



HISTORIC
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ALBA

MINUTES OF HES BOARD MEETING

HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2024

LONGMORE HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Present:

Hugh Hall
Ian Brennan
Gemma Butterfield
Andrew Davis
Joe Doogan
Simon Hodge
Gary Jebb
Ann Leslie
Terry Levinthal
Anne-Marie O'Hara
Ian Robertson

Apologies:

Emma Herd

In attendance:

Craig Mearns, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Roger Curtis, Interim Director of Operations
Stephen Duncan, Director of Marketing and Engagement
Craig Marshall, Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Elizabeth McCrone, Director of Heritage
David Mitchell, Director of Cultural Assets
Lindsey Ross, People Director
Alison Turnbull, Director of External Relations and Partnership
CS, Head of Chief Executive's Office
ZB, Manager, Chief Executive's Office
DR, Head of Health, Safety and Security (part)
PB, Project Manager -NIP Team (part)
ET, Head of Policy, Strategy and Systems (part)
JL, Analytics Manager (part)

Introduction, Apologies, and Minute of the Last Meeting

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Emma Herd.

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2. Terry Levinthal declared a conflict of interest in the item on the Holyrood Park Strategy Plan Public Consultation given his employers involvement.
3. The minutes of the Board meeting held on 6 June 2024 were approved and the Action Tracker noted.
4. The Board acknowledged that, while statutory compliance is mentioned in the ARAC update, it should be addressed as a separate, standalone item at future meetings to ensure it is treated as an overarching Board issue.

Matters Arising

5. The Board homologated the Heritage Planning Performance Report which had been approved by Board members via circulation.

Chair's Update

6. The Chair informed the Board that a large amount of attention had been focussed on the recruitment process for the new CEO. This process was now complete and the incoming CEO, Katerina Brown, is due to start on 16 September.
7. The Board were updated on the current round of Board recruitment. The Chair reported that there had been a good response to the advertisement and interviews would take place in the beginning of September.
8. The Chair highlighted his recent visit to Ayrshire with Board Member Ian Robertson. The Chair was impressed in the level and quality of HES's involvement in the area, particularly in respect of community engagement and relationships, particularly at Dundonald. This was something that could be replicated in other areas.
9. The Chair and several Board Members attended a site visit to Radical Road in Holyrood Park, which was very helpful in understanding the challenges faced and the need to agree a Rock Risk Management Policy.
10. The Board were informed that a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary was now planned for 25 September.

Chief Executive's Report

11. The Chief Executive highlighted a range of items, which supplemented his written report:
 - a. The CEO informed the Board that ELT had been focussed and working on their agreed priorities. Progress was being made and highlighted in the CEO Report.
 - b. The Board's attention was drawn to the recent announcement by the Scottish Government on the recruitment freeze and travel ban. HES did not receive any instructions or direction from Government on this issue, however we would keep under review.

- c. In relation to the Business Model, an early meeting was being sought with Scottish Government to discuss and finalise any remaining issues, including Grant in Aid. Discussions would also be linked to Pay & Grading which is due to go before the Remuneration Group in September.
- d. One of the ELT's identified priorities was Edinburgh Castle investment. The CEO reported that a productive meeting had already taken place with the main castle stakeholders and there is appetite to discuss further how more effective use could be made of the footprint and the estate. A further meeting will be held in October. It was agreed that the Edinburgh Castle Masterplan would be added to the next Board agenda.

ACTION: Chief Executive's Office

- e. The forthcoming Board visit to Dumfries and Galloway was highlighted. It was agreed that CE Office would circulate the draft agenda.
 - f. The CEO reported that a plan regarding Radical Road will be shared with the Board in due course.
12. In addition to the items raised in the report, the CEO also addressed several questions regarding the Castle Stakeholders' Group discussion and Retrolab.
13. The CEO thanked the Chair, ELT and Board Members for their help and support during his period of Interim CEO.
14. On behalf of the Board, the Chair acknowledged and thanked the CEO for all his hard work and for agreeing to step in to provide cover until the substantive CEO appointment was made.

