

# MID-YEAR UPDATE

Published in April 2020 and updated in September 2020 in lieu of our Annual Operating Plan in response to the COVID-19 outbreak



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### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of our annual workplan is to set out our priorities for the year to support the delivery of our Corporate Plan for 2019 onwards *Heritage for All*.

In April 2020 we created a revised approach to our annual workplan, recognising that the disruption of COVID-19 would not allow us to plan beyond a short-term, sixmonth horizon.

Our planning followed three phases:

- 1. Immediate priorities to maintain the operation of our organisation and maximise staff resources for the next six months
- 2. Resumption planning to ensure that we could resume core activities at our sites
- 3. Long-term planning to ensure we can reduce the impact of this period on our organisation and do as much as we can to help mitigate the impacts on wider society

Our 2020-21 Action Plan set out the key actions we would undertake in the first six months of the year to support the response to COVID-19 and maintain and develop our core activities where we could.

Since April, we have responded creatively to ensure we have been able to continue to support our colleagues whilst operating many of our activities as normal. However, other parts of our work, particularly in relation to the Properties in Care, were severely disrupted by the lockdown put in place in response to COVID-19.

To preserve the lives, health and safety of our people and our visitors, and to comply with the instructions of the UK and Scottish Governments in relation to social distancing, the holding of events and gatherings and access to premises, all of our staffed Properties in Care and offices were closed with effect from 5pm on 18 March 2020.

We are now well on the road to resuming activities across our estate and organisation, and returning to a new, better normal in how we undertake our work. However, along with many organisations we continue to grapple with the immediate impact of the pandemic and face significant uncertainty in the wider environment, including whether restrictions will need to be reintroduced to manage a further wave of infections.

This document contains our plan for how we will continue to resume our activities over the next six months, remaining agile and alert to potential disruption, while building back our organisation and the work of the historic environment sector in a sustainable, inclusive way.

Just as importantly, we will use this period to look to the future. We are embarking on a significant programme of work to reimagine how we deliver our services and our support for the historic environment sector. It will encourage creative thinking and ensure our vision, plans and culture are future focused and evidence based. This reimagining work will take place over the next few months.

In developing this mid-year update, and in light of our growing understanding of the impact of COVID-19, we have sought to pick up some of the key themes and priorities we anticipate emerging from this work. The reimagining programme is scheduled to conclude in early 2021 and will direct our priorities for 2021-22 and future years to ensure we maximise the value of the historic environment to the economy and wellbeing of Scotland.

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The historic environment is Scotland's story.

It belongs to all of us. It is part of our everyday lives. It shapes our identity. It tells us about the past, the present – and even points the way to the future.

We are a charity and public body leading the way in protecting, understanding and sharing Scotland's historic environment, for today and for the future. The impact of COVID-19 has had profound consequences and in this period we will consider the longer-term impacts and opportunities it presents for us and our role.

#### We want to use the past to make a better future.

We want the historic environment to make a real difference to people's lives: to our health, to our economy, to our culture, to our environment. We want heritage to involve everyone so that all can benefit.

Through our own activities and our work with our partners and stakeholders, we ensure that the historic environment thrives and delivers equality, sustainability and economic and social benefits for the people of Scotland.

Our core activities span a range of functions:

- We care for more than 300 sites of national importance all across the country and are the largest operator of paid visitor attractions in Scotland.
- We look after internationally significant archives and artefacts.
- We are at the forefront of investigating and researching the historic environment and addressing the impacts of climate change on its future.
- We protect our historic places through designations and consents, promote their sustainable development, and provide millions of pounds each year to local communities to repair and revitalise their historic environment.
- We provide advice and guidance about the historic environment and offer a wide range of training and learning opportunities.

In every aspect of our work we strive to follow our five organisational values - we are collaborative, professional, innovative, open and respectful.

