



Submission to Sheffield Race Equality Commission

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1. Who we are

1.1 Joined Up Heritage Sheffield (JUHS) is a charitable organisation supported by a large group of individuals and organisations united by a desire to champion all aspects of the city's rich heritage. Our charitable objects are set out in Appendix 1. We have also developed an Equality and Diversity statement to guide our activities (see Appendix 2).

1.2 The organisation emerged from Sheffield's Year of Making in 2016, when many of those who came together to run events realised the benefits of better joint working on heritage matters, building on the work done by Sheffield Community Heritage Forum and other heritage groups in the city. There was a clear need for an organisation to increase awareness within Sheffield and beyond about Sheffield's heritage stories, sites and assets of all kinds, in ways to encourage people not currently engaged with heritage to learn about it and enjoy what is available.

1.3 In 2018, we obtained registration as a charitable incorporated organisation on the association model. Day to day management falls to the trustees, supported by a small core group of advisers.

2. What we do

2.1 JUHS offers and promotes opportunities for networking between individuals, local community heritage groups and other relevant organisations and initiatives.

2.2 We hold bi-monthly open meetings (currently on-line) for voluntary organisations and individuals. Topics of common concern are discussed, and attendees can communicate and connect their activities.

2.3 Our website enables community groups to publicise heritage-related events of all kinds.

2.4 A regular newsletter updates supporters on heritage matters and opportunities for more effective joint working.

2.5 We mount or participate in local events to promote the value of heritage. In particular we run 2 or 3 half-day Heritage Forum meetings every year, at venues around the city. All JUHS' activities are free to participants.

3. A Heritage Strategy for Sheffield

3.1 Many local authorities have created heritage strategies to ensure heritage is positively included in decisions, but no such strategy has existed in Sheffield. JUHS' major project since inception has been to create and publish a strategy. This was recently completed, and the strategy can be found at <https://www.joinedupheritagesheffield.org.uk/about-us/a-heritage-strategy-for-sheffield/>.

3.2 Our vision is that within ten years, Sheffield will come to:

1. Understand and celebrate its heritage.
2. Champion a diverse heritage reflecting diverse Sheffield.
3. Exploit the economic potential of heritage.
4. Support the educational value of heritage.
5. Recognise the social, wellbeing and environmental benefits of heritage.

3.3 These are the aims of our Heritage Strategy. Achieving these aims is supported by an Action Plan, which is intended to be implemented, reviewed and updated by a partnership between major organisations in the city and a broadly-based heritage forum which will continue our community-based approach. The Partnership Board which will oversee delivery of the Strategy is now being set up.

3.4 The strategy is unique in this country in being a product not of the local authority but of the community, developed out of workshops and other activities designed to engage the widest possible range of people. Many of them and their organisations had had no previous communication with the others.

3.5 The strategy is also unusual in focusing much more widely than historic buildings and the heritage environment. Rather, we aim to improve public understanding of, and engagement in, all aspects of Sheffield's heritage - historic, architectural, cultural and environmental. The importance of this in a city with Sheffield's diversity is clear.

4. Relevance to the Sheffield Race Equality Commission

4.1 The Commission's Terms of Reference envisage that the issues prioritised for consideration will be Education, Business and Employment, Health, Civic Life and Communities, Crime and Justice, Sport and Culture.

4.2 At first sight, heritage appears to fit within Sport and Culture, and raises similar concerns regarding representation, inclusion, governance and funding as are suggested for the Commission to consider. We believe that this is an appropriate category under which to consider heritage, but also that there are wider impacts on the other issues.

4.3 The Heritage Strategy identifies an important economic role for heritage, including a significant contribution to business and employment. An unrepresentative heritage offer risks creating a bias in the kinds of business and employment that are attracted to the city or flourish here, or limiting the attractions to potential customers.

4.4 Heritage has a large educational value, but much of this risks being lost if the areas studied are not seen as relevant to everyone, either through a failure to recognise the heritage valued by some people or a failure to show how everyone's heritage can have meaning and value to the entire community.

