

**Consultation Event Report**

**Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Draft Corporate Plan**

**Stakeholder consultation event, held on 26 November 2015**

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Following the launch of the 12 week consultation on the HES Corporate Plan (“the Plan”) for 2016-19 a consultation event was held on 26 November at the Macdonald Holyrood Hotel. The event was organised by Holyrood on HES’s behalf and was attended by representatives of organisations in the historic environment sector.

1.2 The programme comprised a presentation by Jane Ryder, HES Chair, followed by group discussion in 5 tables focused on the 5 strategic themes of the Plan. The groups were each facilitated by a member of the HES Board of Trustees with HES staff in attendance as note takers. Discussion centred on the following questions: What do you like?; What do you not like?; Is there anything missing?; What could we [HES] do more/less of?

**2.0 What do you like?**

2.1 Overall there was a positive response to the draft plan. Stakeholders welcomed:

* the focus on demonstrating positive and collaborative leadership in championing Scotland’s historic environment;
* the emphasis on collaboration through the document;
* the preservation and maintenance of the functions that were traditionally performed by Historic Scotland and RCAHMS;
* the emphasis on promoting international reputation and profile; and
* the focus of on skills and traditional materials.

**3.0 What do you not like?**

3.1 There were a number of issues raised with the draft that can be summarised as follows:

* The **Vision** should include the words “safeguarded” or “protected” instead of *cherished*;
* Under **Values**, the definition of “respectful” is too inwardly focused and could be changed to “We acknowledge that what others have to say is important to us and valued by us”.
* The Plan could reflect greater integration of functions of Historic Scotland / RCAHMS than it currently does, particularly across the themes of UNDERSTAND and PROTECT;
* The Plan is too focused on Properties in Care (PiCs) and historic buildings and could, for example, include reference to the undesignated historic environment and designed landscapes;
* HES’s grant-giving function should be first referenced under LEAD as grants are about more than investment to meet conservation needs. There could also be a clearer articulation of HES’s funding priorities;
* Telling the story of Scotland should be a collective endeavour - together ‘we will tell the story of Scotland’;
* There is a KPI referring directly to HES staff being engaged in transformation but no reference to this in the objectives. The KPI relating to transformation should be subordinate to an overarching KPI about developing HES people, as the development and maintenance of skills and expertise is seen as a key issue for HES and the sector; and
* Some participants expressed concern at HES having become a charity, taking the view that HES must demonstrate that it is breaking new ground with its status by opening up new funding routes and not be competition with others in the sector for the same funds.

**4.0 What is missing?**

4.1 There were a number of things that were identified as either missing in the plan or considered to require further emphasis:

* The Plan could give more prominence to climate change as a priority and a challenge, and to what HES can and should do to lead on combating its effects. It could make a greater commitment to influencing the green agenda around sustainable sourcing and the use of local materials, as opposed to buying in materials from abroad. It could also include examples of work on climate change prevention;
* There is no reference to what HES should be doing in terms of supporting biodiversity.
* The Plan should recognise the impact of a shortfall or reduction in resources on the ability to deliver the Plan and Our Place in Time (OPiT), especially in terms of local authority resources;
* There could be more emphasis on the important roles of others including local authorities, professional bodies, community groups and private owners who own and/or look after most of the historic environment, including undesignated sites;
* In its leading and enabling role HES should be engaging with other policy areas on behalf of the historic environment;
* There could be more focus of addressing skills capacity issues in HES and the historic environment sector, including building capacity at the local level. It is also important to recognise that the expertise does not just reside in HES. HES will not always be able to provide the expertise and should state that it is willing to signpost the work of other experts, including at a local level;
* There is insufficient reference to undesignated historic environment and historic landscapes;