# SUPPORTING SCOTLAND'S WELLBEING

The historic environment is a key part of Scotland's infrastructure and at the heart of who we are. These places, where we live, work and study, are rich in opportunities to provide, in the words of the First Minister 'new jobs, good jobs and green jobs'; to point the way to a circular, net-zero economy and to foster community connection and wellbeing.

Through our work we support the wellbeing outcomes in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, the Programme for Government 2020-21 *Protecting Scotland Renewing Scotland*, and the Scottish Government's Economic Recovery Implementation Plan.

Our Corporate Plan for 2019 onwards, *Heritage For All*, is still very much relevant and sets out five outcomes to ensure the historic environment is cherished, understood, shared and enjoyed with pride, by everyone:

- 1. The historic environment makes a real difference to people's lives
- 2. The historic environment is looked after, protected and managed for the generations to come
- 3. The historic environment makes a broader contribution to the economy of Scotland and its people
- 4. The historic environment inspires a creative and vibrant Scotland
- 5. The historic environment is cared for and championed by a high-performing organisation

The link between these outcomes and the National Outcomes in the National Performance Framework can be found in our Corporate Plan<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.historicenvironment.scot/about-us/who-we-are/heritage-for-all/

### 2020-21 SO FAR

2020-21 is the second year of our Corporate Plan for 2019 onwards: Heritage for All.

We have accomplished a great deal in the first six months of the year with over 90% of our Year 2 Action Plan (April to September 2020) actions achieved or partially achieved. It is thanks to the hard work, resilience and commitment of each of us that we are able to keep on going, play our part in Scotland's response and start to look ahead to recovery.

Our successes over the first six months of the year span the full range of our functions. This has included quickly transforming the way we work to respond to lockdown, supporting our people, supporting the sector, maintaining service delivery where possible and using our voice to amplify the growing call for a recovery that benefits everyone.

In focusing on the activities that add most value to our outcomes, we have worked to improve and promote our online resources and social media channels to support people through the lockdown period. We have worked extensively with our partners across the sector and beyond to explore the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and consider how we can work together to mitigate them and build a sustainable future. We have worked to reopen our sites and properties in a safe and orderly fashion to contribute to our visitor's wellbeing after lockdown, recognising that our sites offer information and interest as well as the opportunity to be outside and engage with others while maintaining physical distancing.

Here is just a sample of what we have done together:

#### Responding to Lockdown

- We closed down and secured all 336 Properties in Care then successfully reopened 226 sites, with public health measures and restrictions in place, by the end of September. This represents over 75% of our year-round sites, of which around 200 are free to access.
- We repurposed technology at our national conservation centre, the Engine Shed in Stirling, to produce PPE for frontline-workers battling COVID-19 across Scotland, working with Scottish Enterprise and the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.
- We made the case for and received additional grant in aid from the Scottish Government to address the funding gap left by site closure, enabling us to plan for the rest of the year.

#### Supporting our People

We acted quickly to protect our people, closing our workplaces and moving to a
robust, secure and effective remote working model, enabled by our recent
investments in IT and information governance. As of September, we have been
able to welcome the majority of our people who had been placed on furlough,
such as those who are based at our sites, back to work.

- We supported our people in a wide variety of ways throughout this period through a wellbeing programme, providing equipment, regular communications, enhanced online learning opportunities, safety measures to support return to onsite working and a long-term commitment to flexible working.
- We conducted pulse surveys to understand the impacts of the pandemic on our colleagues and, together with the launch of our 'suggestions' portal, we have gained valuable insight that is shaping how we move forward.

#### Supporting the Sector

- We <u>conducted online surveys</u> to help understand the impacts of COVID-19 for the historic environment sector in Scotland, which provided the basis for a coordinated and collaborative response to the crisis.
- We worked with our grant recipients and suppliers to understand the impact of the pandemic on them and how we could help them, within our means, through the pandemic and resuming delivery when the time was right.
- We supported sector working groups around COVID-19 response and resumption, including the COVID Historic Environment Resilience Forum, set up to discuss medium and longer-term actions to address sector resilience, sustainability, and contribution to Scotland's national recovery, and the Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group.
- We provided ongoing leadership of the sector through the *Our Place in Time* (OPiT) Chief Executives Forum.