4.5 Health and wellbeing benefits flow from connection with heritage, and these will be denied to some if the heritage offer is partial.

4.6 Heritage in a range of complex forms and interpretations is central to community identity. As part of the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector ourselves, JUHS needs to be sure to support and gain support from everyone in the sector. This is equally relevant to our role as a contributor to civic life and as an advocate working with civic decision formers.

4.7 Heritage has an impact, in our view, on all the Race Equality Commission's priority issues. This includes Crime and Justice where to avoid bias or exclusion it is vital for institutions to have a good understanding of the broadest range of cultural identities, and knowledge of the significance and possible sensitivity of place and practice.

4.8 The Heritage Strategy includes a number of actions that serve the aim of championing a diverse heritage, reflecting diverse Sheffield (numbers in parentheses are those used in the strategy document):

- Compile a heritage directory including an audit of community heritage activities (1.3).
- Create, through community activity, and publicise a local list of heritage assets (the People's Heritage List, see Appendix 3) (1.5).
- Undertake research on the breadth, condition and significance of Sheffield's heritage (1.8).
- Better define Sheffield's heritage narratives (2.1).
- Encourage development and sharing of heritage narratives by diverse communities in Sheffield (2.2).
- Run a knowledge exchange project to make the strategy work for more people and a wider range of people (2.3).
- Improve access to heritage activities (2.4).
- Improve articulation of heritage issues in Sheffield City Council policies (5.1).

5. The challenges of diversity

5.1 The strategy has been well-received, and we want to build on this by empowering everyone in Sheffield to take an interest in the city's diverse and fascinating heritage, understand their city's and community's past and shape their desire and ability to influence the future development of this important local resource. We have already begun to work with education interests with a view to helping schools celebrate diverse heritage.

5.2 JUHS has been concerned from the start to ensure that all parts of the Sheffield community have the opportunity to join and influence its work. It has to be said that we have not found this easy. We have reached out to rather more diverse groups than have responded, and it is the case that the level of response was higher in the early days of work on the heritage strategy than it has been more recently.

5.3 It must also be admitted that while we aspire to be a diverse organisation, in terms of race we cannot claim to be. We do not have any information about the demography of our supporters, but if the trustees, core group members and attendees at events are any indication, diversity is mainly limited to age and gender, and we are not racially diverse.

5.4 We remain concerned to understand better why this is so and as far as we can to remedy the situation. We hope that publication of the strategy, and the further efforts we are making to engage with organisations will take us in the right direction. A lack of true diversity of all kinds, including race, in both engagement and focus, inevitably compromises our ability to encourage empowerment and champion heritage for all Sheffielders.

5.5 Although we do not yet have answers to the challenges of diversity, we can explore the factors that should influence how they can be approached.

6. Factors to consider

6.1 Anecdotally, we learn that there may be a degree of “outreach fatigue”. Following a realisation that an organisation lacks diversity or a diverse outlook, it is likely to look for contacts that it sees as representative, with the result that such people or groups may receive multiple approaches. These may occur in clusters in response to events in the news or initiatives by authorities to address disparities. This at least creates an overload, but also risks being seen as box-ticking or attention given only because of a perceived problem.

6.2 The term “outreach” is itself problematic. It could be taken to suggest that those reached out to are seen as peripheral, different or isolated. The process should be that of a society communicating with itself on equal terms.

6.3 The term “heritage” is ambiguous. It frequently refers to our lived landscape, built and buried features, oral histories, and memories in many forms, often (but by no means always) consisting of or referring to physical things; it gives us a sense of place and connectedness. But for many people, ‘heritage’ has an intangible and transportable meaning referring primarily to one’s cultural, faith and family heritage which is very personal, and for many Sheffield residents reaches well beyond the city and even the country, while still fostering a sense of place and connectedness.

6.4 There will be different views of what is considered meaningful and qualifies as “heritage”. It would be wrong to assume that everyone, regardless of racial identity, has the same view of what can be “heritage”, but equally wrong to assume that no-one does. It would also be wrong to assume that specific views correlate with identity, including racial identity. The Heritage Strategy quite deliberately casts the net wide and includes intangibles, and must remain open to ideas about what can convey meaning between people and how to celebrate this.