* HES should be showing more leadership in terms of digitisation, making available and sharing digital resources electronically. It is also important to promote the resources that are available elsewhere and to improve access to information across organisations;
* Under PROTECT it was suggested that there could be an earlier emphasis made on collaboration and that HES could aim to collaborate with others in the collecting material also;
* There could be greater reference to working locally in a collaborative way, engage with local groups and encourage local involvement. The implications of the Community Empowerment Bill in terms of resourcing has not been fully recognised at a local level and there is a question as to what HES will do to support the sector in this regard. There isn’t enough ambition around how the PICs could potentially be used differently to become the community focus (through investment some properties may be returned to a useful state);
* There needs to be more said about the input of the voluntary sector and consideration should be given to creating a KPI that specifically references the contribution of volunteers;
* There is no reference made to joint schemes or to joint promotion with other property owners and operators;
* There should be a fuller commitment to HES being a listening organisation;
* The relationship between the historic and natural environments could be further explored; and
* There should be reference to the SHED strategy as a collaborative project.

**5.0 What could we do more/less of?**

5.1 A variety of suggestions were made in response to this question, a number of which closely related to responses made to the other questions. The suggestions are summarised as follows:

* HES needs to invest in training and succession planning to ensure that expertise is not lost.It is also important to work together to maintain expertise across the sector;
* HES should look at how it transfers skills to communities to help them with the challenges of understanding, caring for and promoting their local historic places;
* There should be more investment in a national maintenance programme to support early intervention and therefore prevent a more significant investment requirement, or urgent intervention at too late a point;
* In acknowledging the challenges faced by HES (and others), there should there be a broader debate on the future of PICs, how they are managed etc., and how this may then influence the shape of conservation across the country;
* There are opportunities for closer collaboration in terms of marketing and promoting heritage assets across Scotland with e.g. joint ticketing with NTS or joint deals on membership benefits such as giving limited access for members to other organisations’ properties. HES should also explore opportunities with other organisations to work together regionally e.g. NTS, SNH etc.;
* HES should shift the national focus from the iconic sites to community based initiatives and work to better demonstrate how they contribute to the national outcomes. HES could also promote its leadership role in building local access partnerships;
* HES could support others in order to help applicants to apply for funding;
* HES should do more to promote domestic development of traditional; materials.
* Tie HES education programmes to the curriculum;
* HES should work to understand and embrace the needs of its customers and demonstrate how partners & stakeholders are of critical to successful delivery;
* HES should review how it shares information and charges for the services it provides. It could also look at alternatives to charging for copying archive items, e.g. sponsorship;
* HES could consider lower admission fees for domestic visitors to PICs than for foreign visitors;
* HES could work to provide the tools to help the historic environment sector do more to encourage people to become active citizens in supporting heritage and get people excited about their heritage; and
* Clarity around how to access all the services – this could include signposting to both internal and external services.

**6.0 Next steps and acknowledgements**

6.1 The content from the discussions will be fed into the drafting process.

6.2 The event was organised by Holyrood. Thanks go to everyone who participated in the workshop

Individuals from the following organisations participated in the discussions:

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust

ALGAO:UK

Archaeology Scotland

Architectural Heritage Fund

Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland

Architecture + Design Scotland

Argyll and Bute Council

Association of Preservation Trusts – Scottish Committee

Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland

Austin-Smith:Lord LLP

Built Environment Forum Scotland

Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists

Clackmannanshire Council

Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership

Dundee Historic Environment Trust

Edinburgh World Heritage

Europa Nostra UK

Glasgow Building Preservation Trust

Groves-Raines Architects

Heritage Lottery Fund

Historic Houses Association

Institute of Historic Building Conservation

National Galleries of Scotland

National Museums of Scotland

National Records of Scotland

National Trust for Scotland

New Lanark Trust

Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust

Registers of Scotland

Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland

Scotland’s Garden and Landscape Heritage

Scottish Churches Trust

Scottish Civic Trust

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency

Scottish Natural Heritage

Scottish Property Federation

Scottish Redundant Churches Trust

Scottish Tourism Alliance

Shetland Amenity Trust

Sorrell Associates

Stone Federation GB

The Law Society Scotland

VisitScotland