#### **Delivering our Services**

- Over August and September we welcomed over 150,000 visitors back to our staffed sites.
- We continued to play an efficient role in the planning system with turnaround times for applications and consultations maintained.
- In April we launched 'Learn at Home' to help home educators and learners access freely available new and existing digital resources and learning materials.
- Digital engagement increased as physical access reduced with our online archives particularly popular. Canmore, SCRAN and NCAP all saw their highest ever levels of web traffic between April-May 2020 and there were over 10,000 views of the 3D digital models of Edinburgh and Caerlaverock Castles in the first two weeks.
- We harnessed the knowledge of 5,000 members of the public, who helped us to identify archive images of Scotland which are now available online for the first time through Canmore.

#### **Using our Voice**

- In June we issued a statement against racism in support of the Black Lives Matter movement: heritage should be shared by all without any form of discrimination or inequality.
- In August we <u>published information</u> showing the wellbeing health benefits of heritage and how we can better target heritage-related activities, infrastructure and community connections towards people who are most in need of improved wellbeing.

• In September we provided evidence to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee as it seeks to understand the impact of COVID-19 on Scotland's culture and tourism industries, support required and how their recovery can contribute to a greener, fairer Scotland.

Our collective efforts over the last six months stand us in good stead for the remainder of the year and as we start to reimagine what the future holds.

## UPDATED SIX-MONTH PLAN

For the first six months of 2020-21 we focused on continuing to deliver essential functions in these challenging times, reallocating resources and our people's time as needed. For some of our activities we were not able to continue to provide normal service for much of this period.

Given the continuing uncertainty in our operating environment, we cannot return to business-as-usual for the immediate future. Indeed, with the evolving situation and the lessons we have learnt from continuing to operate during lockdown, it may not be desirable for us to return to business-as-usual as it was before.

The disruption of this year provides us with an opportunity to build our organisation, sector and wider society back better, more sustainable and inclusive than ever. To support a green, wellbeing economy, our work to reimagine our future will need to respond robustly, based on rigorous research, to the big issues that will frame our operating context into the future: global recession, climate change, digitization, Brexit and more.

Through our reimagining work over the autumn and winter we want to highlight the difference heritage makes to the people and places of Scotland. Our reimagining work will help us ensure the way we deliver our core functions is optimised in response to the lasting implications of the global pandemic for society, for our sector and for us, including identifying things we need to change or stop doing. With the principles of sustainability at the heart of the historic environment, we believe that Scotland's past can help us to build back better and pave the way to a greener, fairer future.

For the next six months our focus is on the balance between:

- Planning for a different tomorrow by developing our thinking and commencing initiatives in key areas, seeking where possible to anticipate some of the key themes and priorities of our reimagining work; and
- Continuing and developing our core activities to a high standard, refreshing these to reflect the changing circumstances we now find ourselves in.

Throughout this plan the emphasis is on delivering and developing our **core** activities while laying the groundwork for success and sustainability in the future, focusing on reviewing how we operate to make sure it remains fit-for purpose and supporting our people to thrive and maximise their impact in the workplace.

By doing this we can ensure that we are in the best place possible to contribute to our outcomes, particularly to **support the historic environment sector** to build back better and ensure we and the wider sector make a **strong contribution to both the wellbeing and economic recovery** of Scotland and its people.

Our operations and activities will need to be flexible to adjust to the changing economic situation, fluctuations in Government restrictions in place and responsive

as we continue to learn about how the tourism and other sectors will resume in Scotland.

This Action Plan retains the structure of our Corporate Plan, identifying actions in relation to each of our five outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Some of these actions have continued from the actions we identified in the initial six-month period of 2020-21, as we continue to work in these areas. Other actions have been identified and added to this mid-year update to show the areas we want to focus on as we reimagine how we work and the impact we can have across the historic environment sector and wider society.

