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Historic Scotland Review

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Your ref:  
Our ref:

25 June 2003

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## **REVIEW OF STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF HISTORIC SCOTLAND**

The Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport has announced the establishment of a review to look at the structure and functions of Historic Scotland. I would welcome your views and comments to help to inform this review.

The terms of reference of the review are:

- a to consider the range of functions currently discharged by Historic Scotland on behalf of Scottish Ministers;
- b to consider whether the most appropriate vehicle for the accountable delivery of these functions deemed necessary or desirable is an executive Agency, an NDPB, a Departmental body, a privatised entity, a voluntary organisation or some combination of these options; and
- c to make recommendations to Ministers that take cognisance of the financial and practical implications of the various options considered.

The review is being carried out independently of Historic Scotland and the process is open to all those who have an interest in the heritage of Scotland. This is an opportunity for all those with an interest to submit their views and comments. The results of the review and Ministers' conclusions in the light of the review will be made available to Parliament.

The attached paper seeks to identify some areas where your comments would be most helpful. Please do not feel obliged to answer all of the questions or to feel constrained by them if there are issues which you think are relevant which fall outside of the questions or the issues identified. The review will not, however, consider or review specific cases. An individual or organisation's experience of an individual case may inform their considerations about the structure and functions of Historic Scotland (as opposed to the discharge of these functions) and I would welcome any such comments or views.

I am issuing this letter to a wide range of organisations and individuals working in areas relevant to the historic environment in Scotland. I attach a list of bodies and individuals to whom I am sending this letter. The letter and the attached consultation paper are also being placed on the Scottish Executive website and information about the review and a link to the consultation paper is available on the Historic Scotland website. Background papers on the review will also be placed on the Scottish Executive website. Please feel free to share this invitation to comment with other organisations. If anyone would like to discuss the process or their comments then please feel free to contact me.

I would be grateful if you could send responses to:

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The closing date for comments is 17 September 2003

It would be convenient, where possible, to receive responses in electronic form, although hard copies will certainly also be fully taken into account. In accordance with normal Scottish Executive practice copies of all responses will be made publicly available in the Scottish Executive library at Saughton House, unless it is specifically requested that this should not happen.

**Rachel Sunderland**

# **REVIEW OF HISTORIC SCOTLAND**

## **Introduction**

1. Scottish Ministers have announced that a review of the functions and structure of Historic Scotland will take place and the results of the review and Ministers' conclusions in the light of that review will be made available to Parliament.

The terms of reference of this review are:

- (a) to consider the range of functions currently discharged by Historic Scotland on behalf of Scottish Ministers;
- (b) to consider whether the most appropriate vehicle for the accountable deliver of those functions deemed necessary or desirable is an Executive Agency, an NDPB, a Departmental body, a privatised entity, a voluntary organisation or some combination of these options; and
- (c) to make recommendations to Ministers that take cognisance of the financial and practical implications of the various options considered.

## **Background**

2. Historic Scotland's mission is "to safeguard the Nation's built heritage and promote its understanding and enjoyment".

3. Historic Scotland is responsible for the upkeep of more than 300 historic properties across Scotland. The organisation provides statutory protection for buildings of historic or architectural importance and monuments of national importance by listing and scheduling, which are done under separate legal arrangements. In 2001-02 200 monuments were scheduled and 65 listed building units were surveyed. Some 2700 listed building consent cases and 200 scheduled monument consent cases were handled. In 2001-02 the organisation spent £49.2m protecting, presenting and promoting Scotland's built heritage and generated income of £18m.

4. The work of the organisation is guided by the following objectives:

- To protect and conserve Scotland's built heritage;
- To encourage public appreciation and enjoyment of Scotland's built heritage;
- To play an active role in the development and success of social, economic and environmental policies; and
- To be effective and efficient in its work.

