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0. Introduction

This briefing paper takes the Bigg Market area in Newcastle upon Tyne (UK) as a case study. It follows the process of an ongoing (2015-2018) public realm scheme, which is explicitly conservation-led, and supported by a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Townscape Heritage (TH) grant. It is however, not taken forward by the local authority, but by NE1 Ltd., the local Business Improvement District (BID) company. This implies shifting roles and responsibilities in the urban governance. This research follows and reviews the Bigg Market process as it unfolds to reveal the (possible) impacts of those new forms and formats of urban governance on the heritage management.

1. Newcastle as a Case Study

1.1. Location of the study area and sub-area

Newcastle upon Tyne is the biggest and most important city of the North East of England, with a population of about 293,000. It forms the core of the Tyneside urban area with a population of 880,000 and the heart the Tyne and Wear City Region inhabited by 1,650,000 people. The first settlement of where today’s Newcastle is located was recorded in Roman times and is remembered as a home to Hadrian’s Wall. The remains of the ancient wall are still visible in some parts of the city. Newcastle’s historic urban core covers the area that later formed the mediaeval town. The upper part of that medieval city centre was redeveloped by Richard Grainger in 1830s as a Georgian New Town (Grainger Town). Since the XIX century Newcastle was one of the powerhouses of the industrial revolution and the centre of English shipbuilding and heavy engineering. After the decline of Newcastle’s main industries, the city had to ‘reinvent’ itself. Conservation-led schemes played a significant role in this process.

1.2. History and significance for cultural heritage

1.2.1. Newcastle

Although Newcastle is not widely recognized as a historic city, it has 12 designated Conservation Areas (CA’s) and a stock of over 2000 listed buildings. Since the 1970s the city went through a post-industrial demise and the Thatcher era left it as one of the poorest urban regions in the country. From the 1990s onwards, innovative conservation-led development projects have formed an explicit part of this process, and the city’s ‘Urban Renaissance’ was connected to the successful conservation-led regeneration of the Quayside and Grainger Town among other things. More recent conservation-led regeneration schemes are the Ouseburn Valley, Byker Estate, the Stephenson’s Quarter and “Old Newcastle”.

1.2.2. Central conservation area

In 1963 the Development Plan for Newcastle proposed four main preservation areas in the city centre. This was half a decade before the concept of conservation areas was introduced in England, Wales and Scotland by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 (Atkinson & Burns, 1963; Buswell, 1984; Pendlebury, 2001). Those pre-Act preservation areas did initially not include the medieval morphology of the Bigg Market area. They however, did cover a significant part of the historic city and formed the basis for two larger conservation areas formally designated in 1967. In 1970 also the Bigg Market, including adjoining Cloth and Groat Market, were designated. In 1973, it the various conservation areas were merged into one large ‘Central Conservation Area’ (CCA). This CCA has seen several extensions since (NCC, 1996).

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1 https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157065/report.aspx#tabrespop
1.2.3. Bigg Market
Newcastle’s historic urban core, which is still defined by the urban structure of the medieval settlement, remains important in the city’s retailing and office provision and is central to the city’s large nightlife industry of restaurants and bars. Together with the Castle and the Cathedral, the Bigg Market area forms the medieval heart of Newcastle. The Bigg Market is located centrally located in the CCA, and about half of the buildings along the Bigg, Cloth, and Groat Market are designated (Local, Grade II, Grade II*).

1.3. Challenges for the area
1.3.1. Newcastle
While Newcastle is the key employment area in the North East of England, joblessness, underemployment and high numbers of low-income households remain the most important challenges for the city. The region’s economic prospects look even gloomier given that both Newcastle and the whole of the North East are characterised by the highest countrywide dependence on public sector employment. Hence, Newcastle has been and will continue to be particularly vulnerable to job losses resulting from ongoing and radical austerity measures.

The local authority already had to reduce spending by £221 million as a result of the steep decline in central government support between 2010 and 2016. Another £70 million more in spending reductions are due until 2020. Moreover, “[f]rom financial year 2020-21, Government intends to abolish the core grant to councils completely, with councils instead being funded through retaining all of its business rates income rather than returning around half to central Government as at present” (Newcastle City Council, 2017). As the ratio between central state funding and other funding (e.g. locally raised council taxes and business rates) varies significantly between local authorities, the cuts affect some more than others. For some perspective in relation to the average cuts nationwide “Newcastle’s spending power has been cut by £603 per household over this period (2010-2016), compared to a national cut of £294 per household” (Newcastle City Council, 2017).

As the endogenous business formation has historically been relatively weak and its survival rates quite poor (NCC & Gateshead Council, 2014), the city is highly dependent on inward investment, a regional retail centre function, and a growing higher education industry with an estimated population of 107,000 students across Newcastle and Gateshead universities and colleges (NCC & Gateshead Council, 2014). Newcastle faces a need for economic growth, which it partly aims to establish by deploying its – vulnerable – historic environment. New development is stimulated to aim at enhancing local distinctiveness, and (re)creating sense of place (NCC & Gateshead Council, 2014). There thus might not be direct development pressures, the danger of allowing for development that doesn’t comply with this statement due to a fear for a lack of development, is real.

1.3.1. Historic Urban Core
Even though projects like the Grainger Town Project did a great deal to preserve historic buildings in the intervention area, much of the historic building stock in Newcastle’s historic urban core is still underused, and not always in a good state of conservation. Hence, the continuing challenge for the years ahead lies in using the historic assets for economic benefit and in doing so without compromising their cultural value and physical qualities. Defined challenges are attracting inward

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investment and supporting and facilitating development (retail, offices, tourism and culture, and knowledge and science), and increasing the residential population in the urban core.

Figure 1: Bigg Market, Newcastle upon Tyne (UK), an aerial view Google Maps 2016

Figure 2: Case study location, Newcastle upon Tyne, Bigg Market Google Maps 2016
1.3.2. Bigg Market

In the various regeneration schemes in the city centre, the Bigg Market area seems to have been bypassed. The neighbouring Grainger Town project did not lead to increased development on the Bigg Market. Neither did more recent projects such as the redevelopment of the Station Area and the Old Newcastle project. The Core Strategy (NCC & Gateshead Council, 2014) does not consider the Bigg Market to be part of the primary shopping area, nor does it designate it as a key site for development. It does however indicate it as a public open space to be improved.

Bigg Market is currently considered “a sort of very run down area of kebab shops and no longer trendy pubs” and “its role in the city has changed, it used to be a place people went to, because it’s where all the action was. Now it’s just a place people go through, to get to the other places where the action is. Now, even just turning the corner going down High Bridge, you’ve got a couple of good pubs down there where people go to rather than you, to what’s left on the Bigg Market.” [Interview LA, 10 May 2015]

Various specific issues have been identified in the management plan (NECT, 2016), regarding the buildings (e.g. low level of understanding about fabric, bad state of conservation/condition, vacancy rates and under-use of upper floors), the public realm (e.g. ad hoc alterations and poor repair, complex place management, low on green, high on motorised traffic), and regarding the economy and stakeholders (e.g. low margins/turndown, high churn in operators and tenants, lack of diversity, poor daytime economy, low profile in destination marketing and heritage activities).

2. Planning reform: evolution of the governance and planning of the historic built environment

2.1. Building the system 1945-1979

The first national ancient monuments protection act dates back to 1882, this Act and its successors provided protection for archaeological monuments. Protection of areas and buildings was introduced in the Housing Act (1923) and planning legislation in 1932 (Pendlebury, 2015a). Provision for the planning and management of historic cores in the UK grew incrementally through the twentieth century. Conservation concerns over the loss of historic buildings in urban areas grew during the inter-war period of the 1920s and 1930s with, for example, the loss of Georgian architecture in London being a particular concern. From the 1940s onwards, heritage policy developed, in both the context of cultural policy where government patronage of the arts supplanted that of church, crown, aristocracy and bourgeoisie (Hewison, 1995) and in the context of town planning policies, in which the management of the wider historic environment became increasingly embedded (Pendlebury, 2015b). Comprehensive planning, however, came with the post-war planning acts – specifically the Town and Country Planning Acts of 1944 and 1947.

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act elevated governmental and societal recognition of planning and introduced a listed building system to the English planning system (Davoudi & Pendlebury, 2010; Pendlebury, 2015a) With regard to preservation however, the Act did not lead to significant action at a national level in the first decade. This was due to the influence of economic deprivation of post-war austerity and the fact that the interest in the historic character and significance of a historic city was primarily local (Pendlebury 2004; Pendlebury 2005). Moreover, listing was intended as guidance for decision making in planning, and it was accepted that listed buildings could be sacrificed in the interest of planning (Pendlebury 2009). Heritage was to be protected for its own sake rather than to perform any wider social or economic role (Pendlebury and Strange 2011).

In the second half of the 1940s many post war reconstruction plans were developed. They are now largely associated with radical and comprehensive redevelopment. Though the definition of what comprised a historic city at the time would now be considered rather limited, those plans form an important stage in the development and adoption of conservation-related concerns
planning (Larkham, 2003; Pendlebury, 2003) In practice the economic deprivation of post-war austerity meant that relatively little central area development occurred until the 1960s.

By the start of the 1960s the momentum in favour of redevelopment of central areas was growing rapidly, and Newcastle upon Tyne positions itself as a frontrunner in this debate in the UK. As in many British cities, it is the period when post-war redevelopment is in full swing. Though as the decade develops, the concern for area conservation grows, with an initial culmination in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. With this Act, a system of conservation areas was created, and as such it is the first explicit legislative recognition of the importance of historic areas (Pendlebury 2001; Pendlebury 2005). This Act enabled local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any parts of their own area that are of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The 1967 Act was preceded by the commissioning in 1966 of the four studies of the historic cities Bath, Chester, Chichester and York (Pendlebury 2001). It also builds on the ideas of area-based concepts as developed in the post war reconstruction plans that continue to develop during the 1960s (Larkham, 2003; Pendlebury, 2005). Ensemble-value increasingly informs decisions to place Building Preservation Orders on listed buildings, and government guidance stresses conserving the character of towns (Pendlebury 2001). As the consequences of redevelopment in city centres became apparent, the opposition to demolition grew.