# 1. THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES

We contribute positively to almost every aspect of Scottish life but the potential of heritage has yet to be fully realised – we want to change that. Healthy buildings, fulfilling jobs, education and volunteering opportunities are tangible touch points for people all across Scotland and the historic environment is woven into our sense of identity as individuals, communities and as a society. Supporting this via online engagement has become increasingly important.

Our priority actions for the next six months are:

#### Planning for a different tomorrow

- Develop a stronger narrative articulating the benefits of Scotland's historic environment, thereby contributing to a repositioning of heritage and its potential to make a real difference to people's lives and Government policy
   KPI 1
- Redefine the place of digital in the future of our services, reviewing our Digital Strategy and identifying opportunities for investment in digital innovation that is responsive to our users' needs KPI 2
- Develop new Equality Outcomes for 2021-25 and a 2021-22 action plan that shape our work in seeking to ensure an accurate representation of Scotland's history and demographics and enabling more people to feel more able to engage with the historic environment KPI 2
- Contribute to vibrant neighbourhoods with resilient local services by developing and implementing an action plan that helps communities use their heritage as a catalyst for a recovery that has wellbeing and sustainability at its heart KPI 3

- Enhance the impacts of our work on people's wellbeing by integrating our wellbeing research into decision making KPI 1
- Digitally document more of the sites, collections and archives in our care, increasing the amount of information on the historic environment available in digital formats and accessible to the public online KPI 2
- Agree a Business Case for the redevelopment of our online digital services to provide a single place for all to access Scotland's national record of the historic environment KPI 2
- Use our social media presence and our online resources to promote heritage to new and existing audiences, followers and members KPI 2

 Progress and augment our work to improve access, widen participation and reduce inequalities in Scotland's historic environment, including working with partners on Year 1 of the two-year Managing Imperial Legacies Project KPI 2

# 2. THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT IS LOOKED AFTER, PROTECTED AND MANAGED FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME

As with many other areas, the challenges of looking after the historic environment have only been exacerbated by the lockdown period and the continuing economic impact. We will continue to work across the historic environment sector and beyond to ensure that our heritage is invested in to support wellbeing and economic activity now and for generations to come.

Our priority actions for the next six months are:

#### Planning for a different tomorrow

- Promote town and city centre renewal and the reuse of historic buildings following the COVID-19 disruption through adapting our approach to administrating our designations, provision of advice and guidance, and statutory consultation functions KPI 4
- Revise our cross-sector approach to investment in built heritage in light of the COVID-19 situation as part of our consideration of the future shape of the historic environment sector, concluding the built heritage investment plan process KPI 4
- Develop a long-term Properties in Care (PIC) Strategy that considers how we manage and operate these assets in a sustainable and innovative way to maximise their contribution to society and wellbeing now and for the generations to come KPI 4
- Develop a Green Recovery Statement for the sector to influence policy and investment and harness the principles of sustainability inherited from our past to create green jobs and reduce carbon through adaptive reuse and energy efficient retrofit of older buildings, including those that make up many of our homes and offices KPI 5
- Prepare for future climate challenges by developing a Climate Change
  Adaptation Plan that builds on our learning from the lockdown and supports
  the transition to a resilient low-carbon organisation KPI 5

- Resume core inspections, maintenance and investment activities at the
  properties in our care to continue to care for, enhance the sustainability of and
  provide public access to these sites KPI 4
- Continue to look after and manage the collections and archives in our care, including developing a Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS) Action Plan to identify compliance risks and investment required so we may continue to share loaned collections around the country KPI 4

- Support the development of Scotland's National Planning Framework IV and its incorporation of Scottish Planning Policy, as required by Scottish Government planning and key agencies KPI 4
- Deal with 90% of regulatory activities, consultations and decisions within stated timescales, ensuring our decisions are open, transparent and easy to understand KPI 4
- Deliver a revised version of Year 1 of our Climate Action Plan, including continuing energy efficiency improvements at our sites and reviewing our waste management KPI 5

# 3. THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT MAKES A BROADER CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY OF SCOTLAND AND ITS PEOPLE

As an attraction for international tourism, the historic environment provides a big contribution to Scotland's economy but this sector continues to be severely impacted by the COVID-19 situation. We will work with partners across the tourism and historic environment sectors, as well as within the communities we work in, to contribute to sustainable economic recovery. This includes continuing to provide high-quality visitor experiences at our sites, supporting communities through our grant programmes and working to ensure the sector has the skills it needs to thrive.