Historic Scotland does this by

- Providing statutory protection through:
  - Scheduling monuments of national importance;
  - Listing buildings of special architectural or historical importance;
  - Dealing with casework on scheduled monument and listing building consents;

- Carrying out and facilitating conservation of historic buildings and monuments of national importance through:
  - Conservation and maintenance of properties in care;
  - Advice and grants to assist with conservation and management of ancient monuments;
  - Encouraging archaeological surveys and excavation at those sites threatened by natural forces or development where preservation is not possible;
  - Taking properties into State care;
- Researching and developing issues and skills related to the built heritage and raising the standard of conservation practice;
- Encouraging visitors to properties in Historic Scotland's care and ensuring that they enjoy and benefit from their visits;
- Developing knowledge, appreciation and access to the built heritage across a wide audience;
- Promoting the built heritage as an integral part of the Scottish cultural experience;
- Operating a range of high quality tourist attractions and working with other tourist organisations to attract visitors from home and abroad;
- Contributing to sustainability;
- Contributing to social inclusion;
- Providing jobs;
- Contributing to policy on architecture for Scotland;
- Valuing and developing the organisation's staff;
- Ensuring continuous improvement in operational policy, processes and procedures;
- Maximising the potential of information and communication technology;
- Generating income to support core activities;
- Making the best use of external funding sources.

5. Further background information on Historic Scotland can be found at [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

## **Some questions about role and strategy**

Are the functions undertaken by Historic Scotland necessary? Should any of the functions not be undertaken?

What would be the impact if any, or all, of Historic Scotland's functions were discontinued?

Are there functions carried out by Historic Scotland that might advantageously be carried out by other bodies working in the field of archaeology, preservation, conservation, presentation, recreation, access (such as local authorities, voluntary organisations, private sector organisations, the Scottish Executive)? Which functions and why?

Are there any functions carried out by such bodies – or perhaps not being carried out at all – that could be carried out by Historic Scotland. Which functions and why? Are there functions which Historic Scotland are currently not undertaking which you consider they should be taking on?

Is there scope to rationalise the functions of Historic Scotland with those of other bodies? Which functions? And how might they be organised?

To what extent do Historic Scotland's objectives link with the guiding themes and values of the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament – for example in tackling social disadvantage, promoting Scotland's identity, improving public services and safeguarding our environment?

## **Historic Scotland Planning and Structure**

6. Historic Scotland is an Executive Agency within the Scottish Executive Education Department. Executive Agencies were established in 1988 as a consequence of the UK Government's 'Next Steps Initiative' aimed at improving the delivery of public sector services. Executive Agencies are usually established where a set of functions can be carried out discretely within a clear policy framework set by Ministers. Executive Agencies of the Scottish Executive are constituent parts of the core departments and have a strong focus on the operational delivery of service outputs. All of the functions performed by the Agency are carried out on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

7. Ministers are responsible for setting the policy and resources framework within which Historic Scotland operates. While Ministers do not normally intervene in the day-to-day management of the organisation they do approve Historic Scotland's Corporate Plan, set targets and monitor performance and approve the Framework Document which sets out roles and responsibilities. Ministers also, usually following an open competition, approve the appointment of the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is responsible to Scottish Ministers for the organisation's management, performance and future development.

8. As an Agency Historic Scotland is directly accountable to Scottish Ministers who are, in turn, directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament for its performance.

9. Historic Scotland employs approximately 844 (full time equivalents) members of staff in a wide range of disciplines and skills including archaeologists, art historians, conservators, craftsman, custodians, keykeepers, building professionals and specialised support staff and administrators. The organisation's head office is in Edinburgh but responsibility for the care and presentation of properties is devolved to teams in Edinburgh, Stirling and Fort George.

### **Planning**

10. The different Groups within Historic Scotland (Heritage Policy, Properties in Care, Technical, Conservation, Research and Education, Chief Executive's Group and Finance and Procurement and Personnel) each produce a one year Operational Plan. This Plan sets out the planned activity of that Group for the coming year along with information on training needs and changes in information technology. The organisation as a whole then produces a Corporate Plan. Previously these Plans covered a single year but from 2003-04 Historic Scotland has decided to produce a 3-year Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan draws together information available from the Operational Plans and then outlines how the organisation will deliver against key objectives and targets.

11. Historic Scotland is in the process of developing a ten-year vision for the Agency. The organisation anticipate that the ten-year vision will:

- Clarify the organisation's role
- Create direction, identify long term goals and set an agenda; and
- Promote the work of Historic Scotland, increase recognition and reach out to stakeholders.