The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act introduced comprehensive controls over works to listed buildings. This was the start of a more controlled approach to planning the historic environment. In the early seventies legislation further increased the power to control conservation in planning, by carrot and stick. A blanket control, requiring consent for demolition in conservation areas was introduced in 1974, but also government grants for conservation areas were introduced (Delafons, 1997; Mynors, 2006) Throughout the seventies, national and local discussion on the changes that reinforced the conservation planning system led to reflection and a broadening of the scope of conservation planning. There was a growing attention for urban continuity and for the needs of the local community, and a more inclusive approach to what was considered of value, in terms of time and type (DoE 1973; Pendlebury and Strange 2011). Those debates echoed across much of the western world (CoE 1975). So, halfway the seventies the principal legal instruments of heritage protection in England had been established (Pendlebury, 2015a). By the celebratory 1975 European Architectural Heritage Year conservation was enjoying a far more central position in the planning system than had been the case a few years before. However, conservation objectives and development pressures were often competing and the 1974-1979 Labour government seemed at best lukewarm to certain elements of conservation policy (Pendlebury and Strange 2011).

2.2. Consolidating the system 1980-2007
During the 1980s and 1990s, the conservation planning system developed, matured and tightened. At the same time the extent of the protected historic environment and the popularity of ‘heritage’ led conservation into new, more economically instrumental relationships. The interface between these two processes was not without some tension, but on the whole the conservation system has proved to be extremely robust. A key body in mediating and promoting

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this agenda has been Historic England, or as it was called until 2015 “English Heritage”. It was created in 1984, assuming responsibilities from the Department of the Environment (DoE) and various other advisory bodies (Pendlebury, 2002).

The election of a Conservative government in May 1979 brought a new enthusiasm for heritage (see for example Hewison, 1987), which within the planning system translated to a new support for conservation policy, in a period of more general hostility to the idea of state-planning (Allmendinger and Thomas 1998, Thornley 1991). Throughout the period 1979–97 the policy weight placed on heritage protection developed significantly. Whilst the basic procedural town planning framework was not fundamentally altered in this decade, there were dramatic changes to the policy framework, the funding resources, and the amount of the historic environment under protection. New protected categories were created, such as the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and English Heritage, now Historic England, was set up.

Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s conservation planning practice began to embrace and promote the idea of the historic environment as an asset to be used and adapted for economic gain. In government planning policy the economic role of conservation emerged in Circular 8/87 (DoE 1987), which argued that conservation and regeneration are essentially complementary. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15, DoE & Department of National Heritage, 1994), in turn, went further than previous guidance on advocating a creative approach to finding new uses for historic buildings. While this led to a firm embedding of the historic environment as a central objective of the town planning system, new challenges and spheres of contestation arose. For example, the undeniable pressure of development which was especially strong in economically buoyant commercial locations like historic centres. This in turn led to a more instrumental understanding – or expectation – of conservation. The focus more and more shifted towards its potential to contribute towards growth and to help in the regeneration of places, rather than just the protection of those places.

In the 1990s the potential of heritage to be a positive force in economic regeneration was increasingly established and was evident in large-scale city centre initiatives. Under Blair’s New Labour government (1997 - 2010) the term ‘Urban Renaissance’ was coined (Urban Task Force, 1999). This represented a regeneration doctrine which asserted that intensive public investment in core areas would stimulate sustainable economic growth and social inclusion through employment, all backed by the presence of generous UK and European funding streams. The ‘Urban Renaissance’ was to set the agenda for the new century, and urban agenda for an urban century. Market-led and economic competitiveness objectives however, often kept leading the actual local urban agendas (Colomb, 2007).

The ‘renaissance’ of historic urban cores as loci of cultural activity, and bundling physical regeneration with advertising strategies was a part of a wider New Labour agenda. Regeneration initiatives, in the cores of post-industrial cities in particular, were intended to stimulate economic growth in the North of England, and thus rebalance both national economy and demographics by making the North contribute to the UK’s economy and secure jobs for local populations. One of the most well-known examples of such regeneration initiatives is the Grainger Town Project in Newcastle. The Grainger Town Partnership, working in a period of extremely favourable property-market conditions, was very successful in many respects, revitalising Newcastle’s city centre, recycling buildings, improving the public realm and facilitating the development of a new central

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4 English Heritage separated into two organisations in April 2015; the English Heritage charity which cares for the National Heritage Collection of more than 400 historic places and their collections and Historic England, the public body that looks after England’s historic environment and helps people understand, value and care for historic places.
residential community. Although in practice significant tensions existed between the various stakeholders (Pendlebury, 2002).

The importance of heritage value beyond its historic and aesthetic dimensions became more and more emphasized. Since the introduction of the “Heritage Counts” reports in 2002, the performance measuring of the added value of heritage became strongly established. This program later got specific regional and city reports (since 2011 Heritage Counts programme specified for North East, since 2014 Heritage Counts: local authority Profiles). So heritage has to perform in economic terms, both in spent and in earned resources more and more.

2.3. Neoliberalising the system 2007-2016
The main post-crisis policy shifts in the UK for the historic environment, came after 2010, with the newly installed Coalition Government (2010-2015) who saw austerity, public sector reform and further de-regulation as a pathway forward. Under the coalition government planning was (yet again) framed as bureaucratic, and a barrier to development and prosperity that was considered needed to crawl out of the 2008 economic crisis. This led to the abolition of the regional planning framework and the introduction of a new “streamlined” National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012. While the NPPF promotes sustainable development, this often seems to be confused for sustaining economic development (Scott, 2015).

2.3.1. Planning framework
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) that comes with it, replaced a wide range of previous “Planning Policy Statements” (PPS). Specifically for the historic environment, in 2015 Historic England started publishing “good practice advice” (GPA) to replace the heritage specific PPS 5 and 6. Although some feared heritage would disappear in NPPF, the protection and enhancement of the historic environment actually forms an important component of NPPF. Conservation is not only one of the core planning principles (article 17), it is also mentioned within the environmental dimension of the definition of sustainability (article 7), the overarching theme of the NPPF.

Article 17 includes the following “take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas [...]” and “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations” while article 7 states that the environmental dimension of sustainability is about “contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment [...]”

The general appetite for an approach that is less restrictive is supported by the NPPF, but was already introduced in the 2008 Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment by Historic England. The NPPF builds on the ‘constructive conservation’ principles which led to a context in which change to the historic environment became more acceptable. The NPPF did up the pressure by its emphasis on development.

“the NPPF has also allowed things to be, ...I would say, smoother and simpler, but at the same time probably there is more opportunity for developers to create the case for bigger change, using the NPPF, that wouldn’t have been possible under PPG15 or previous regimes. That’s probably overall good thing if you subscribe to the concept of constructive conservation, where conservation isn’t about preventing things it’s about moving heritage forward then the NPPF is a good thing.” (NECT, 2016)

In the meantime, the Localism Act of 2011 also started to influence heritage management. The aim of the Act is to facilitate the devolution of decision-making powers from central government control to individuals and communities. With greater powers for local communities, the aim is to develop a more inclusive, democratic process. Locally, neighbourhood forums or parish councils are stimulated to develop their own neighbourhood development plan, in which heritage can play
a role, and a local heritage management strategy can be developed. This potentially leads to other definitions of (local) heritage and a more holistic conception of place, although it seems that until now heritage is still mostly connected to the traditional aesthetic and historic dimensions and national designation (Jackson, 2015; Pendlebury, 2015). The Localism Act also gives local community groups the right to make a bid to buy a property that has a community use when it comes up for sale, as a “Assets of Community Value”. Whilst this is principally aimed at securing the ongoing community benefit of local facilities such as shops, pubs, and libraries, these are often located in buildings with heritage value. The mechanism can therefore be used to secure the opportunity to negotiate the acquisition of heritage assets with community value.\(^5\) While it might be used in this way, it is not at the moment the case in Newcastle. The focus on localism, as a key concept in the participatory democracy, can also be seen in for example the Historic England 2020 vision document (Heritage 2020: strategic priorities for England’s historic environment 2015-2020). Three out of their five strategic priorities aim at engaging with, supporting, and facilitating communities.

2.3.2. Austerity

As austerity measures in local government continue, the lack of public investment remains, and the role of the local authority shifts even more towards facilitating and encouraging private investment, and community initiatives, rather than undertaking schemes themselves.

Extensive cuts to public services that were at the forefront of the austerity measures have resulted in a major crisis in terms of skills and capacity for managing the historic environment at national and local level. The downward trend pre-dates the crisis of 2008 but has certainly accelerated since. Between 2010 and 2015, local authorities have lost about 40% of their main grant.\(^6\) Austerity measures are part of the wider ideological neoliberal objective of a reduced role of the state. This has accelerated other longer terms trends, e.g. outsourcing of activities traditionally undertaken by local authorities to consultants and contractors, or to volunteers and local communities. Moreover, councils are expected to invest more and more from asset sales.\(^7\)

Reduced capacity becomes very clear in the recent report on local authority Staff Resources.\(^8\) It shows that over the past 10 years, the number of conservation specialists that provide advice to local authorities (but not limited to those FTEs directly employed by a local authority) has fallen by 35.8% (292.4 FTE). This is significantly higher than then general decrease in local public sector employment, which comprises a staggering 25% over that same decade. In sharp contrast, public sector employment in central government increased with 5.9 % over the past 10 years (figure 3).

Heritage funding from major bodies has remained in a downward trend for the last two decades, though probably worsened by the economic crisis, and clearly suffering from the austerity measures taken post 2010 (fig. 5). HLF funding has seen a substantial increase over the past years (fig. 4), as a consequence of higher lottery sales, and a political refocus on heritage (post-Olympics, and presumably to compensate for the decreased HE funding). HLF funding is becoming the primary source for funding heritage in the UK, as such their definition(s) of heritage, structures of heritage management, and funding decisions have an ever-growing influence on heritage practice.

