

Advocacy and Policy

Icon is an ambitious advocacy body and thought leader for cultural heritage conservation.

INVESTIGATION & ANALYSIS

We research the cultural heritage conservation sector and wider political landscape to identify opportunities and challenges and to deliver insight to stakeholders.

We do this by monitoring policy developments, compiling the insights of our members and building the evidence base of our sector.

We have seized opportunities to raise conservation on government agendas and turned international demand for our sector's skills into a formal partnership.

ENGAGEMENT

We engage widely with the cultural heritage sector to pool resources for maximum benefit and to ensure conservation is included within wider discussions.

We do this by analysing the ever-evolving stakeholder landscape, collaborating on shared initiatives and developing and managing partnerships.

We have unlocked funding for new collaborative projects and our messages have been highlighted within unified responses informing top-level decision making.

INFLUENCE

We influence decision makers, opinion formers and the public to ensure cultural heritage conservation is widely valued, understood and supported.

We do this by responding to parliamentary business, sharing high quality briefings and promoting positive messages on a content-rich website.

We have helped decision makers recognize the impact of policy changes on cultural heritage and to develop new solutions and engaged others to join in on our efforts.

We employ this expertise and experience to realise our vision for cultural heritage to be valued and accessible and for its future to be enhanced and safeguarded by excellence in conservation. Our work strands support the strategic aims of Icon's Strategy 2017-2021:



Become the authoritative source of information on conservation in practice, policy and the profession.



Promote the value of high-quality conservation with our partners and with the public.



Extend our influence as a strong voice for conservation of the cultural heritage.

However, the benefits of our advocacy and policy transcend our organisation. Allied professionals, sector bodies and businesses, private owners, volunteers, academics and members of the public stand to benefit from the positive change we engender of cultural heritage being better understood, appreciated and cared for.

Sound too good to be true?

Take a look at the case studies below, which evidence some of our recent successes and outline how *you* may have benefitted.

INVESTIGATION AND ANALYSIS

	What?	Why?	What is the evidence of impact?	How did <i>you</i> benefit?
1	Icon actively monitors , forecasts and analyses developments in policy affecting the conservation of cultural heritage.	Risks and opportunities to cultural heritage and conservation are identified , enabling action to mitigate negative impacts or maximise beneficial effects.	<p>In January 2018, Michael Ellis was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Icon identified the leadership change as an opportunity to raise the profile of cultural heritage conservation.</p> <p>Icon wrote to Ellis with congratulations and invite to experience “conservation in action.” Icon’s quick action and persuasive messaging resulted in a positive response from the Minister’s office and secured a date in a busy ministerial diary.</p> <p>Partnering with the Tate, Icon organised a VIP tour of the conservation studios ending with a presentation from Icon on the value of conservation and current issues, including retaining practical skills, building a workforce more representative of UK society and the profession’s role in supporting a global Britain.</p>	<p>The challenges and opportunities for the conservation sector were highlighted at Government level.</p> <p>= Conservation is better understood by Government and policy makers</p> <p>= Conservation issues are taken into account by Government and policy makers</p>
2	Icon consults widely with the cultural heritage conservation sector on core advocacy messages.	The diverse views of the cultural heritage conservation sector are gathered, analysed and used to inform action.	<p>In 2018, the Scottish Government consulted on its draft Culture Strategy, setting out ambitions, aims and actions to support the nation’s culture.</p> <p>To inform its response, Icon consulted its Policy Advisory Panel, which consists of 100+ members across conservation specialisms, sectors and geographies. Scotland-based members provided unique insight on regionally sensitive issues while others presented arguments on cross-sector and broader geographical themes.</p> <p>The bottom-up approach allowed Icon to collate a response based on tangible and specific actions to address the local needs of cultural heritage conservation in Scotland and to recommend ideas supportive of the profession nationally.</p>	<p>Icon’s messages were aligned with other respondents’ concerns and suggestions, maximising the potential for favourable influence.</p> <p>= Conservation is better understood and supported</p> <p>= Conservation issues are taken into account by Government and policy makers</p>
3	Icon collects and analyses evidence and undertakes research within the cultural heritage conservation sector.	Information and insight on the cultural heritage conservation sector is widely accessible and used.	<p>In 2017, the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) was commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to develop an overview of innovative practice in cultural heritage being led by UK organisations.</p> <p>Icon drew on the experience of its 2500-strong membership to collect examples from the field of conservation. Icon selected three case studies, which best exemplified innovation within the profession and flagged them to UKNC.</p> <p>The Commission featured all three of Icon’s case studies in the report submitted to BEIS.</p>	<p>The potential of conservation to support the UK’s sustainable development goals was highlighted to BEIS.</p> <p>= Sectoral expertise and insight are demonstrated</p> <p>= The reputation and standing of the conservation sector are enhanced</p>

