

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs
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Jane Ryder
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Dear Ms Ryder,

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND – LETTER OF GUIDANCE 2015-16

Ministerial Letter of Guidance to the Chair of Historic Environment Scotland

I am writing to you to set out the priorities I would wish to set for Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in the delivery of your functions to 31 March 2016.

I recognise the importance of setting out my expectations in anticipation of the launch of HES on 1 October and your adoption of the full range of powers contained in the Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014.

Since your appointment as Chair in January I have welcomed your commitment and that of your Board to the challenges involved in preparation for the establishment of a new public body.

In April, when I met with you and the Board in Alloa, I took the opportunity to outline my expectations of the Board. The Board have a critical role to play in helping to deliver the expectations of Ministers and the vision of *Our Place in Time*. You are uniquely placed to lead HES in creating strategies on how best to work with various players in the sector to achieve collaborative working and deliver the ambition of *Our Place in Time*. I know the Board have been meeting monthly and are actively involved in preparation for the full establishment of HES on 1 October. It will continue to be important for the Board to identify the excellent work in the current bodies while also implementing the required transformational change which is required to transition to HES. The Board should perform a strong challenge function when considering and scrutinising proposals before decisions are taken.

By focusing on outcomes and the related strategic objectives I set out below, I expect you to make decisions which will equip HES to be the lead body for our historic environment: a body which will lead by example in delivery of *Our Place in Time* and the Programme for Government.

This first year is one of transition from the existing organisations of Historic Scotland and RCAHMS to HES. Ministers and officials in the Scottish Government stand by to support you in this transitional period, and in this spirit, I would like to propose a meeting with you to discuss the issues you face and the approach you plan to take.

Vision for Heritage

As the new lead public body for Scotland's historic environment, I expect that HES will champion the Strategy and take a lead in its delivery. By aligning Corporate Plan objectives to those of the Strategy I am sure HES will be able to clearly demonstrate contribution and remain aware that HES will be seen as the standard setters for delivery.

For the first time, Scotland's historic environment has a common vision with the potential to deliver real benefits for the people of Scotland and the historic environment. In addition to welcoming you as a member of the Scottish Historic Environment Forum, I am sure that you will continue to strongly support the contribution that staff in HES will be making to the various working groups and to the Historic Environment Operational Group to pursue that vision and further develop common objectives and projects to meet collective priorities. In working collaboratively to deliver the objectives of *Our Place in Time*, HES has the opportunity to maximise its contribution. I recognise the challenge presented by this but welcome HES's objective to play a lead role.

I will expect HES to work with my officials to agree a metric to show what delivery of the organisation's contribution to *Our Place in Time* as set out in your Corporate Plan will look like, and to enable exception reporting through the balanced score card to track and report delivery of the various agreed objectives, aligned to the Measuring Success work being led by BEFS.

Programme for Government, Government Economic Strategy and HES role

1. A Strong, Sustainable Economy

Scotland's Economic Strategy sets out our ambition to boost productivity and create greater prosperity for all. These ambitions are underpinned by four priorities which I expect you to consider and align with when making decisions for HES:

- **Investing** in our people and our infrastructure in a sustainable way.
- Fostering a culture of **innovation** and research and development.
- Promoting Scotland on the **international** stage to boost our trade and investment, influence and networks.
- Promoting **inclusive growth** and creating opportunity through a fair and inclusive jobs market and regional cohesion.

HES are entrusted with responsibility for managing and running historic buildings and sites which are in the care of Ministers and of welcoming visitors from Scotland, the UK and tourists from around the world to sites across Scotland. We expect HES to provide excellent service to visitors, both international and local, and to strive to deliver great visitor experience. HES will engage with VisitScotland, Scottish Government and partners to promote Scotland as a tourist destination and grow the volume and value of heritage tourism.

HES will contribute to Ministers' priority to provide learning, skills and work opportunities for young people. I expect this to involve continued engagement with the wider sector when considering resourcing and building skills which will secure the future of our historic environment, a key aim of the Strategy. I look forward to visiting the Engine Shed and I am following the project as it progresses to provide a national conservation centre by summer 2016. This will aid delivery of the Traditional Skills Strategy which connects well with providing opportunities for learning and skills. HES should also work towards achieving the Investors in Young People gold standard and continue to engage with the education system to provide development opportunities for young people.

2. A Stronger and Fairer Scotland

The Strategy is the starting point for thinking about wellbeing and empowerment of communities. I expect HES to be closely involved in the joint national and local government working group which is considering these areas and to work to ensure that access to our historic environment and associated benefits are available to everyone across Scotland.

HES already have duties in relation to equalities and I will expect the new body to be able to demonstrate that it takes these duties seriously in all areas of its work, both internal and external facing.

I am pleased to note that HES has supported the commitment to work towards gender balance on boards by 2020 by becoming an early adopter to the 50/50 by 2020 agenda. The drive behind 50/50 by 2020 is to ensure that public boards are more representative of the communities and customers they serve, have better access to talent and have improved board governance, decision making and performance. I look forward to hearing about progress towards the goal of gender balance for the HES Board by 2020, with the support of the Scottish Government Public Appointments Unit.