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5 https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/HAR/CRB/#(4)
6 https://www.ft.com/content/cf4b4a26-d8b8-11e6-944b-e7eb37a6a8e
7 https://www.ft.com/content/cf4b4a26-d8b8-11e6-944b-e7eb37a6a8e
8 An Eighth report on local authority Staff Resources Produced by Historic England, the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation August 2016 Online via http://ihbc.org.uk/resources_head/SelectPapers/files/8LAresources.pdf
UK public sector employment in local and central government - March 1999 to June 2016 (in Million) seasonally adjusted

Figure 3 UK public sector employment in local and central government March 2002 to June 2016 (in million) seasonally adjusted data via Office for National Statistics. https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/publicsectoremployment/september2016

Total Historic England (HE) grants paid out annually

Figure 5 Total Historic England (HE) grants paid out annually data via Historic England Indicator data 2016 on capacity building https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/indicator-data/

Value of projects made by HLF (£ million in 2015/16 Real Prices)

Figure 4 Value of projects made by HLF (£ million in 2015/16 adjusted for inflation) annually, data via Historic England Indicator data 2016 on capacity building https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/indicator-data/
2.3.3. Local impact of austerity, flexibility, and localism

In the face of austerity, a smaller state, but also devolution and a more development minded, change accepting, approach to the historic environment, several issues arise for Newcastle when it comes to the future of conservation.

Pre 2008 the conservation office was an expanding team. All conservation area management plans and conservation area character statements were in place, as well as a local list and historic environment records, a program of interpretation, a well maintained website etc. This is no longer the case; there is barely enough staff to take care of the core activities such as listed building consents and conservation area consent. In the most recent rounds of the still ongoing cuts, the conservation and planning department is not as heavily hit by staff cuts as other departments. This is attributed to the fact that planning for the Historic Environment is a statutory function, and the team has already been stripped to the bare minimum. Moreover, the NPPF does put a lot of emphasis on having the expertise to make informed decisions on the historic environment (interview LPA, 2016). The conservation and planning departments’ historic environment team in Newcastle consisted of 8 to 9 conservation officers and 3 to 4 urban designers in the beginning of the 21st century, the team is now down to 3 conservation officers and 3 urban designers (interview LPA, 2015, 2016). The Newcastle team thus went from 11-13 members down to 6. Most of the lost jobs came from the side of the heritage officers, which reduced with about 66% over the past decade, far worse than the already significant 36% drop national average.

While the legal framework to manage the historic environment has not substantially changed, the following quotes suggest that the context of austerity, and reduced resources and capacity have a strong impact on the day-to-day management on council level. The lack of resources and capacity leads to a more reactive form of urban management, focusing mostly on statutory functions, leaving many other initiatives to the market.

“[… ] to try and… , be proactive if you like, about conservation and heritage has become much more difficult to… deal with. And that’s a combination of …, capacity, resources focusing on the main sort of objectives of the Council, when it comes down to it, wider objectives of the Council are things like social care housing and statutory functions a local authority has to do.”

“[W]hat drives the proactive work is the capacity to do it, and so, we haven’t got the capacity. If people come to us, wanting some help, we can’t finance them, we can point them in the right direction and try to support them if we got time to do it. But you know, the… statutory role takes… precedence.” (LPA, 2016)

“Newcastle perhaps is lucky, in that it had a lot of the more strategic historic environment management tools that a conservation officer would expect to have, it had those in place before austerity hit.” Conservation officers are doing “more reactive work, rather than pro-active work, and they are not therefore going out in to the communities, there is not as much networking as there used to be, there aren’t the training events, there isn’t the opportunity to meet people face-to-face, and to develop the profession, to develop the sector and give it status and profile... because everybody is always sat behind a desk looking at decision files.” (NECT, 2016)

As those excerpts show, austerity and the aim for a reduced role of the state led to decreased capacity, is generally perceived as a very negative thing, as it leaves hardly any time for anything that goes beyond the statutory task, let alone time for a more pro-active approach. That means, there currently is no capacity to for example develop local guidelines, interpretation programmes, or web-based initiatives, neither can the local authority invest in participating in training programs, or developing proposals to apply for funding.

There are no substantial financial resources to fund local initiatives. In terms of what can be done, the focus is very much on the designated heritage assets, and on those applications that imply significant changes to the historic environment. More day-to-day changes in conservation areas are dealt with by the planning offices rather than the conservation officers. The perception in the
Newcastle Conservation team is that this situation improved, or maybe forced, collaborative working between heritage and planning. Further internal changes to deliver collaborative working, such as open floor plans, are being implemented.

“It is here, I don’t know of it’s everywhere, it’s not uncommon now to find urban design and conservation teams as one unit. Which is as it should be, its only different parts of the same environment, so from our perspective we work very well” […] “the unity of the way in which development management is delivered is actually better, maybe just because its smaller and sort of the barriers get broken down” (Interview LPA, 2016).

The NPPF is perceived as a flexible planning framework which allows for a smoother process and more opportunity for developers to argue for change. It is however clear that the flexibility of the NPPF combined with austerity leads to direct changes in approach, and to changing limits of acceptable change. The perception is that “consent regimes I think have got both more complex, certainly in the last three/four years and perhaps lighter touch” (Interview, NECT 2016). Legal frameworks allow for interpretation, and decisions as to for example what is ‘significant change’, or what is ‘desirable to preserve’ do not have a definite answer, and are at the discretion of the local authority. In Newcastle we see a push to “manage schemes rather than go through a great bureaucratic process to get listed building consent.” Where previously they would ask for listed building consent for every adjustment to a listed building, now they might say “it’s a change to a building which actually doesn’t materially affect the special character of the historic building, so …” This is not considered negative per se, it is maybe “a little bit more risky, but it gets more done.” (Interview LPA, 2016). Moreover, it was argued by the NECT officer, that “if you subscribe to the concept of constructive conservation, where conservation isn’t about preventing things it’s about moving heritage forward then the NPPF is a good thing - which I would agree with” (Interview, NECT 2016).

Logically, a smaller team has to be strategic in determining what is worth fighting for. This leads to a higher threshold for issues to become significant, and active discouragement of being too precious about the historic environment at the ‘cost’ of the public benefit – which can be seen literally in the online consultation of the Bigg Market:

“it is concluded that there is harm (less than substantial) to the setting of adjacent listed buildings and the historic character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. However, it is acknowledged that there are significant public benefits of the scheme and overall the appearance of the area would be enhanced. It is therefore considered that the scheme, although causes harm (less than substantial) to the significance of the setting of the designated heritage assets of the adjacent listed buildings and the designated heritage asset of the conservation area, this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme and general enhancement of the space. It is therefore […] considered acceptable” (Online registration - Historic Environment Manager, 2016). 9

It clearly shows how heritage management in Newcastle has changed from a practice of conserving buildings to a practice of managing change. This is generally perceived as a positive thing by the involved stakeholders. It also reveals how much political push there is to support development. Newcastle is to be a ‘working’ city, and the main drivers for any action are economic growth and job creation (NCC & Gateshead, 2014). Restrictions on building and urban development are not necessarily welcomed. The current lack of development pressure, and the

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9 Planning « Application Comments 2016/0296/01/DET | Redesign and enhancement of the external public realm space. | Public Space Bigg Market Newcastle upon Tyne Conservation - FAO Ian Ayris
Comment Date: Thu 21 Jul 2016 online via https://publicaccessapplications.newcastle.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=consulteeComments&keyVal=O2ZVU1BSG6L00
dependence of the local authority on development for an economically sustainable business model certainly increases the chances of ‘inappropriate development’.

Table 1: Overview policy themes UK / Newcastle upon Tyne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy themes</th>
<th>1945-2007</th>
<th>2008-2017</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building the system 1945-1979</strong></td>
<td>The adoption of various Acts set out the framework for conservation in the UK. Halfway the seventies the principal legal instruments of heritage protection in England had been established.</td>
<td>Neoliberalising the system 2007-2016</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidating the system 1980-2007</strong></td>
<td>During the 1980s and 1990s, the conservation planning system developed, matured and tightened. At the same time the extent of the protected historic environment and the popularity of 'heritage' led conservation into new, more economically instrumental relationships.</td>
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<td><strong>In the 1990s the potential of heritage to be a positive force in economic regeneration was increasingly established and was evident in large-scale city centre initiatives. Also known as “Urban Renaissance”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Austerity between 2010 and 2015, local authorities have lost on average about 40% of their funding, and more cuts are pushed through abolishing core funding by Central State by 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act</strong></td>
<td>Elevated governmental and societal recognition of planning and introduced a listed building system to the English planning system.</td>
<td>Localism Act of 2011 aims to facilitate the devolution of decision-making powers from central government control to individuals and communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The concern for area conservation grows, with an initial culmination in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act and The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act introduced comprehensive controls over works to listed buildings.</strong></td>
<td>A blanket control, requiring consent for demolition in conservation areas was introduced in 1974, and also government grants for conservation areas were introduced.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1984 English Heritage / Historic England was established. They continue to produce policies and guidelines for the Historic Environment.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regulation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Incentives (including financial tools)</strong></td>
<td>**15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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schemes offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund based on lottery ticket sales

New schemes such as Heritage Action Zones, do not come with significant funding.\(^{10}\)

Vacant listed buildings are exempted from paying any business rates until reoccupation.

LEPs have funds for things like job creation, education, skills and capacity building, as well as for stimulating a low carbon economy. Those might apply to heritage

<table>
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<th>Direct intervention tools</th>
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<th>Communication and engagement tools</th>
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<tr>
<td>Most recent initiative to stimulate public engagement national heritage, is the creation an online initiative Historic England late 2016 called <em>enrich the list</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Counts reports have been monitoring participation and engagement for over a decade, since 2011 also regionally.</td>
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<td>Heritage Open days</td>
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<th>Knowledge tools</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is a developing evidence base for heritage. The focus on indicators and measurements has been steadily growing in England, and the UK generally, especially since the introduction of ‘heritage counts’ (2002).(^{11})</td>
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<tr>
<td>The recently developed ‘heritage index’ adds to this by mapping the strength, breadth and diversity of heritage in England, Scotland and Wales (RSA, 2015).(^{12})</td>
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<tr>
<th>Institutional innovation – e.g. new partnerships</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grainger town partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE1 Ltd., the local Business Improvement District (BID) company takes the lead in a HLF TH project.</td>
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</tbody>
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\(^{10}\) [http://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/haz/haz-explanatory-notes-guidance-jun16.pdf](http://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/haz/haz-explanatory-notes-guidance-jun16.pdf)

\(^{11}\) [https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2016/heritage-counts-sector-overview-2016.pdf](https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2016/heritage-counts-sector-overview-2016.pdf)


3. The legal and policy framework in 2016 and beyond

3.1. Policy themes and general goals – national and local

The planning system in the UK includes the following parts:

1. National Legislation
2. National Planning Policy and Guidance (including Historic England Practice Advice)
3. Local Plans & Local decision making

Any decisions relating to listed buildings and their settings and conservation areas must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.

