

£48 million to safeguard nation's critical cultural heritage

- Move is a major part of levelling up drive to improve people's access to the arts, support cultural assets, and power economic growth through culture
- Recipients include famed codebreakers site Bletchley Park, internationally renowned Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and heritage site Berwick Barracks

Galleries, museums, libraries and other cultural venues across the country are set to benefit from £48 million of funding which will improve people's access to the arts, safeguard cultural assets for future generations, and power economic growth through culture.

More than 60 organisations in England will receive a slice of the funding which is being released as part of the government's Cultural Investment Fund which was first unveiled in 2019.

Much-loved public venues such as Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, with its internationally important collection of art and cultural objects, and the museum and former top-secret Second World War code-breaking centre Bletchley Park will receive funding.

Support will also go to smaller venues such as True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum in King's Lynn which celebrates 900 years of the fishing industry, and heritage sites including Berwick Barracks in Northumberland.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

Culture is the bedrock of society. It brings people together, entertains and informs us, and helps us to understand our common past and shared future.

Today we are announcing a raft of new funding for treasured cultural institutions up and down the country.

This will help them to continue their great work, advance our work to level up access to arts and culture so they can be enjoyed by people no matter where they live, and protect these cherished institutions for future generations to enjoy.

Iain Standen, CEO of Bletchley Park Trust, said:

We are very grateful to DCMS and Arts Council England for their generous support via the Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND), that will enable improvements to the aged electrical and water

systems at Bletchley Park.

This work is currently beyond the scope of the Bletchley Park Trust's budgets as we rebuild our finances following the pandemic.

With this significant support, the Trust can continue the important restoration of this nationally and internationally significant heritage site, keeping the doors open for future generations.

Kate Mavor, chief executive at English Heritage, which manages Berwick Barracks, said:

This major grant will help to breathe life into Berwick Barracks, unlocking and bringing back into use empty buildings and spaces within this immense site, right in the heart of Berwick town.

Our Living Barracks project is incredibly exciting – saving an important historic site, providing badly needed employment and investment, and creating a new cultural, residential and commercial space for Berwick.

All the partners involved in delivering this project are delighted at this resounding vote of confidence in it and we'd like to thank the Government for its support.

Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal Neil Mendoza said:

The Cultural Investment Fund was a major commitment in the election manifesto.

It has already helped places like Grimsby and Plymouth. Today's announcement highlights steadfast and needed support for museums and libraries.

We also see a new set of impressive, culture-led regeneration projects all around the country from Torbay to Middlesbrough. Levelling Up in action.

Darren Henley, Chief Executive Officer, Arts Council England, said:

Our artists, arts organisations, museums and libraries are experts in making villages, towns and cities better places to live, work, visit or play.

This investment means they'll be able to help more people across England to lead happier, more creative lives.

Sam Mullins, director of the London Transport Museum, said:

As we recover from the impact of the pandemic, this new investment will enable us to carry out critical repairs and upgrades to our historic Grade II listed building.

It will help ensure our galleries and exhibitions, which relate how public transport moves and shapes our city, are more accessible to our visitors and aid our efforts to ensure our building is more environmentally friendly for the future.

The fund will see £48 million distributed to 63 organisations. It is allocated through three streams: £24 million through the Cultural Development Fund, £18.8 million through the Museums Estate and Development Fund, and £5 million through the Libraries Improvement Fund.

Cultural Development Fund

The Cultural Development Fund aims to give people access to arts and culture in areas with historically low levels of cultural engagement and boost economic growth. The first round of funding announced in 2019 saw Grimsby, the Thames Estuary, Plymouth, Wakefield and Worcester receive a share of £20 million to invest in culture, heritage and the creative industries. The fund helps transform cultural sites which are at the heart of communities.

Today seven regional organisations have been given money for culture-led regeneration projects. Barnsley Museums will receive almost £4 million to transform Elsecar Heritage Centre into a cultural and creative industries hub.

Middlesbrough Council Cultural Services has received a similar amount for a number of projects including creating a printmaking facility, a new studio and a gallery space at The Auxiliary warehouse and to fund new event spaces and a gallery at the Carnegie Library and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.

Another £4 million will help turn Berwick Barracks in Northumberland into a year-round cultural venue with refurbished gallery and cinema spaces. Designed by architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, it was among the first purpose-built barracks in the country and is now run by English Heritage as a visitor attraction.

Libraries Improvement Fund

The Libraries Improvement Fund is helping to transform library services in England by helping them upgrade their buildings and digital infrastructure so they can respond to the changing ways people use them. Twenty-five library services are being supported in this round of funding, including Sandwell Library and Information Service in the West Midlands (£495,000) and Sheffield Libraries (£340,000).

Museum Estate and Development Fund

The Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) helps fund museum and local authority infrastructure projects and urgent maintenance works beyond their day-to-day budgets.

Thirty-one museums across England have been supported by the fund in this round, including Bristol Museum & Art Gallery (£653,000) and Leicester Museum & Art Gallery (£766,450). Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery will receive £5 million to improve public access and fund structural work to safeguard the building for future generations.

True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum in King's Lynn, Norfolk, will receive £50,000 to help the independent community organisation deal with flooding issues which threaten the safety of the collection.

Bletchley Park, the museum and former top-secret Second World War code-breaking centre, has been given £468,000 to pay for essential maintenance works to its buildings near Milton Keynes to help preserve them for future generations. The historic site is now a popular visitor attraction with more than 250,000 visitors per year.

Haringey Council has also been given £588,900 to fund the restoration of the north London landmark Bruce Castle. The Grade 1 listed building is home to the borough's museum and archive and the funding will help address structural issues within the historic building.

London Transport Museum has also been given £277,093 for upgrades including improvements to its lifts to increase public access to the venue.

Government support for the arts

The announcement follows a concerted effort by the government to support the country's vital cultural organisations.

Its unprecedented £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund helped thousands of organisations survive the pandemic. Last month the Government also announced an additional £75 million of arts funding, which will be distributed by 2025 to places that have been culturally under-served in the past as part of its work to level up access to the arts.

Together with today's announcement, the total amount of funding granted now constitutes the highest level of investment by the taxpayer in culture in the post-war period.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Barnsley Museums will receive £3,930,000.
- Middlesbrough Council Cultural Services will receive £4,250,000.
- English Heritage will receive £4,200,000 for its work at Berwick Barracks.

- Details of the recipients of the remaining portion of the Cultural Investment Fund will be announced in due course.