Historic Scotland are conducting independent research to investigate how key partners and stakeholders view Scotland's built heritage and to ascertain their opinions regarding the work of Historic Scotland. This exercise will feed into the development of the ten-year vision.

**Some questions relating to Historic Scotland's planning and structure:**

Is the current organisational structure of Historic Scotland appropriate to the delivery of the organisation's objectives? Would a different organisational structure improve the delivery of Historic Scotland's objectives? Some possible alternatives might include a Non-Departmental Public Body, a core Scottish Executive Department, a private sector organisation or a voluntary sector body.

Does Historic Scotland need different freedoms and flexibilities to improve the delivery of its functions and objectives? If so how might this be achieved without weakening its overall accountability?

How effective is the corporate planning of Historic Scotland in developing clear strategic direction, setting targets and priorities and delivering key targets and outcomes?

## Historic Scotland's Performance

12. Scottish Ministers have set the following key performance targets for Historic Scotland to meet during 2002-2003.

	Target
<b>Protecting Scotland's Built Heritage</b>	
Number of monuments scheduled	275
Weighted number of listed building resurvey units	125
Number of weeks in which 80% of scheduled monument consent cases resolved	9
Percentage of listed building consent cases resolved within 28 days	97%
Number of condition surveys for properties in care	65
<b>Promoting and Presenting the Built Heritage</b>	
Historic Scotland market share compared to other paid visitor attractions in Scotland	56%
Performance rating from the Mystery Visit programme (using three-year rolling average)	86%
Average spend per visitor	£2.10
<b>Agency Management</b>	
Percentage efficiency gains/savings on non-grant expenditure	1%

The organisation reports on their achievements against their performance targets in their annual report.

13. Historic Scotland's Annual Report for 2001-2002 issued in August 2002. The Report showed that Historic Scotland had been successful in meeting all but one of their targets for 2001-02.

	Target	2001-02 Outturn
<b>Protecting Scotland's Built Heritage</b>		
Number of monuments scheduled	200	200
Weighted number of listed building resurvey units	150	65
Number of weeks in which 80% of scheduled monument consent cases resolved	9	9
Percentage of listed building consent cases resolved within 28 days	97%	97%
Number of condition surveys for properties in care	65	67
<b>Promoting and Presenting the Built Heritage</b>		
Historic Scotland market share compared to other paid visitor attractions in Scotland	54.5%	56%
Percentage of satisfied visitors (based on independent survey)	96%	98%
Average retail spend per visitor	£2.05	£2.10
<b>Agency Management</b>		
Percentage efficiency gains/savings on non-grant expenditure	1.25%	1.28%

**Some questions relating to Historic Scotland's Performance?**

How significant are these or other achievements? Is there more that could be done? If so, what?

Are Historic Scotland's targets suitably stretching/demanding?

How does Historic Scotland's performance compare with that of other comparable bodies?

## **Partnerships and Stakeholders**

14. Historic Scotland could not achieve its objectives without the support and activity of its partners and stakeholders. The breadth of the organisation's remit means that there are a wide-range of organisations with a direct interest in the work of Historic Scotland. These include local authorities, archaeological trusts, historical societies, planners, architects, builders, conservation and restoration experts, tourist boards and tour operators, landowners and property owners, members of staff and the large numbers of people who visit Historic Scotland properties. In 2001-2002 there were 2.7 million visitors to Historic Scotland's properties where an admission fee is charged and during the annual free weekend there were 48,569 visitors to properties administered by the organisation.

### **Some questions about Partnerships and Stakeholders**

Is there an effective understanding between Historic Scotland and your organisation about the role of Historic Scotland?

Does Historic Scotland have a productive relationships with your organisations in terms of policy, planning and implementation?

How might these relationships be strengthened?

Is there a need to build closer links between Historic Scotland and other bodies? Is so which ones and on which issues?

How accessible or responsive has Historic Scotland been to your organisation and to the wider public?

Has Historic Scotland promoted its purposes and services effectively?

Does Historic Scotland have your confidence as a body with which your organisation can do business? Are you broadly confident about the effectiveness of the delivery of its functions?