3.1.1. Legislation: Record of historic sites and listed buildings

Decisions on listing are made by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), advised by Historic England (HE). This can be done as part of a comprehensive survey or following a request to look at a particular building (often referred to as 'spot listing'). Emphasis has recently shifted from comprehensive area surveys to thematic surveys. There are approximately 375,000 list entries in England. However, older list entries can encompass a whole street of buildings so in practical terms the number of buildings actually listed is considerably higher and estimates suggest the actual number is over 500,000. A building is listed in its totality, including its interior.

Buildings are listed using the following principles: (i) an inclusive approach based on comprehensive survey i.e. all buildings meeting defined criteria will be listed rather than a representative sample; (ii) no appeal against listing (except on the grounds of factual inaccuracy); and (iii) no compensation as a consequence of listing.

Works which affect the character of a listed building as a building of special architectural or historic interest require listed building consent. This is in addition to any other consent that might be required, such as planning permission. Decisions on listed building consent, and indeed on applications involving designated heritage assets, are subject to specific policies in the NPPF. As such, clear and convincing justification should be produced to justify any harm to significance. Harm is to be ‘exceptional’ (e.g. Grade II listing) or ‘wholly exceptional’ (e.g. Grade I or II* listed buildings). So, harm can be justified on the grounds of public benefits that outweigh that harm.

Total loss of the asset or substantial harm may alternatively be justified if all of the following tests are met:

- there is no viable use of the heritage asset that can be found in the medium term including through marketing to find alternative owners;
- the heritage asset is preventing all reasonable uses of the site;
- public support for or ownership of the asset is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.

3.1.2. Legislation: Conservation areas

Conservation areas are ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Unlike listed buildings, the responsibility for deciding which areas should be designated as conservation areas usually rests with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and there is no grading system of relative significance. The designation of a conservation area has a number of direct effects: demolition is brought within planning control; proposed works to trees have to be notified to the LPA; and different permitted development rights apply. However, just as important as these direct consequences of designation is the effect on the way that planning applications are considered. A local planning authority (LPA) is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing
the appearance of a conservation area. Article 4 Directions (withdrawing permitted development rights) are often associated with conservation areas.

The baseline document for providing a clear assessment and definition of a conservation area’s interest is called a character appraisal. Over time there has been a growing emphasis on community participation in the preparation of appraisals and indeed some are now community-led. The best appraisals combine a deep understanding of the evolution of place and its urban morphology combined with a three-dimensional analysis of its townscape qualities. Appraisals may become supplementary planning documents as part of the local plan. Many conservation areas still have no appraisal; nearly half according to EH data from 2009.

3.1.3 National Policy: NPPF

Although some feared heritage would disappear from the policy framework, the protection and enhancement of the historic environment actually forms an important component of NPPF. Conservation is not only one of the ‘Core Planning Principles’, it is also mentioned within the Environmental dimension of the definition of sustainability – which is the core theme of the NPPF in general. The NPPF builds on the Conservation Principles, policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment (Historic England, 2008) which are: The historic environment is a shared resource; Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment; Understanding the significance of places is vital; Significant places should be managed to sustain their values; Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent; Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.

The historic environment, according to the NPPF glossary is basically everything, as it includes “all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.” Heritage however, is more specifically defined, largely as the historic environment designated as heritage (either listed or included in a conservation area). Paragraphs 126 to 141 of the NPPF contain the heritage specific policies. The NPPF glossary defines conservation as “The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance.” Subsequently a heritage asset is set to a “building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)”. Significance (for heritage policy) means “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. The Setting being the ‘surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’”. The main aim set in articles 126 – 141 is to maintain and enhance the significance of heritage assets as well as their setting, local character, and distinctiveness, while putting them to viable economic use, and to create public benefit. Article 61 states that securing high quality and inclusive design should go beyond aesthetic considerations, and therefore planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment. In the actual heritage articles (126-141), the focus is very much on character of place when it comes to significance. While this character could well include much beyond aesthetics, the mentioned values to consider to define this character, are the ones that are also mentioned in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act: architectural (or aesthetic) and historic. One can wonder how other values such as social, political, economic, ecological that go beyond the aesthetic could come into play here? There is also no mention of how other connections between people and places could be considered.

While issues of management of the historic environment and climate change are both forefront in urban management, and part of the ‘sustainable development’ narrative, they are hardly ever
linked. There is also little indication of how to balance or reconcile these potentially competing priorities where they conflict, leaving to the individual decision-maker the job of reconciling these different policies on a case-by-case basis (Pendlebury et al, 2014).

Heritage is positioned in a wider framework of sustainable development in the NPPF. The NPPF’s (2012) builds on the concept of sustainable development as developed in the late 1980s, having three dimensions: economic, social and environmental (Brundtland, 1987). The environmental dimension of sustainability as described in the NPPF links the historic environment to adaptation and mitigation measures when it comes to climate change and other environmental issues. The role of the planning system is “contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy” (art. 7 p2). Further on, heritage assets are defined as an ‘irreplaceable resource’ (art.126, p30), however this is not linked back into the main aim, which only refers to the prudent use of natural resources, seemingly excluding the idea that a prudent use of cultural or urban resources could also contribute to moving into a low carbon economy.

Both the focus on character and the lack of linking sustainability and conservation can be found in the Newcastle local plan. No direct connections are made between heritage management and climate change. When it comes to the wider framework of sustainable development, the two chapters follow each other in the Core Strategy, without making a direct link.13

The renewed system of Historic England’s Planning Advice comes in two forms: A) Good Practice Advice (GPA), supporting information on good practice, and on how policy and guidance can be put into practice, and Historic England Advice Notes (HEAN’s), they provide detailed, practical advice on how to implement national planning policy and guidance.

3.1.5. Local policy: local plan and decision making
Local Plans build on the concepts of the forerunner the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF was a collection of Development Plan Documents, to which the Core Strategy is central. Other Development Plan Documents can include Site Allocations, Development Management Policies, and Area Action Plans (all of which are optional). The current local plan for Newcastle 2015 - Planning for the future: Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030 (adopted 2015) presents a clear strategy for the urban core, which includes the entire central conservation area. In terms of the historic environment, aims are very much aligned with NPPF guidance. It sets out to maintain local distinctiveness, it focusses on use, and on protecting and enhancing the historic and natural environments. The underlying principle of this local plan when it comes to the historic environment is to reconcile the need for growth and the viability of development with the need to conserve the historic environment and protect local character.

Newcastle’s local plan emphasises a need for increasing the use, enjoyment and understanding of the historic environment, and the assumption is that the quality of development is generally improved when it is informed the characteristics of a place. Those characteristics are described in various ways e.g. identity, local, unique, quality of place, distinctiveness, and sense of place. The document shows clear awareness of the value of the urban landscape, and it rejoices in the success of past heritage-led regeneration schemes: “Heritage led and cultural led regeneration and investment within Gateshead and Newcastle has made a huge contribution to the area.” When it comes to the future the aim is to sustain and enhance heritage assets, as part of the city
centre. Though, there is no further explanation on how the strength and expertise in heritage-led regeneration will be capitalised upon further in the future.

The main aim according to the Core Strategy is to be a ‘working’ city, and the main driver is economic growth and job creation. Whilst this can partly be addressed by utilising the historic environment for increasing its use, and its ‘sense of place’ for heritage commodification and place branding, the historic environment is not presented as one of the main platforms for such growth plans. The bias towards new development, either through demolishing existing city centre sites (such as Newgate Shopping Centre and East Pilgrim Street), or building on derelict or brownfield locations (Ouseburn and Science Central on the former Tyne Brewery site) is strong.

3.2. Incentives and financial tools

3.2.1. Grant regimes

Financial assistance for private owners of the cultural heritage in the UK is mostly oriented around different grant regimes; there is no general scheme of tax assistance. Conservation funding for grants and environmental enhancement works comes from a variety of sources. By far the most significant is the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which offers a variety of funding schemes offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund based on lottery ticket sales. HLF has had at its disposal many times the EH budget. HLF’s income in 2015-2016 was £392million and the general trend of income derived from the operation of the National Lottery is upward.14

The remit of the HLF extends beyond the built environment and within this is a huge diversity of projects encompassing, for example, investment in major museums or small grants for local oral history projects. As HLF has developed there has been a shift of emphasis from physical conservation projects to more ‘people based’ projects, for example projects that are related to access and interpretation and which show education and community benefit. It operates a series of thematic programmes a number of which have been of particular significance for the historic environment. Perhaps most important is the Townscape Heritage (TH) scheme, a conservation area based funding programme that started in 1999 (then called Townscape Heritage Initiative). Funding can range from £100,000 to £2 million. Emphasis is upon repairing fabric, securing the continued use of historic buildings, bringing vacant floor-space back into use and facilitating a high quality public realm. The HLF Townscape Heritage programme is indeed the main funding for the Bigg Market scheme (£1.600.000). A long-term evaluation report showed mixed success with the post-2008 recession inevitably having a negative impact on the results of TH schemes (Reeve and Shipley, 2013).

English Heritage traditionally has a range of grant programmes but these have reduced steadily over the last decade. This includes grants towards the repair of particularly significant heritage assets, with a priority of heritage deemed to be at. Previous conservation area funding programmes have now ceased. New schemes such as Heritage Action Zones, do not come with significant funding.15 There has been an increasing focus on utilising diminishing resources towards capacity building and better management of the heritage.

Similarly very few local authorities now have any provision for grants towards heritage. A variety of specialist funds exist, such as the Architectural Heritage Fund for building preservation trusts. Of major importance over recent decades, but again now much diminished, has been linking conservation schemes with regeneration projects.

