



CONSERVATION
PLACES & PEOPLE



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INQUIRY

21st century places: values and benefits

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All-Party Parliamentary Group on **CONSERVATION, PLACES & PEOPLE**

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For its inaugural inquiry, the recently launched All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Conservation, Places and People will examine the value of the historic environment and how it can help to promote growth and regeneration.

Historic buildings and neighbourhoods can be key elements in the regeneration of cities, towns and rural areas across the UK. Many of the high streets and town centres, which are in the greatest need of revival due to their location in economically depressed parts of the UK, also possess the richest legacies of historic buildings. Their rural and natural settings are no less important aspects of their survival as valued places with viable, low-carbon economies.

Restoring and finding new uses for these treasured local landmarks can help to preserve local distinctiveness and sense of place, the value of which has been heightened for many people during their experience of lockdown.

Selective redevelopment, which capitalises on historic assets, has often proved to be more commercially and socially successful than large-scale comprehensive redevelopment.

Finding fresh uses for old buildings can help to modernise and adapt our historic neighbourhoods for the needs of the 21st century and the new living, working and recreational patterns, which have emerged in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

However projects to regenerate historic building and areas are often difficult to get off the ground due to financial obstacles, like the unequal tax treatment between refurbishment and new construction projects.

The inquiry will conduct an initial call for written evidence to explore these issues. This exercise will be followed by a series of virtual oral to cross examination hearings with invited experts and key stakeholders.

Terms of reference

The Committee is inviting written submissions on:

What evidence exists of the economic, social and environmental benefits from the conservation, care and regeneration of historic buildings and areas, across the UK.

How can the conservation and regeneration of historic areas contribute to the wider agendas of governments across the UK to equity and 'levelling up', along with their focus on high streets revival?

Is there a case for further increasing the level of investment in the heritage and infrastructure of places outside London and the south east of England to assist the 'levelling up' of lagging regional economies?

How can regeneration of the historic environment contribute to and interact with efforts to revive local economies in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent recession?

What evidence exists that historic buildings provide flexible, low rental space for start-up businesses, social enterprises and community facilities, thereby helping to stimulate local economies, particularly in more peripheral neighbourhoods?

How has heritage regeneration helped to boost the image and social cohesion of the areas they are located in, attracting investment and providing a catalyst for reversing economic decline?

How can the care, repair and regeneration of the historic environment help to meet the UK's commitment to sustainable development, including cutting emissions to net zero by avoiding the use and waste of scarce resources associated with demolition and redevelopment?

How can conservation-led regeneration of the historic environment help to promote sustainable patterns of development, striking the right balance between economic growth and social equity, while also curbing wasteful emissions?

What are the implications of the government's reforms to the English planning system, proposed in the planning white paper, for the conservation and regeneration of historic areas?

What have been the impacts of cuts in local government to the capacity of planning departments to facilitate the conservation and regeneration of sensitive historic areas?

How can post pandemic efforts to boost skills training support efforts to revive neglected crafts key to historic building conservation?

How can the conservation and restoration of historic parks and other important green spaces contribute to efforts to encourage exercise and thereby promote health and well-being?

Oral evidence sessions will be announced in due course.