ENGAGEMENT

	What?	Why?	What is the evidence of impact?	How did <i>you</i> benefit?
4	Icon identifies, monitors and engages with stakeholders in the ever-evolving heritage landscape.	Stakeholders with influence and interest in cultural heritage conservation are proactively engaged , managing risk and maximising opportunity.	<p>In 2017, Icon participated in a cultural exchange programme to Shaanxi Province. Icon gathered information on stakeholders in China with an interest in the UK conservation sector's knowledge and experience.</p> <p>Through research and analysis of the stakeholders' priorities and resources, Icon identified shared objectives and an opportunity to collaborate with an influential global partner to drive forward progress in the sector.</p> <p>The analysis and subsequent engagement resulted in Icon signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Shaanxi Provincial Museum Association to support greater collaboration in conservation between the UK and China.</p>	<p>A formal framework was established to support UK-China collaboration in conservation.</p> <p>= Opportunities to share learning and skills are identified</p> <p>= Opportunities to demonstrate soft power are achieved</p>
5	Icon collaborates with the wider cultural heritage sector, contributing to cross-sector initiatives and sharing information to inform others' responses and briefings.	Moveable cultural heritage conservation is included with the broader cultural heritage debate and represented within collective messaging .	<p>In 2018, the Heritage Alliance was preparing a briefing for the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) on skills shortages across the heritage sector.</p> <p>Icon responded to the Alliance's call for evidence and shared its data on skills challenges within moveable heritage conservation, contributing to a more complete and better-informed picture of skills needs in heritage.</p> <p>The Heritage Alliance presented Icon's information in its briefing to the MAC to inform recommendations on salary levels for a new visa system. The Heritage Alliance subsequently highlighted the usefulness of Icon's evidence and encouraged Icon to submit further data.</p>	<p>The unique skills needs of moveable cultural heritage were highlighted to a Government advisory body and presented within a unified message on visa salary level concerns.</p> <p>= Skills needs within the conservation sector are better understood by Government</p> <p>= Government is better informed about the risks and challenges arising from policy decisions</p>
6	Icon develops and manages partnerships with organisations within and beyond the cultural heritage sector.	Resources are pooled to maximise advantages and minimise risks to cultural heritage conservation.	<p>In 2017, Icon used its networks across the heritage sector to identify the absence of current labour market intelligence (LMI) and available funding to undertake new research as challenges shared by other professional bodies.</p> <p>Drawing on an existing positive relationship, Icon brokered an agreement with ClfA to work in partnership to address the problem by pooling ideas and intellectual effort.</p> <p>Icon and ClfA submitted a successful funding proposal to Historic England for the development of a sustainable toolkit for undertaking workforce research.</p>	<p>Funding was unlocked to develop an accessible toolkit for bodies to collect LMI.</p> <p>= Conservation is better supported due to improved access to cost effective research tools</p> <p>= Resources are used effectively by minimising the risk of duplicating research activity</p>

INFLUENCE

	What?	Why?	What is the evidence of impact?	How did <i>you</i> benefit?
7	Icon lobbies decision makers by responding to formal consultations and parliamentary business.	Cultural heritage conservation is supported through favourable policy and the moderation of disadvantageous policy.	<p>In July 2018, Icon responded to the Government's consultation on the policy directions that set the framework for the National Lottery Heritage Fund's operations.</p> <p>Following careful analysis of the consultation, Icon drafted a response advocating for guidance that encouraged high standards of conservation and supported the heritage workforce. Icon provided clear and concise recommendations for alternative wording, backing arguments with evidence.</p> <p>The Government acted on the suggestions, revising select directions according to Icon's proposed wording.</p>	<p>The most significant funder for the conservation sector operates within a framework that promotes high standards of practice and more fully supports the workforce.</p> <p>= Conservation is better supported by increasing the commitment to maintaining high standards</p>
8	Icon briefs opinion formers on cultural heritage conservation through high-quality statements, letters and original reports.	Decision-makers understand the value of cultural heritage conservation and how to support it.	<p>In 2018, Icon produced a report on international engagement within conservation with the aim of building greater domestic awareness of opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>Icon used its experience of Shaanxi to show the region's interest in UK conservation and prospects to enhance collaboration. The report explained how national priorities benefitted from global partnerships in conservation. Icon proposed actions for the sector and decision makers so that opportunities to maximise advantages were taken.</p> <p>Following the report's publication, Heritage Minister Michael Ellis invited Icon to discuss how DCMS could best support the sector to ensure its contribution to the Government's soft power agenda.</p>	<p>Government officials gained greater understanding of how conservation can contribute to and be supported through its impending soft power strategy.</p> <p>= The potential for the conservation profession to support national priorities is better understood and acknowledged</p>
9	Icon promotes key messages and information on cultural heritage conservation through a dedicated, content-rich and up-to-date website.	Information and news on cultural heritage conservation is widely accessible with the public and stakeholders.	<p>In 2019, the Heritage Council identified immigration and soft power as key agenda items for its future meeting.</p> <p>Icon composed briefings on the cultural heritage conservation sector's connections to immigration and soft power for publication on the Icon website and for dissemination to Heritage Council members.</p> <p>The Heritage Alliance incorporated Icon's information within in its own Brexit briefings to Government and the Heritage Council. The Alliance subsequently praised the usefulness of the briefings and expressed interest in further updates.</p>	<p>The value of people and skills exchange to cultural heritage conservation were flagged to Government and presented within a unified message on Brexit and immigration.</p> <p>= Government is better informed about the international connections of the UK cultural heritage conservation sector</p> <p>= Government is better informed about the risks and challenges arising from policy decisions</p>