15 http://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/haz/haz-explanatory-notes-guidance-jun16.pdf
3.2.2. VAT
The heritage sector has had a long running campaign on Value Added Tax (VAT). Somewhat perversely new construction historically has been zero rated whereas building repair has not. On listed buildings, even more perversely, VAT was not chargeable on alterations to historic buildings (generally defined as works requiring listed building consent) but was payable on routine repairs, creating an incentive to change the character of buildings and disincentive to undertake proper maintenance. A change finally came through the 2012 budget, but unfortunately for the heritage sector it was to apply VAT on all works to listed buildings. VAT for alterations to listed buildings is 20% since 2012.

3.2.3. Land value
Possibly different from general perception, recent research has shown that the effect of designating conservation areas is in general positive on house prices inside a conservation areas although the lowest – but still positive – differences are found in the Northern region, which includes Newcastle (Ahlfeldt et. al. 2012).

3.2.4. Business rates
In the case of Bigg Market, the local authority has pledged match funding for £300.000. The local authority would see this pre-investment returned in a few years through reoccupation of the buildings, which will generate income for the City Council on either business rates (or possibly council tax, in case of residential use), both calculated on the valuation of the property. Normally, property owners don’t pay business rates for three months when a building becomes vacant. Listed buildings however are exempted from paying any business rates until reoccupation. Therefor the City Council will gain from bringing them back into use and can justify this pre-investment.

3.2.5. Direct intervention – municipality/government as key actor
Aside from the pre-investment the City Council is willing to make ‘on the back of’ expected returns on business rates, there is no form of direct intervention on the local authorities behalf when it comes to the Bigg Market Area project. This follows the line where a role of ‘facilitator’ is more and more common for the local authority. The capacity to take a more pro-active approach, which was always a role of guidance rather than one of direct intervention, has disappeared.

“the role of the local authority is changing, basically it’s moving now to something which helps facilitate ‘the people do things’ rather than doing things themselves, and obviously across the council, there are those services the council provides, like emptying the bins, but even things like making sure the streets are lit, is done through a private finance initiative with an energy company [...]” (LPA, 2016).

“We haven’t got the capacity, we just cannot run, obviously, as part of Townscape Heritage schemes you get money to putting somebody in, to work on things, but there’s an awful lot of work sitting behind that, which has to be done by an organisation, and we are not in the position to do that. [...] So, yeah, we were quite happy with someone else dong the running on this, our issue is around the interplay between what they want to achieve and what we, as a planning authority... and the conservation team, ... not necessarily what we wish to see, but what we are prepared to allow” (LPA, 2016).
3.3. Communication and civic engagement

3.3.1. National initiatives

Most recent initiative to stimulate public engagement national heritage, is the creation an online initiative Historic England late 2016 called enrich the list.\textsuperscript{16} Everyone can add additional information such as photographs, events, memories, knowledge to already listed heritage sites.

3.3.2. Engagement in the North East

On average participation in heritage is slowly increasing. In the North East, the participation percentages in 2013/14 were the highest in the country for adults participating in heritage, according to the national ‘taking part’ data.\textsuperscript{17} It has however dropped by 5% since (figure 4). Participation in these numbers, is measured by visiting sites, volunteering, or joining heritage organisations. For the majority of people participation takes the form of visiting sites. The North East is the only region in which heritage-related domestic tourism day visits dropped since 2013.\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{participation_by_all_adults_16_per_region.png}
\caption{Participation by all adults (16+) per region}
\end{figure}

\textit{Figure 6} results from Heritage Counts indicator data on “Public Engagement” via (https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/indicator-data/), which in turn is mostly based on the Taking Part Survey.

3.3.3. Bigg Market

As in many cases, in the context of Bigg Market, heritage funding is a generator of stimulating participation in heritage locally. The HLF bid requires NE1 to develop an activities plan. NE1 is familiar with developing events and activities, but not in the heritage sector. This widens the knowledge base at NE1. The engagement activities are focussed on educating people about the Bigg Market and organising events to engage with aspects of the heritage.

\textsuperscript{16} https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list/
\textsuperscript{17} For more information on the Taking Part Survey https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taking-part
\textsuperscript{18} Heritage Economic Impact Indicator Workbook via https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/heritage-and-the-economy/
NE1 is also using the project to have their staff and volunteers learn about heritage and heritage management more widely:

“We’ve never done anything heritage-y, really, [...] obviously we are a commercially focused company, and everything is all about at improving the attractiveness of the businesses, street cleaning etc. has been the focus, now we are thinking about much bigger things, a bit of a different direction. I’ve worked in heritage settings before, but certainly my senior management team haven’t, so you know, you are upscaling a lot of people about heritage. Even the marketing team and all, they are learning about heritage, which is great. We’re teaching the street rangers about heritage, they will act a guardian, but at the same time we will upscale their knowledge, so they can help on monitoring, of material decay for example. But also teaching them about history of buildings, so when they are out for cleaning, or helping with an event, they can talk to people, and engage with people and talk about it. Which is good for us, good for the heritage of the area, and also for the rangers.” (Interview, NE1 project manager)

3.4. Knowledge – research and studies
There is a developing evidence base for heritage. The focus on indicators and measurements has been steadily growing in England, and the UK generally, especially since the introduction of ‘heritage counts’ (2002).\(^{19}\) The recently developed ‘heritage index’ adds to this by mapping the strength, breadth and diversity of heritage in England, Scotland and Wales (RSA, 2015).\(^{20}\) In addition to an annual theme with local case studies, and the national and devolved nations data, the ‘heritage counts’ data also includes to create local authority profiles, and regional overviews. The focus is on creating an evidence base for economic impact (e.g. monetary, job creation) of heritage as well as the societal benefit (e.g. participation, wellbeing) it brings.

On a local level, the capacity within the local authority for doing additional research is reduced to a very low level. Outside of the statutory tasks, there are hardly resources to do anything. In the case of the Bigg Market this meant that research and policy that would normally be developed or commissioned by the local authority, is now commissioned by NE1. The new management plan for the Bigg Market Area, therefore was developed by NECT, as commissioned by NE1. The developed report is an addition to the character appraisal ‘patterns of experience’ which was also produced by NECT, as commissioned by the local authority in 1996.

3.5. Future trajectory of policy
3.5.1. Local continuity
Locally, expectations are that the situation will not change anytime soon. Bigg Market as a case is followed in the heritage world as well as by local authority as a pilot. It is interesting for its new ways of policy development, funding, and place branding and management. The local authority is interested to see how the NE1 public realm scheme developed, as pilot scheme for new processes and responsibilities, as well as in terms of approach.

“[T]he landscape changes, with the most recent proposal of these heritage action zones, we need to find out what those are about, and Heritage lottery fund keep changing their grant schemes, streams. It’s difficult for the council to make changes in that sort of direction, because we’re not influential enough were not people with either money or the government clout behind it, so it’s difficult for ourselves to create the proactive things, so we wouldn’t... you know, another Grainger Town is not on the horizon.” (LPA, 2016)

As required by HLF, NE1 has commissioned a range of studies for the Bigg Market to support their (successful) HLF bid, to define the architectural and technical qualities and local socio-economic

\(^{19}\) https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2016/heritage-counts-sector-overview-2016.pdf
capacity and support for the new public realm scheme. The required policy, a management plan for the Bigg Market Area, was developed by NECT, and also commissioned by NE1. It is not unlikely the local authority would have commissioned NECT to develop this research and report, so the executive party is maybe still the same, and even the money may come from the same funder (HLF) as it most likely would have in case the LPA would have been the lead partner. It however comes through a BID company, instead of the local authority.

This situation in which the stakeholders have pretty much stayed the same but responsibilities shifted significantly, creates an unclear future. It holds opportunities, but also creates potential issues. The lack of experience with non-governmental parties taking the lead in an HLF application, means the funder requires NE1 to act as if a local government. Without a critical assessment of the process and potential consequences NE1 could be on track to take the role of a sort of shadow government, though one without a responsibility to the wider community.

Understandings of heritage are also likely to change. A BID company had different aims, which might be sympathetic to certain uses of heritage but are not focussed on a wide and inclusive conceptualisation of it necessarily. HLF as a non-departmental public body (accountable to parliament through DCMS) is effectively setting the criteria for heritage projects.

It has already been acknowledged as something that might become more prominent in the future, therefore some initial research was done. In 2016 the Heritage Counts report theme was ‘place branding’ and focussed on the way BID’s use heritage in their place management. 21

3.5.2. Heritage Post Brexit

Over the past decades, the heritage discourse has to some degree shifted away from origins that were often concerned with nation-building. With the UK intending to leave the EU, and general sentiments towards nationalism, combined with a suspicion of ‘expert narratives’ the future of heritage policy is presented with a challenge. The heritage sector is likely to be faced with a particular set of challenges in a post-Brexit UK. How can a liberal and inclusive liberal agenda be pursued? Will this risk a (greater) disconnection with a substantial section of British society? Will expectations change about what heritage is and what it is for? And also, what will be the practical consequences of Brexit upon e.g. resources? How will Brexit impact on British ‘soft power’ and international domain in the sphere of heritage expertise and policy?

The statutory planning policies that apply to the historic environment are not strongly shaped by EU policy directives in the cultural context, they are mostly developed by central state or local authority. 22 Environmental policies are another story all together. The most direct and significant

21 https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2016/heritage-and-place-branding.pdf
result of Brexit is likely to be access to EU funding, especially on a local level. In the post-2010 austerity context, local authorities had even more need to find funding elsewhere and used EU as a convenient source that will likely become inaccessible.  