Our priority actions for the next six months are:

#### Planning for a different tomorrow

- Explore innovative approaches to creating jobs and skills development opportunities, including supporting and making use of Government schemes and extending our training facilities, to allow the heritage and related sectors to play our part in recovery in line with the sector's Skills Investment Plan KPI 6
- Progress the design of our refreshed grant programmes and deliver the new Historic Environment Recovery Fund on behalf of Scottish Government to support the economic recovery and financial sustainability of groups working with the historic environment KPI 6
- Redefine the visitor offer, particularly at our sites, ensuring a collaborative approach with the tourism sector to deliver high-quality, sustainable experiences that contribute to local economic recovery while minimizing the impact on the environment KPI 6
- Reshape our marketing to reflect the changing world around us, including
  playing our part in the wider tourism sector strategies of Scotland and
  responding to the needs and preferences of our visitors, members, customers
  and local communities KPI 6

- Provide quality visitor experiences at reopened sites while the public health restrictions are in place, utilising digital content to supplement our existing offer KPI 6
- Continue to operate a prioritised grants programme to support the historic environment sector within available resources KPI 6
- Promote the integration of heritage into investment-led recovery, working with place partnerships, economic agencies, Community Planning Partnerships and Growth Deals KPI 6

• Deliver a revised version of Year 2 of our *Research Strategy* for 2019-22, scoping future research funding and collaboration opportunities that support us to reimagine how we work and the impact the historic environment sector can have across wider society KPI 6

# 4. THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT INSPIRES A CREATIVE AND VIBRANT SCOTLAND

The historic environment is about more than buildings and artefacts so it is important that we continue to champion intangible cultural heritage and the stories of our history. We will use technology and digital means to continue to promote creative and educational activities that can be accessed online instead of in person. As the global economy continues to recover, international cooperation is essential and we will continue to build our relationships with international partners and initiatives.

Our priority actions for the next six months are:

#### Planning for a different tomorrow

- Develop a creative new learning offer from 2021-22, reaching out to our audiences to understand their diverse and changing needs and enable testing of innovative, flexible and inclusive approaches to increasing participation and supporting positive destinations for our learners KPI 7
- Use our reputation as a world-leading heritage organisation to build our international networks, promoting the value of Scotland's heritage attractions, and our heritage skills, science, technology and climate change expertise to contribute to the global recovery KPI 8

- Undertake intangible cultural heritage and creative industries projects in collaboration with industry partners, promoting respect for cultural diversity while supporting the recovery of the creative sector KPI 8
- Build on the success of Learn at Home to develop a learning resources section and inclusive new content on updated 'Learn' webpages and through our social channels KPI 7
- Continue to deliver the core commitments within our *Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23* with a focus on online and digital activities while we are unable to continue our public engagement and face-to-face initiatives KPL7
- Deliver a revised annual plan for Year 2 of our International Strategy
   *Partnering Globally* focused on remaining recognised as an international
   centre of expertise and helping to maximise the benefits from our shared
   global heritage KPI 8

# 5. THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT IS CARED FOR AND CHAMPIONED BY A HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANISATION

The recent period of disruption has shown the many strengths we have as an organisation that allow us to thrive in challenging times, as well as the areas where we need to further build our resilience. Our core strength is our people, who have continued to provide outstanding services and adapted well to new ways of working, including remote working and changes at our sites to incorporate public health measures. The closure of our sites in the first part of the year had a significant impact on the financial resources available to us. We have worked with the Scottish Government and other partners to ensure that we can meet our financial commitments for 2020-21 and will continue to work to build our financial sustainability over the longer term.

