responses included:

- Funded training from experts with lived experience on how to engage with diverse communities
- Template policies and training videos for viewing from the HES website
- Support networking opportunities with interested EDI-focused groups and historic environment sector organisations.

Overall, we noted a profound interest in improving the sector's response to EDI issues, and a will to work with others to develop a coherent approach. It is clear that there is significant scope for development in this area.



11 Our Actions

Reflecting on the findings of the report, we will take the following actions to improve our service over the coming year:

- Consider more broadly the structure of our grant funding, to ensure it remains fit for purpose
- Implement monitoring our contribution to delivering Net Zero
- Work with internal and external colleagues to improve our guidance and support in relation to EDI within the historic environment in Scotland.

In addition, we will also develop a policy in relation to the use of AI in grant applications, to guide our applicants on its proper use.

As always, we remain committed to funding Scotland's historic environment sector as effectively and fairly as possible. If you have ideas about how we can improve our service, please get in touch via email: grants@hes.scot



Historic Environment Scotland is the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment.

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