3. Strengthening Our Communities

HES have diverse resources creating a dynamic presence and reach, both in terms of geographical locations and digital access. I would like to see HES engaging with communities even more effectively across the whole range of activities, to empower them to participate in and enjoy our historic environment. Place-making activity has the potential to impact across a broad spectrum of strategic agendas and could deliver benefits to individuals, communities and our nation by connecting people to place; instilling understanding and value of our historic environment.

HES should consider and take reasonable steps to pursue opportunities for partnership working with other bodies, including local authorities, wherever this can support the delivery of *Our Place in Time* and any other related business objectives. For example HES should participate, as appropriate, in Community Planning Partnerships.

Specific Operational Tasks

HES has an important role in World Heritage which will continue. HES will ensure that the Scottish Government's strategic policy is implemented, while developing operational policy and a corporate approach to the implementation of the Operational Guidelines and decisions by the World Heritage Committee. That should ensure that HES are able to provide advice, support and expertise to the Scottish Government and to stakeholders and partners including the World Heritage sites and trusts themselves. HES liaison with partners to deliver operational management of World Heritage sites is valuable and will need to continue alongside liaison with stakeholders and national and international heritage bodies. World Heritage is globally recognised and I would wish to see HES identify opportunities to raise awareness and promote Scotland's World Heritage to the widest audience.

I welcome HES's continued important role in ensuring the successful implementation of the Archaeology Strategy in close association with the delivery of the aims of *Our Place in Time* and in liaison with stakeholders.

HES will continue to work to update and conserve collections, both physical and digital, and make resources accessible to the public.

The Scottish Government, as sponsor, awarded funding separately to Historic Scotland and RCAHMS earlier this year. I am pleased to note that the Accountable Officers of HS and RCAHMS have been working together with you to move to a position of managing the funding available during the year as a single budget thereby enabling HES to take forward the delivery of its business from 1 October 2015.

In line with the Framework Document, I would encourage you to continue to look for innovative ways to continue to diversify and increase funding from other sources for the remainder of the year and continue to do so in future years.

Third-party grant funding levels are to be maintained at around £14.5 million per annum. The HES grants programmes provide essential support to projects across our historic environment. Just as Historic Scotland cannot award grants internally for works, HES must only award grant funds to external organisations for works in line with the assessment criteria and priorities of HES grants programmes. I will expect to receive revised and updated grant schemes for approval following a review of grants that I understand is under way this year.

HES should continue to reduce carbon emissions and I expect HES to prepare for the implementation of measures under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to improve the quality and consistency of reporting in line with the Climate Change Action Plan 2012-17 developed by Historic Scotland. HES should also ensure that evidence is captured of the wider contribution HES make to this agenda through advice to owners of historic buildings. The Strategic Historic Environment Forum has requested Historic Scotland to work in partnership with others to develop a strategic approach to tackling climate change as a priority; I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this work.

Specific Transitional Tasks

The scheme of delegation will set out in a transparent manner Scottish Ministers expectation in relation to how the properties in care and the associated collections will be managed and conserved. It will be published and require the publication by HES of a number of associated plans and policies covering how the scheme will operate. I am aware that these are still being developed but I expect to receive your proposals as to how the requirements of the scheme will be met prior to the implementation of the scheme on 1 October.

As Chair, alongside your Board colleagues, you will continue to support the transition from Historic Scotland and RCAHMS to HES and will ensure that HES is equipped to perform its functions and deliver the Strategy.

Corporate Expectations

In addition to annual reporting, HES will provide information to Ministers when required, this includes quarterly reporting of key corporate information, sharing Board papers in advance of meetings and provision of appropriate and timely advice and information on specific issues.

Part of the corporate challenge for HES is to demonstrate success. I look forward to considering the HES Corporate Plan which I expect to be attuned to the wider context of our Programme for Government and to demonstrate clearly how HES are helping to deliver national outcomes. To this effect the HES Corporate Plan objectives should be clear, specific and measurable, supporting and aligning with the wider measuring success activities of *Our Place in Time* which is being taken forward by BEFS.

You will know that the Government commissioned the Working Together Review to examine progressive workplace policies. HES should have regard to the report and the recommendation that public bodies should report publicly on their approach to industrial relations and its impact on workplace and workforce matters.

Public bodies are able to encourage the payment of a Living Wage to people involved in delivering public contracts. Statutory guidance for public bodies on how workforce-related matters, including the Living Wage, may be taken into account in public procurement processes will be published and I would expect HES to take account of this guidance.

Although not explicitly mentioned in the Programme for Government, I should take this opportunity to emphasise that we continue to expect every public body to deliver efficiency savings of at least 3% per annum during the course of the current Spending Review (2011-12 to 2015-16) and to report publicly on the actions undertaken and the results achieved.

You will know that Scotland's International Framework commits to showcasing our culture and heritage to strengthen our international relationships and to better share ideas and enhance cooperation. I will therefore expect HES to develop and maintain a strategic approach to the body's international activities to ensure that this engagement aligns as strongly as possible to and supports Scotland's International Policy Statement and internationalisation agenda.

Conclusion

I would like to reiterate my thanks for the work which has been carried out. I look forward to hearing your reports on the progress towards the strategic objectives which I have identified. I am copying this letter as below. This letter will be published on the Scottish Government website.

Kind regards
Fiona Hyslop

Fiona Hyslop

Copies:
Minister for Europe and International Engagement
Education and Culture Committee
Director of Culture, Europe and External Affairs
Deputy Director of Culture and Historic Environment Division