Our priority actions for the next six months are:

#### Planning for a different tomorrow

- Join forces with sector partners to understand their immediate needs and work towards a long-term plan for the sector, feeding into the evolution of the Our Place in Time (OPiT) sector strategy KPI 9
- Evolve our culture and experience at work, enabling our people to be their best through the implementation of Year 1 of our People Strategy and its four pillars: engaging our people, employee experience, releasing potential and leading into the future KPI 10
- Explore new ways of working to fit with colleague appetite and business need, demonstrating our commitment to long-term flexible working for the benefit of all colleagues KPI 10
- Develop our future operating model, considering lessons learned from the last six months to build our organisational resilience and sustainability KPI 10

- Deliver 'Programme for Success' priorities for 2020-21 to transform the way
  we work, including continued rollout of our new HR, payroll and financial
  management system, an electronic records and document management
  system, Intranet, and PIC Asset Management System and developing a
  business case for the long-term storage of the archives and collections in our
  care KPI 10
- Support the delivery of our activities for the benefit of Scotland by continuing to provide effective and efficient corporate services, engaging across our organisation and responding to needs KPI 10

• Implement an internal communications plan focusing on how we inform and support our people, considering how we monitor colleague engagement to enable appropriate actions to be taken KPI 10

### MEASURING PERFORMANCE

We are proud of what we have been able to achieve this year, despite the challenges we have faced. At the end of the year, we will be able to show how we have delivered on the actions in both Action Plans we have published this year. We will also provide an assessment against each of our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to show how we continue to work towards the outcomes set out in our Corporate Plan.

Outcome 1: The historic environment makes a real difference to people's lives

- KPI 1: Increase wellbeing from Scotland's historic environment
- KPI 2: Increase engagement with Scotland's historic environment
- KPI 3: Enhance communities' use of their heritage in placemaking

Outcome 2: The historic environment is looked after, protected and managed for the generations to come

- KPI 4: Strengthen the resilience of Scotland's historic environment
- KPI 5: Increasingly lead the sector in climate change action

Outcome 3: The historic environment makes a broader contribution to the economy of Scotland and its people

KPI 6: Increase economic benefits from Scotland's historic environment

Outcome 4: The historic environment inspires a creative and vibrant Scotland

- KPI 7: Increasingly inspire creativity and innovation
- KPI 8: Increase international recognition of the quality of Scotland's historic environment

Outcome 5: The historic environment is cared for and championed by a high-performing organisation

- KPI 9: Grow trust and confidence in Historic Environment Scotland
- KPI 10: Enhance the sustainability of Historic Environment Scotland

### **RESOURCES**

The closure of our sites for an unknown period has had an impact on the financial resources available to us. Our total budget for the year is £90 million, including the commercial income we will earn from our reopened sites and additional funding from the Scottish Government to help manage the impacts of COVID-19.

This welcome funding ensures we can continue delivering our key functions and allows us to support the sector and the wider economy through continued investment in grant programmes, communities and skills. However, it does not fully offset the loss of millions of visitors. For the remainder of 2020-21 we will need to continue to rigorously prioritise and work with our partners on creative ways to deliver our activities.

The bulk of the work contained in this updated six-month Action Plan will continue to be undertaken using the most important resource we have available, our people.

We will continue to support our people to manage their workload in these difficult times, recognising that many of our colleagues may continue to need to care for family members or self-isolate as the COVID-19 outbreak carries on. Where they have the technology needed, our people will continue to work remotely for some time to come.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Our planning has been supported by strong risk management practices across our organisation. We maintain a corporate risk register to support the delivery of our strategic priorities and this is being refreshed and kept under regular review in light of the evolving COVID-19 situation and long-term impacts.

Historic Environment Scotland is the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment.

We are committed to ensuring this publication is accessible to everyone. If you need it supplied in a different format or language, please get in touch.



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