

BEIS and DCMS: Creative Industries Sector Deal

Icon Statement

5 June 2018

The Institute of Conservation, Icon, is a membership organisation and charity which brings together those with a passion for the care of cultural heritage. Icon raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation. We represent nearly 3,000 individuals and organizations comprising professional conservators, heritage scientists and many others committed to improving understanding of and access to our cultural heritage.

Icon is pleased to see the creative sectors recognised as an “undoubted strength of our economy” in the government’s Sector Deal for the Creative Industries. The Deal is a part of the government’s wider Industrial Strategy, which sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people in the UK. The Deal will see government and industry invest £150 million across the Creative Industries.

Icon welcomes the Deal. However, a more balanced consideration of the sector and acknowledgement of the link between the Creative Industries and cultural heritage sector is crucial to achieving the government’s aims of “making the most” of the Industries. Cultural heritage conservation enables the Creative Industries by inspiring professionals but also by preserving and managing their creative outputs. The link is particularly evident in the cross-disciplinary field of heritage science, which includes scientific research that supports access to cultural heritage, its conservation, interpretation and management. “Making the most” of the Creative Industries will rely on a strategy that considers these underpinning sectors and professions.

Of the Sector Deal’s key commitments, we commend the following:

- **Cultural Development Fund**

The Culture White Paper, Mendoza Review and the Heritage Statement highlighted the important role of heritage and culture in placemaking and economic development. We are delighted that this potential has been integrated into the Industrial Strategy through the Sector Deal’s commitment to a Cultural Development Fund.

Government will invest £20 million through the Fund to encourage the regeneration and growth of creative clusters, supporting local partnerships to bid for investments in culture and the Creative Industries. The Fund is a welcome initiative to place heritage at the heart of communities and will undoubtedly complement the work of the Great Place scheme and Heritage Action Zones.

Icon hopes that the projects supported through the Fund will reflect the diversity of the Cultural Sector. For example, heritage conservation holds great potential for community engagement and regeneration. It can connect people more closely to their areas by engaging them in projects that identify, preserve and make accessible their local heritage and collections. Through heritage science projects, communities can engage with both heritage and science, awakening interest in scientific research and developing digital and technological competencies.

- **Creative Industries Clusters Programme**

The AHRC will deliver a Creative Industries Cluster Programme worth £39 million of government investment, complemented by a “minimum contribution” of £25 million from industry. Up to eight Creative Research and Development Partnerships will be funded through the Programme, bringing together top universities and businesses. Icon is pleased that the shortlist of projects is fully representative of the Creative Industries, including proposals from crafts, heritage, museums, galleries and libraries.

The Programme’s national Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, which will be established to increase understanding of the Creative Industries and to develop policy solutions to challenges facing the sector, is an exciting initiative. We hope the Centre will be genuinely national and multidimensional, considering questions from across the Industries and the country.

The cultural heritage sector continues to engage with concerns such as entry barriers and diversity, but many organisations lack the capacity to research the issues themselves. The sector would benefit from the kind of evidence and labour market analysis that the Centre could provide. We urge the government to ensure that the AHRC considers developing infrastructure to support creative and digital engagement, that includes provisions for active engagement of conservation and heritage science. This will support the provision of creative and digital skills that the sector urgently needs.

- **Creative Careers Programme**

Icon has advocated for the benefit of targeted campaigns to build awareness of career opportunities in heritage and conservation. We are encouraged by the government’s commitment to invest £2 million in an industry-led Creative Careers Programme aiming to reach “at least 2,000 schools and 600,000 pupils in two years.” Inspiring young people and awakening their interest will be critical to a sustainable talent pipeline.

The support package will also cover the development of apprenticeship standards for the industry. We strongly believe that a broader range of educational routes will be crucial to opening careers and building a workforce that is more representative of UK society. Icon is actively involved in the development of Trailblazer standards for conservation and we welcome the government’s continued commitment to apprenticeships.

The Deal suggests the development of an “employer-led cross-industry quality assurance framework” for Higher Education, Further Education and work-related courses, building on industry-led accreditation schemes. Professional bodies, such as Icon, are ideally-positioned to ensure that course providers are preparing students for success and supplying skills that the sector needs. We are eager to explore Icon’s potential engagement with the framework.

While we endorse the commitments discussed above, we would have welcomed a Sector Deal that explicitly addressed the following issues:

- **Arts Education**

The £2 million invested towards developing creative skills and education represents just over 1 percent of the Deal's total investment. No new measures are outlined for improving arts education or policy. This is in stark contrast to the £406 million that the government will invest through the Industrial Strategy in maths, digital and technical education to help address shortages in STEM skills.

STEM graduates are widely employed in the Creative Industries. However, the imbalance in the Industrial Strategy's education commitments ignores the fact that creative subjects are key drivers of the UK's creative and cultural sectors. The study of arts, crafts and design is central to inspiring and equipping the future professionals of these industries. Conservators, for example, combine knowledge of science with practical crafts skills and understanding of artistic methods.

The Deal does not address the effects of the EBacc, which emphasizes a core set of academic subjects studied for GCSE and excludes creative disciplines. A decline in the study of arts subjects has already been reported.¹ It is illogical that creative education is sidelined in a Sector Deal for the *creative* industries. Icon urges the government to place arts subjects at the centre of education policy to ensure a balance between Creative Industries' technology and cultural subsectors.