Table 2: Summary of policy and action for management and planning of the historic urban core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of modification they seek (WHAT)</th>
<th>Tangible attributes</th>
<th>Intangible attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy themes</td>
<td>Austerity; ‘working’ city;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives (including financial tools)</td>
<td>The local authority has pledged match funding for £300,000 as a pre-investment return expected through increased business rates.</td>
<td>Focus is on reducing vacancy rates and stimulating the return of the ‘market’ function of the area in a wider sense, as an event space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HLF Townscape Heritage programme is the main funder for the Bigg Market scheme (£202,800 + £1,625,100) which will be used for:</td>
<td>Expectations are that the uses of the BM buildings will not change significantly, but will become less tacky, more ‘tasteful’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Upgrading the public realm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Co-funding grants for the facades and shopfronts of buildings owners on the Bigg Market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct intervention tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and engagement tools</td>
<td>HLF requires an Activities Plan, which includes focus on memories of Bigg Market, and heritage themed event / workshops / tours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NE1 focusses on increased day time use as well as diversification of publics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NE1 will build on / stimulate businesses to build on intangible heritage and nostalgia (such as a Bigg Market beer).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge tools</td>
<td>NE1 is monitoring various issues, such as state of conservation and satisfaction of business owners.</td>
<td>Consultancy project students from Newcastle University have provided analysis on footfall data, vacancy rates, and provided baseline on perceptions of Bigg Market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional innovation – e.g. new partnerships</td>
<td>NE1 leading the HLF bid and public realm works</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Mapping change in the Bigg Market

This chapter will reveal what changes have taken place in the Bigg Market – its physical form (morphology and activities or functions). It will give a general overview of the past half century, and a more detailed overview of the recent decade.

4.1. Bigg Market: mapping change

In the High Medieval Period the Castle was built and while commerce first concentrated at the riverside, it soon extended up, via the Castle and the Cathedral to the Markets spine. It is in this established context that the Bigg Market area thrived. Streets between the cathedral and the town walls’ new gate grew from the 13th and 14th centuries as a commercial zone. Figure 4 shows the layout, which is still recognisable today. Chares - narrow lanes - formed links between the main spines, including Pudding Chare (to Westgate) and High Bridge (to Pilgrim Street). These narrow busy lanes were the town’s only east-west links. Development was incremental and based on a pattern of long narrow burgage plots. Each plot was developed with tenements of housing and commerce facing the markets, with yards and courts behind and productive fields beyond.

Figure 8: Medieval city layout (green) and 19th century Grainger Town outline (dashed)

This pattern kept evolving. It was only when Richard Grainger, a speculative developer in the 1820s, 30s and 40s, started to develop Grainger Town that the form of the city experienced major change.

Grainger Town comprises three major city streets, a number of secondary streets and some major public buildings, including a theatre and a covered market. This massive development, completed between 1834 and 1839, left the medieval street pattern largely intact (Pendlebury, 1999). The Bigg Market area did see some change to this medieval pattern (figure 1). An east-west connection at the bottom of the area (Collingwood – Mosley Street) had already been introduced by the end of the 18th century (Mackenzie, Dent, & British History Online, 1827). This street separates the Market area from the Cathedral site. Grainger Street was laid out across the top of Bigg Market, severing it from Newgate Street and overlaying some of the burgage plot pattern on Newgate Street. The smaller buildings in the middle of the market area (between Flesh and Groat...
market) disappeared too. Later that century, a new exchange, town hall and assembly rooms were realised right in the heart of the area (1860s). Another substantial impact was that Bigg Market area’s main market function was overtaken by Grainger’s new covered “Grainger Market” as well as the streets of smart retail shops. Currently, the Bigg Market area presents an eclectic townscape, bound together by its medieval morphology.

In more recent times, some rather large developments took place behind the facades of the market area, erasing some of the older buildings along with it the original medieval morphology of chares and the burgage plot pattern. The main areas of change are indicated in the map below (Figure 5, A-E). The figures show that plots that had seen significant change before the market area became part of the central conservation area in 1970 (orange lines), were more likely to be subject to more change by 2016 (purple lines). As addressed in Chapter 2, the seventies gave rise to a more controlled approach to planning the historic environment, providing the local authority more powers to control conservation in planning, by carrot (government grants) and stick (demolition consent, currently planning consent). There was a growing attention for urban continuity and for the needs of the local community. This can be seen in the design developments that took place in the market area. The only post-1970 major changes are to plots that had already changed before the area was designated as a conservation area. Moreover, newer developments (e.g. fig. 10 C-D) are more sensitive to the urban structure than earlier ones (fig. 10 A, B).

- A and B are larger scale post war developments.
  - [A] being the Cathedral Square building that replaced the 1860s town hall complex (One Cathedral Square, or Sun Alliance House), as designed in 1974-6 by Hadfield Cawkwell Davidson & Partners. This building replaced the former Council Chamber, which was demolished in 1973.
  - [B] is Thompson House, built circa 1964 as the printing works and offices for the Newcastle Journal and Evening Chronicle, designed by Cackett, Burns Dick & Mackellar.
- C is a development completed in the early 1980s, called Merchant House / Honeypot House. It’s a mixed-use development, with a large residential part. The development is a large T-shaped building, which picks up on some of the original plot structure, and presumably the built form, to be ‘in keeping’ with the context.
- D and E are more recent developments.
  - D is a development from the beginning of this century, TJ Hughes rebuilt the whole area behind some of the facades of (14) Bigg Market, stretching to Grainger Street. It opened its doors in 2002.
  - E is the most recent development, the 222-bed hotel “Motel One” with an address at High Bridge, and built into the Half Moon Court only just opened its doors at the beginning of 2016 and was designed by Archial NORR.
- The two planned developments are White Hart Yard and Bigg Market Public Realm
Figure 9: Left of the black line, Bigg market 2008 (Google Maps); right of the black line, Bigg market 2016 (author)

Figure 10: Bigg Market changes, 1910’s (yellow lines), 1960’s (orange lines), 2015 (purple lines)
Figure 11: permits Bigg market, based on data from https://publicaccessapplications.newcastle.gov.uk

Figure 12: listed buildings, and buildings at risk, defined as HLF funding priority properties as determined in the NE1 2016 Bigg Market Buildings Management & Maintenance Plan
4.2. Change of use

4.2.1. Past changes

In the various regeneration schemes in the city centre, the Bigg Market area has largely been bypassed. The neighbouring Grainger Town project did not lead to increased development on the Bigg Market. Neither did more recent projects such as the redevelopment of the Station Area and the Old Newcastle project. The Core Strategy (NCC & Gateshead Council, 2014) does not consider the Bigg Market to be part of the primary shopping area, nor does it designate it as a key site for development. It does however indicate it as a public open space to be improved. But in a context of reduced capacity and ongoing austerity, priority lies elsewhere. So generally, there is a lack of positive change in the area.

While the morphological mapping showed the larger changes, and the clustering of those, to the urban structure, a more detailed understanding of changes show an additional story. The tracing of permits reveals the smaller changes that are not directly visible in the morphological study.

As figure 10 shows, there is a significant drop in permit applications in the area after 2007, to zero in 2011, and then as from 2014 slowly picking up again. There is no obvious local reason for such drop (e.g. a grant scheme before 2008 to stimulate shop front improvements) so it is likely this is related to a general decline in development as a result of the financial crisis. The applications are mainly for physical alterations and changes of use. While the number of ‘change of use’ applications does not significantly change after 2007, the applications for physical alterations drop significantly. After 2007, or actually, as from 2014, about three-fourth of the applications came with a proposed change of use as well as physical alterations, while pre 2008, only one-fourth of the applications were for both change of use and physical alterations, the remainder being for internal and/or external alterations only. The changes of use since 2014, are moving away from any retail, into hot food takeaway in one case and sports facilities in the other case, and changing offices into apartments. There are not enough changes to determine a trend based on this.

The changes in the public realm are harder to map. It’s mainly a gradual decline in the state of conservation. The area was already classified as a priority area for improvements of public space in the local authority’s 2010 public realm audit, and it hasn’t been improved since. A significant additional impact came from building traffic over the past decade (for TJ Hughes, Motel ONE). This led to square with roadwork patches, broken public benches, and containers (fig. 10). It generally considered as a ‘run down’ area, and mostly associated with a rather heavy night-time economy, and not much of a day time economy.

Due to a variety of uses, the area changes a lot depending on the time of day and time of the week. Moreover, the vacancy rates are high (see next page), there is a general lack of maintenance of many of the empty buildings, and foot fall varies. There are higher footfall numbers on the weekend, and during lunch and a significant seasonal change, with hardly any foot fall in winter (fig. 16). Bigg Market is on an important road route (one way) out of the city centre, for buses and cars towards the quayside, as well as buses towards Gateshead via High Level Bridge. Moreover, the area has mostly lost its market function, though there are some food trucks and a fortune-teller some days of the week, and there are protests occasionally. While much less busy than in its glory days, it still has the image of being one of the main squares in Newcastle party city.

LPA 2010 public realm audit: “It is now largely known for its lively night-time activities. The physical quality of the Bigg Market was generally in a reasonable condition but it is an untidy, unkempt space. It is a busy space during the day but pedestrian movement is hindered by the arguably excessive street furniture and intrusive traffic. It scored 5 for the possibility of becoming a cherished part of the setting, but only 1 for having positive distinctive character. It was considered to be of medium benefit. Overall the space scored 59%. The space could be improved by upgrading the street furniture and surface materials, removing the street clutter and reducing the level of traffic movement through the space. More radical solutions have been suggested to remove the modern office block and reinstate the market square to enable the space to be used for events.”
4.2.2. Future changes

With the HLF funding, NE1 will provide grants to property owners or renters, to improve facades and shopfronts of the listed buildings, the assumption being that this will stimulate grant receivers to also invest in their property beyond the façade and to decrease vacancy rates. Moreover, the hope is it will snowball, and owners of other buildings will also improve their property.