6.5 Heritage relates to and forms identity in different ways for different individuals. It may be given (for example, within families and communities) or adopted (for example, when moving to a new area). There is no “right” heritage for an individual person, and how a person identifies does not determine what heritage they espouse. To some extent, we choose our heritage, and we also choose who to share it with. Again, it would be a mistake to expect everyone to do this the same way, or to assume that it correlates with identity, including racial identity.

7. Conclusion

7.1 JUHS’ Heritage Strategy was conceived as an instrument to speak to the whole city, rooted in the community and reflective of the views and aspirations of the many and diverse groups and individuals who contributed to its creation.

7.2 We recognise that our aims are demanding and that delivering the Action Plan will require sustained effort. This may be especially so in relation to diversity issues but JUHS remains committed to achieving its aims and welcomes support and advice that will help their achievement.

7.3 “Heritage is not just old stuff. It connects us, provides a sense of rootedness and place, and is vital to understanding who we are and what we would like to become” (P. Ainsworth, in ‘Heritage Health and Wellbeing, A Heritage Alliance Report’ 2020).

Appendix 1

Joined Up Heritage Sheffield: Charitable Objects

To promote the conservation, protection and preservation of heritage within Sheffield and the surrounding areas for the benefit of the public, in particular but not exclusively by:

- Educating the public about the subject of heritage, and in particular the heritage of Sheffield and the surrounding areas;
- Undertaking activities directed to preserving heritage;
- Providing information, advice and training to promote best practice in and between the range of groups and organisations in Sheffield and the surrounding areas whose objects and activities concern heritage, including by means such as organising workshops, meetings and conferences;
- Liaising with the public and private sectors and acting as a representative of the voluntary heritage sector in Sheffield and the surrounding areas in relation to public policy and decisions;
- Promoting volunteering in the conservation, protection, preservation and appreciation of heritage in Sheffield and the surrounding areas.

For the purpose of this clause 'heritage' consists of those things forming part of our history and traditions which are passed down through successive generations, including (without limitation) buildings, structures, landscapes and other physical remains of past human activity, crafts and craftsmanship, performance and cultural activities.

Appendix 2

Joined Up Heritage Sheffield: Equality and Diversity Statement

JUHS has developed this Equality and Diversity statement to guide its activities.

Joined Up Heritage Sheffield (JUHS) brings together a large, diverse group of individuals and organisations who are united by a desire to champion the city's heritage. We seek to empower everyone in Sheffield to take an interest in the city's diverse and fascinating heritage, understand their city's past and shape their desire and ability to influence the future development of Sheffield's important local heritage resources.

JUHS is committed to ensuring that it operates on a basis of equality for all, in line with the Equalities Act 2010. Its activities are open to all. It recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and is committed to making sure that JUHS is as inclusive and welcoming as possible in its proceedings and in its reflections and promotion of Sheffield's diverse heritage.

The statement can also be found on our website at <https://www.joinedupheritagesheffield.org.uk/>.

Appendix 3

Local Heritage Listing

Local authorities are encouraged by Government to create Local Heritage Lists. These recognise and record heritage assets that are valued by the local community, and local listing is a material consideration in planning decisions. Local listing generally applies to the same kind of assets such as structures or landscapes that can be designated for their national importance, but does not confer the same level of statutory protection.

Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham have received Government funding to create a Local Heritage List during the financial year 2021/22. This work will be managed by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service. It provides an opportunity to identify heritage that is important to Sheffielders. It is hoped that a community-based approach to Local Listing can create a truly diverse list that recognises heritage from across the city's geographies and communities.

The JUHS People's Heritage List is a separate but related initiative. It can incorporate assets that are locally listed, and in addition can record nominations of assets important to local people that do not meet the criteria for planning policy protection. In order to recognise a diverse range of heritage, it may be that it should also encompass intangible heritage, such as customs, traditions, events, recipes or performing arts.