- **Brexit**

The Creative Industries were identified as a priority for an early Sector Deal because of their critical role in building a "Global Britain" as the UK exits the EU. Caring for our shared past will be key to fostering a joint future for our society, while the conservation of heritage will allow our cultural exports to continue to tell the UK's story around the world. Recognition of this potential is important.

The Deal remains silent on the challenges caused by Brexit, despite the sector's concerns regarding access to talent, skills and funding.² Addressing the challenges now will be key to preparing the UK for the fundamental change ahead. In this light, we would have welcomed more detail on how the government plans to support the sector in mitigating the negative impacts of Brexit.

To encourage the engagement of the Creative Industries with heritage and conservation, which would include heritage data management and repurposing, we suggest the establishment of suitable and publicly accessible research infrastructure. This would enable the sector to foster the development of creative and digital skills, as well as the development of synergies between the creative, cultural and heritage sectors, and put conservation and heritage science in a globally leading position.

We understand that BEIS is considering supporting UK involvement in the European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science and strongly advocate for infrastructure as proposed above to be developed in the frame of such international collaboration.³

¹ Joint Council for Qualifications, 2017. *Summer GCSE Results*; Ofqual, 2017. *Summer 2017 exam entries: GCSEs, level 1 / 2 certificates, AS and A levels in England*.

² House of Commons DCMS Committee, 2018. *The potential impact of Brexit on the creative industries, tourism and the digital single market. Second report of Session 2017-19*. House of Commons. Available online at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcdmeds/365/365.pdf> [accessed 19 April 2018]. Powell, J., et al, 2016. *Brexit Report: The impact of leaving the EU on the UK's arts, creative industries and cultural education – and what should be done*. London: Creative Industries Federation. Available online at: <https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/sites/default/files/2017-05/Brexit%20Report%20web.pdf> [accessed 19 April 2018].

³ <https://e-rihs.ac.uk/>

Icon acknowledges that the industries and sector also have a role in making Brexit work. Icon is actively encouraging the provision of home-grown talent by supporting the development of conservation apprenticeships. We are also looking to undertake research on the conservation workforce's EU nationals and concerns to better understand how Icon can prepare the profession.

- **Heritage, Conservation and Heritage Science**

While DCMS terminology excludes heritage and conservation from the Creative Industries, the sectors are closely interconnected. For example, museums, galleries, libraries, crafts, and arts are considered a part of both the Creative Industries and the Cultural Sector, which heritage falls under.⁴

However, the Sector Deal focuses on the technology side of the Creative Industries, investing over £33 million in “immersive technologies” such as virtual and augmented reality. The Creative Industries’ cultural subsectors are overlooked, as shown through the imbalance in education commitments. The Deal fails to explicitly acknowledge the creative aspect of heritage and the sector’s enablement of the Industries. This risks the sustainability of the underlying support structures of the Creative Industries and, by extension, the Industries themselves.

Heritage and conservation activities can have an origin in individual creativity, skill and talent. Conservators employ similar practical and technical skills to craftspeople, artists and designers. The research methods and approaches of heritage scientists and creative tech professionals are also comparable. Research questions relating to the interpretation, management and preservation of heritage drive innovation in science and technology that generate value beyond the sector.

Conserving the old is integral to inspiring the new. Heritage collections and sites stimulate creative businesses by inspiring the creation of products and services. Creative professionals of all specialisms, such as in graphics, fashion, fine arts and architecture, can draw on heritage made accessible by conservators and heritage scientists. Similarly, advances made through heritage science can inspire the creative application of new tools.

Conservators will ensure that what is created now will be preserved for the education and enjoyment of future generations. Emerging forms of heritage, like the technologies encouraged by this Sector Deal, will require new scientific approaches combining traditional fields of science as well as computer and data science.⁵ Indeed, most heritage as it is produced today is digital and requires enhanced digital and creative skills to understand, use and transform. Most of the data that humanity has produced so far is also digital. Conservation and heritage science enhance the documentation, management, repurposing and reuse of data *about* heritage (e.g. gaming, film and other visual industries) and data *as* heritage (e.g. digital repositories).

Icon hopes that this relationship is recognised at the Deal’s implementation and that heritage and conservation are considered under the Deal’s commitments. Ultimately, we advocate for a heritage-specific deal that recognises the 11.9 billion in GVA that heritage directly creates (in England alone).⁶ This value is greater when the role of heritage and conservation in maximising the value of the Creative Industries is taken into consideration. Investment in these sectors generates a by-product in the industries they inspire and support.

⁴ DCMS, 2016. *DCMS Sector Economic Estimates Methodology*. Available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-methodology>

⁵ Strlič, M., 2018. ‘Heritage Science: A Future-Oriented Cross-Disciplinary Field’. *Angew. Chem, Int. Ed.* 2018, 57, 2-4. Available online at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/anie.201804246> [accessed 5 June 2018].

⁶ <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2017/heritage-and-the-economy-2017.pdf>

Icon will continue to advocate for heritage and conservation as, at the least, an important support base for the Creative Industries, and, at the best, a Creative Industry in its own right. We are committed to making the Sector Deal work for the Creative Industries in the widest sense of the Industry's definition. Icon looks forward to working with partners across government and the sector to ensure the successful implementation of a Deal that capitalises on its strengths.

Alison Richmond, Icon Chief Executive

Anni Mäntyniemi, Icon Policy Advisor

Matija Strlič, Icon Heritage Science Group Chair