As such, expectation is that vacancy rates will go down and the day-time use of the area will go up. Moreover, while the type of use is not necessarily expected to change, the type of venues is expected to “move up in class”, away from the, what is now described as “tacky bars” and more towards the offer available on High Bridge and Grey Street. The upgrade of the area may lead to an increase in rental prices, and the current businesses owners may be priced out of the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Vacancy Levels</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Vacancy Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bigg Market</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bigg Market</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth Market</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cloth Market</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groat Market</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Groat Market</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudding Chare</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pudding Chare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Bridge</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>High Bridge</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Only 1-51 falls within Bigg Market boundary drawn out)

| TOTAL | 74   | TOTAL | 94   |

Figure 14: Image from John Aynsley, Abi Rhodes, Camilla Bebb and James Dyson (2017) research report NE1 consultancy project. Unpublished report + online publication via [http://jamesdyson94.wixsite.com/ne1biggmarket](http://jamesdyson94.wixsite.com/ne1biggmarket)

![Bigg Market average footfall data 2014-2016 per hour](image)

Figure 13: Image based on data as analysed by John Aynsley, Abi Rhodes, Camilla Bebb and James Dyson (2017) research report NE1 consultancy project. Unpublished report + online publication via [http://jamesdyson94.wixsite.com/ne1biggmarket](http://jamesdyson94.wixsite.com/ne1biggmarket)
5. Experiencing Bigg Market

5.1. Citizens’ sense of place

A person can be satisfied with the setting while not strongly attached to it as well as the other way around (Stedman, 2003). Our research on how citizens experience the Bigg Market therefore encompassed memories (attachment), use and feeling (meaning), and satisfaction (positives and negatives of space). The results are based on 50 street interviews in Bigg Market (November 2016) and an analysis of local and national newspapers by 4 master students from Newcastle University, as presented in their (unpublished) report and their online publication via http://jamesdyson94.wixsite.com/ne1biggmarket (accessed Feb. 2017).

The interviews were recorded during lunchtime (40), or in the evening around 21.30 (10). Across a variety of age groups, 24 women and 26 men were interviewed. In total, over two thirds of the people asked respond positively to the question of how they feel in the space (ranging from a more neutral fine, to happy and comfortable). The perception of the Bigg Market it seems is not as strongly negative as the experts portray it. Associations with the nightlife influence the general perception, but are more often mentioned as a positive (16) than as a negative (10) of the area. The lack of diversity in the offer and audience is mentioned as something to be changed by about 40% of the interviewees. It is not the drinking culture itself, but its results, i.e. the lack of cleanliness and the neglect of the buildings are the most mentioned negatives by all age groups. The mess, the lack of cleanliness, and the run down feel of the area is a shared concern especially among daytime users (mentioned by 22/40). They do very much influence the current sense of place. About 40% of people interviewed mentioned that the state of the public realm was the main reason they wouldn’t want to spend much time in the space and put them off fully utilising the space. Those who are not put off by it, and currently use the Bigg Market during the day (e.g. for a lunch break), appreciate the open feel and the fact that it is never very busy - a nice place to stop and sit. Also the location in the city is mentioned as a reason for use.

The research shows that there is a difference in perception of the Bigg Market between different age groups. When asked for positive associations the groups aged over 55 would mostly refer to past memories associated with the Bigg Market. The association is with a vibrant market place and social hub throughout the day, and a less tacky and less violent drinking culture during the night. This is a group which currently uses the BM for shopping, a lunch break, or as the route to work, they hardly go there in the evening anymore. The negative perception of what Bigg Market has

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become, is supported by an analysis of local and national newspapers showing a strong increase of negative headings around Bigg Market (almost exclusively negative, mentioning e.g. alcohol, assault, attack, police) over the past 15 years. The idea older generation has of Bigg Market, is likely connected to the general negative way the area is portrayed in newspapers. Memory and history play a significant role in the sense of place in Bigg Market, especially for locals. Outside visitors however do not necessarily have these associations. While they also feel the area is run down, they do appreciate the restaurant and café culture present.
Figure 21: general association with Bigg Market

Figure 20: The mentioned positive features, categorised

Figure 19: The mentioned negative features, categorised
The younger generation (18-34) is indeed very much aware of the social stigma of the area, but mention the nightlife as a positive association. It is a good place for going out, and ‘bump into’ old friends. As such they also value its central location, and the fact that it links up a lot of pubs/clubs to create a cluster. Another positive mentioned by the younger generation, is the slow but recent change in the area towards cafes and restaurants, and a move up in ‘class’ of the area, which they appreciate. Recent changes – mostly in use - to the area are thus recognised. Also NE1’s plans to rejuvenate the area are known and mentioned as a positive, especially among the younger generation.

Something that came up in the newspaper analysis is the gendered nature of reporting on the Bigg Market. The word “man” came up as one of the most mentioned words in newspaper articles of the past 15 years, next to words such as attack, police, nightclub, bar, party (see figure 23). Safety, especially related to the (idea of) nightlife, is mentioned as an issue in the interviews as well. The difference in general negative associations is stronger for women as 1/3 women asked express a negative feeling, vs 1/5 of the men. While it was not explicitly mentioned as an issue, the interviews also show that when women express a negative feeling in the space (8/24), it is often associated with feeling unsafe. The negative associations men express (5/26) are uncomfortable due to underuse, crowdedness, and a general lack of interest.

5.2. Professionals’ sense of place
All professionals identify a strong contrast between day-time and night-time when it comes to sense of place. The Bigg Market is described as very run down and tired space that needs at least a facelift, possibly more. During the day it is underutilised and a place you ‘go through’ rather than a destination. The place it is strongly associated with Newcastle party city and heavy drinking, when it comes to night-time use. Although the perception is that is used to be a heart of this scene, but currently is less so.

“A sort of very run down area of kebab shops and no longer trendy pubs” and “Its role in the city has changed, it used to be a place people went to, [be]cause it’s where all the action was. Now it’s just a place people go through, to get to the other places where the action is. Now, even just turning the corner going down High Bridge, you’ve got a couple of good pubs down there where people go to rather than… to what’s left on the Bigg Market” (interview LPA, 10 May 2016).

“During daytime is sort of tired, lonely, quiet, irritated, fractured…” while “at night it is very lively, a bit boorish, and a bit …a bit, it’s not aggressive but boisterous perhaps is the word. It’s very commercially driven obviously, but very much managed by public sector, ambulance, police, cleansing team […]. But that atmosphere is absolutely crucial to its significance.” Moreover “there is a sharp contrast between the two at the moment” (NECT, 2016).

“I don’t think, we’ve talked about gentrification and stuff, Bigg Market will never shake off this,…you know Bigg means beer, I’d like to embrace some of it, I think the historical context of it is really interesting too. […]. We’ve been thinking about a BM beer […]. So I don’t think, the alcohol thing is not something to be ashamed of, you know Newcastle is a party city, you know, it’s more about calming the party atmosphere down, to a degree that it doesn’t exclude people. […] The point of the activities plan is trying to engage with people who are no longer part of that
area, not just about the heritage, but it’s about engaging with people who are scared of going to the Bigg Market, the elderly, [...] families...” (NE1, project manager)

The public realm scheme does increase concerns about gentrification. The party-city feel, is considered crucial to the area’s heritage to a certain extent and softening this character will lead to changes in this atmosphere. NE1 aims to ‘calm down’ the party-city atmosphere, and hopes the scheme will make the area more accessible to a wider group of people, and make it more inclusive. It however also means, specific groups could be pushed out, or capitalised upon (e.g. Bigg Market Beer). The ‘party-city’ sense of place is probably strong enough to survive, or even flourish, under the current regime, albeit becoming a little less ‘boorish’. NE1 wants to capitalise on a potential sense of place that is linked to the built heritage, to validate their project. “Today’s consumer is very market savvy and if a brand is constructed from scratch they are suspicious; using heritage brings credibility and authenticity to the offer...” Newcastle NE1 Business Improvement District Company, 2016 as quoted in HERITAGE COUNTS 2016 Heritage and Place Branding (Historic England, 2016).

6. The management of change
6.1. The process of managing change

In summary we can characterise the management of historic cores as following:

It is the local planning authority that has the primary responsibility for the management of the historic core in most circumstances. Moreover, a whole variety of other public, private and voluntary sector agencies may also have a significant role in the management of the historic environment. However, roles and responsibilities are changing, and other stakeholders, such as BID companies, are beginning to lead on historic environment projects. In particularly significant locations and cases, national agencies, such as Historic England, may become involved. Equally there may be a significant role ‘from below’ played by local civic groups or the involvement of business groupings in place-management strategies.

Since the creation of the modern post-1947 planning system local authorities have sought a ‘balanced approach’ in managing historic urban areas, seeking to accommodate the retention of historic character alongside economic development and growth. However, the nature of that balance has changed radically over time. Broadly speaking we might say that the significance of conservation policy steadily grew until the end of the century, aided by a repositioning of the historic environment that saw it as increasingly compatible, and indeed advantageous, in economic development terms.

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In the last decade, whilst there has been no systemic withdrawal of heritage protection, the system has come under a degree of pressure in particular locations. Certainly where statutory protection does not exist, the UK planning system tends to be weak in terms of sustaining some sense of overall city character or form. Strong austerity measures and the small state ideology have their impact. Proactive development of policy and guidelines has disappeared. Moreover, the threshold for issues to become significant is going up, and there is an active discouragement of being too precious about the historic environment at the ‘cost’ of the public benefit. NPPF supports this ‘lighter touch’ approach. While sustainability and sense of place are considered key in NPPF, economic benefit takes precedence.

Strategic management tends to occur through a wide and extensive variety of statutory and non-statutory plans. Under the Localism Act (2011) Local planning authorities are required to have a Local Plan. Local Plans should set out opportunities for development, and guide on what development will and won’t be permitted. It should also include strategic priorities for development of an area, which includes protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment. More heritage specific policies might include: conservation area character appraisals and management plans; urban design strategies; regeneration strategies; and neighbourhood plans. LPAs may also have site-specific policies of different types e.g. development or design briefs.

The Localism Act potentially influences heritage management as it comes with greater powers for local communities. Heritage can be defined locally in a neighbourhood development plan, and a local heritage management strategy can be developed. The Act also provides for Community Right to Bid on Assets of Community Value. Local Authorities might also want to dispose of public buildings they currently own through a community asset transfer. Whilst this is principally aimed at securing the ongoing community benefit of local facilities such as shops, pubs, and libraries, these are often located in buildings with heritage value. Those options are being explored within the context of Newcastle, but not yet in the central conservation area.

The role of local authorities has changed over the decades. Since the 1970s local authorities have become steadily less involved in direct capital funding in building projects in the historic core, with their role becoming more to do with managing, regulating and enabling. The post 2010 austerity measures made it necessary, especially for the less affluent local authorities, to reduce activities even further. Newcastle planning authority is mostly restricted to its core statutory role, which affects their position in the management of the public realm.

There is a need for new tools, formats, and approaches to deal with the shifting roles and responsibilities. This is partly a process of trial and error, and indeed Bigg Market by all stakeholders is very much seen as a pilot project. But partly also requires flexibility and anticipation of all stakeholders, and above all open communication. A process of co-production might be the aim of NPPF, but it does not provide the tools to do so.

Finally, the local authority has some legal requirements to consult and work with local communities. More progressive local authorities have extended this community engagement far beyond statutory requirements in many ways. The shift in responsibilities as seen in the Newcastle case, affect this. A BID company as NE1 has no legal obligation to work with local communities beyond the one they represent, the business community.

6.2. Process of managing the Bigg Market Area project
6.2.1. New tools and mechanisms

The Bigg Market shows a significant change in the management of the historic environment. The stakeholders in this research expressed their concern about the changing process, especially the clarity of it in terms of responsibilities, and the lack of tools and mechanisms to support potentially valuable initiatives by ‘other’ parties than the traditional ones.
The current approach requires a flexible and creative approach by all involved, as many of the available mechanisms and tools are not an exact fit. The influence of the local authority is decreasing while NE1 becomes effectively a heritage manager, a new role and responsibility that is not been part of their past practice. HLF seems to deal with NE1 almost as if it is a local authority, because of the novelty of this partnership construction. It requires a management plan but the local authority doesn’t have the resources or capacity to develop one. Therefore NE1 commissioned the North of England Civic Trust (NECT) to produce a Management Plan, so a private sector stakeholder commissions the writing of a policy document, which then has to be adopted by the local authority. NECT is being paid by a private organisation to write public policy. A policy “which the council doesn’t really want it has to be said yet. They didn’t ask for this document. They like it, but that’s kind of by-the by. They don’t know how to adopt it, because they never had this kind of document before. It’s going to get some kind of sanction towards formal status” (NECT, 2016). There is no formal structure or protocol to deal with such a situation and its formal status therefore is to be negotiated. Because it wrote the policy, commissioned by NE1, NECT is part of the HLF bid partnership set up by NE1. However, formal support from NECT for the design might be considered unethical, as is has to be tested against the public policy they wrote.

6.3. The reasoning in consideration of managing change
6.3.1. Different concepts and aims, same results?
The Influence of HLF as the funder on the process is not to be underestimated. TH is a “local authority aimed” funding scheme and NE1 is not a local authority. While both NE1 itself, and the local authority expect that NE1 will be able to manage the process more efficiently, and get the project through faster none of the interviewees though the results would necessarily be different. They might even be better in terms of longer term economic development and job creation, as that is what NE1 is good at.

“[!]t’s a conservation based scheme but it’s not led by... purist conservation principles, and to some extent it’s using the heritage status to get money into it, rather than... perhaps it’s not to improve the heritage of the city... but to benefit financially. So it will have a longer term benefit, it’s just, I do not particularly have an issue about it, it’s just you know two slightly different things. And maybe their approach is better in that respect, that sort of hard-nosed commercial approach actually might in the long term, have a more effective, I mean, long term success than actually investing in sort of more conservation based approaches to individual buildings.” (LPA, 2016)

“[T]he only reason the HLF scheme is coming to the forefront at the moment, the Bigg Market, is because the townscape was being eroded and eroded and eroded, and unfortunately the LA couldn’t step in with any sort of resource to protect that heritage, whereas we’ve decided to step in and that heritage is going to be preserved for you know the next 25, 40, 50 years, I think, unfortunately resources are just so tight that heritage and protection of heritage is way down the shopping list, and economic development is right up there.” (NE1 project officer, 2016)

There is a difference in how heritage, and the need for improvements, is defined. NE1 is set up to improve the economic position of Newcastle as a city. Their assumption is that investment in the public realm and grants for improving the facades/ shop fronts will lead to a knock-on effect to improve the buildings and generally improve the state of conservation of the area. Their focus is on improving the ‘face’ of the market, and therefore on upgrading the exteriors of the listed buildings. In terms of investment, the consideration for tangible heritage is much higher, although the requirements of the HLF do make sure there is a push towards the intangible and interpretation (e.g. activities, atmosphere). Moreover some of the stories lend themselves to support the heritage branding, such as a Bigg Market beer, city tours exploring the histories of the market, and developing a ‘memories of the Bigg Market’ project (to become an online resource).

The Heritage Counts 2016 research on how BID’s see heritage shows that “heritage is used extensively by BIDs to assist with place branding and place making strategies. Where BIDs did
engage with heritage, this invariably extended beyond the most obvious heritage assets in their area to include less prominent, intangible heritage. Individual examples of heritage being used by BIDs to assist place branding include offering local heritage tours to recently arrived businesses, developing smartphone applications (apps) that update with thematic heritage trails that include GPS directions, and leading larger, externally funded projects to restore and maintain heritage buildings. If BIDs did express scepticism about heritage, it was that it could inhibit the development and/or introduction of a contemporary place brand. Heritage tends to be dominated by a very historic narrative; embracing more contemporary heritage is something that would appeal to BIDs. 26

By developing a Bigg Market Beer, exploiting the built heritage for branding and “authentication”, and initiating a wider memory project, NE1 is clearly using and framing heritage to strengthen the sense of place while turning it into a positive narrative. As the street interviews showed, they will probably be able to capitalise on the nostalgia for the Bigg Market in ‘the old days’ when it comes to older locals as well as visitors, while developing it as a hip space for the younger demographic.

The built heritage aspect of the Bigg Market is much appreciated by the local experts in terms of the eclectic architecture and the medieval morphology and fabric that remain. However, this is not defining the identity of the place at the moment. This medieval structure is more of a ‘hidden gem’, which is vulnerable. As such, the fact that NE1 is addressing the public realm and the building frontages of the more robust Bigg Market rather than the medieval morphology of shares and lanes makes the process more acceptable for the local authority. While stakeholders from government and 3rd sector acknowledge the aims of a BID company will be different, more commercial, they are not necessarily convinced this will lead to very different results for Bigg Market as a place. What it influences more profoundly is the process of heritage management.

7. Conclusions - Heritage Management in the face of austerity

The direct and indirect impacts of changes in urban governance in the UK become manifest in the process of ‘revamping’ the Bigg Market area, in which heritage is positioned as a driver for change. The proposed and approved public realm scheme is explicitly conservation-led and a large part of the initial funding comes from the Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage programme. However, the project and grant application are not taken forward by the Local Authority, but by NE1, the business improvement district (BID) company in Newcastle. This not only leads to changes in the governance structure, it also requires other roles, responsibilities, and attitudes from various stakeholders.

i) How is the governance and planning of the historic urban landscape changing and why?

The legal framework has not changed, but with the NPPF a more flexible, development minded, policy framework has been introduced. The emphasis on the historic environment is significant, and follows previously established ideas of constructive conservation.

Increasingly, austerity and small state ideologies, in combination with the flexibility NPPF provides, lead to an unavoidable change in governance. In a context where local authorities do not have the capacity or resources to go beyond their statutory tasks, non-governmental parties get a stronger position in urban development.

ii) How are relationships between the physical built environment and the intangible cultural heritage considered in the governance of urban heritage?

For the historic environment we see, on the one hand, a more effective and result oriented approach, and on the other hand a limited and more operationalized concept of heritage. While there is an acknowledgement of intangible heritage, and a funding framework in which this needs to be addressed, the focus is on tangible heritage. Within the tangible aspects of the heritage of Bigg Market, the focus is on the facades, the literal ‘face’ of the heritage. Both tangible and intangible heritage are to a large extend a tool to deliver economic growth.

With stakeholders in the lead who are new to the management of the historic environment, it is likely that heritage gets redefined. When it comes to the tangible heritage, this seems to be rather narrow, focussed on the facades, and close to formal definitions of listing and generally the authorised heritage discourse. However, the intangible heritage might be pulled out more than it would normally be, as it provides a narrative for place branding.

iii) What is citizens’ perception of sense of place? What factors contribute to their sense of place and do they recognise any changes in the historic environment that affect sense of place?

The sense of place of the Bigg Market is very strongly connected to the drinking culture. The different age groups all refer to it, mostly positively, albeit in different ways. The media seems to have a strong impact on the sense of place, mostly pointing out the negatives. The lack of cleanliness, and the increased run down feel of the place seem to affect people the most in their appreciation for the area. This is reflected in how they rate the built environment, although overall, the feeling is positive, and architectural quality is mentioned by about 10% of the people.

The generally expressed need for regeneration, improved safety, and less tacky bars, shows that while the nostalgic connection with the drinking culture is strong, the effects of this drinking culture, do influence the way people experience the place.

iv) How best can policy makers and other stakeholders take account of place identity/sense of place in the management and planning of the historic urban landscape?

The lack of past focus upon the Bigg Market, together with some large developments in its direct vicinity, show their effect; a tired and run down public space, neon shop fronts and vacancy.

Those are not necessarily the results of planning reform, but can definitely be seen as a result of need of the local authority to focus its scarce resources elsewhere. While no direct correlation can be demonstrated between (change in) management, spatial change and sense of place, the decline of the area has probably been exacerbated in this process.

There is a direct relation visible between the sense of place and some of the intangible heritage of the Bigg Market. As some parts of this culture, and its impacts on the built environment, are still very much alive, it is not necessarily seen as ‘heritage’ though.

The need for economic development and growth comes with pressures that make it difficult to regulate development, even in a conservation area. NPPF supports this. Investments in an area are hard to reject, they can at most be guided, and the role of the local authority is to facilitate. The new roles and responsibilities have to be renegotiated, and depending on the good-will of a new lead-partner, sense of place and heritage become part of how the future of the place is imagined and developed. In Bigg Market we see a strong interest in the heritage by NE1. This is related to as a genuine interest and passion for the city, as much as it is seen as a city marketing tool and a way to authenticate and brand new developments.

As such, the operationalization and financialisation of heritage, both in concept and in assets, are emerging. Moreover gentrification is a significant threat, as the lower-end bars will be priced out of the area, and with it its clientele. On the other hand, the increased day-time use and safety, will likely lead to a more diverse public to visit the area.
8. References


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