Corporate Performance

15. Craig Marshall introduced the paper and provided background and context to the risks highlighted.
16. In relation to the risk against the International Strategy, Alison Turnbull clarified that 'at risk' was not an actual risk as such but a marker for the Executive to keep under review. She stressed that there was a distinction to be made between international work and alignment with Scottish Government targets. She further informed the Board that the action plan had been refreshed and that HES was actively working with other organisation operating in this space and had productive meetings with the National Library of Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland.
17. The Board expressed an interest in the outcome in respect of grants. Members recognised that HES made a positive local economic impact and there should be stronger recognition of what HES grants achieve. Board Members would find it helpful if they could get a snapshot of each local area that they could draw on if needed.

18. It was agreed that it would be helpful if the latest Board Paper on grants could be recirculated to the Board as this provided useful analysis. Consideration should also be given to providing Board Members with a 'deep dive' session on grants.

ACTION: Chief Executive's Office

ACTION: Director of External Relations and Partnerships

19. The Board queried the rationale behind the revised visitor experience target. It was explained that the target had been realigned to be more realistic with appropriate plans and investment to maintain and achieve revised targets in place. The aim is to achieve a stretch target next year, and work needs to be done to identify the necessary steps to reach that goal.

20. The Board looked for reassurances that Archive House remained a priority and that staff had been kept informed of developments. This was confirmed to the Board.

Financial Statement

21. Craig Marshall outlined the main highlights contained in the statement. He noted a strong commercial performance, including the achievement of the stretch target. While there were still budgetary pressures related to staffing costs, the remainder of the budget was broadly in line with projections.

22. Going forward, it was expected that the Business Model, once approved would have a positive impact on the position.

23. The annual accounts were currently undergoing the usual clearance process and would come before the Board for sign-off in due course.

24. The Financial Statement was approved by the Board.

Head of Health, Safety and Security joined the meeting.

Safety, Physical Security and Well Being Annual Report

25. The new Head of Health, Safety and Physical Security introduced the report. He reported that health and safety culture within HES was very much evident. HES demonstrated a good approach to risk assessment and a strong appetite for reporting risk. He assesses that staff had the confidence to report issues and that action would be taken. The approach to HLM was exemplary and he had found good evidence of inspections taking place and regional meetings happening.

26. It was noted that improvements can be made around governance, reporting and ensuring documents and guidance are up to date and reviewed regularly.

27. The Board queried the increase in the number of reported accidents and sought to understand the reasons behind it. Several factors were identified,

including the rise in visitor numbers and more accurate reporting. As the systems become more embedded, more detailed and precise information will become available, aiding in the identification of trends and other insights.

28. The Board acknowledged that traditional candles are used in some properties, which poses a risk. They have requested an update on the current situation regarding the use of candles, including any measures being taken to mitigate associated risks and ensure safety.

ACTION: People Director

29. The Board noted the report and were content with assurances received.

Head of Health, Safety and Security left, and Project Manager – NIP Team joined the meeting.

Update on Holyrood Park Strategic Plan Public Consultation

30. Alison Turnbull introduced the paper and thanked Board Members Anne-Marie O'Hara and Simon Hodge for their help and input.

31. The vast majority of responses to the consultation had expressed how highly the park was regarded and how treasured it was. There was a strong thread that the majority wanted it to remain as it is.

32. HES had been proactive in its approach and had worked to develop relationships with key stakeholders. HES would look to strengthen and develop these relationships during the next steps.

33. The main issues identified were climate change and traffic management.

34. The Board welcomed the approach taken by HES in developing the plan and recognised its potential for future development of the park. The plan also provided a good basis when considering HES approach to potential funders.

35. It was noted that the strategy would be published later in the year.

36. The Board were interested to hear of potential uses for the park, including those that could generate additional income. They suggested that by learning from similar organisations, such as The Royal Parks, HES could gain insights into common challenges and effective solutions. It was noted that although there were a number of monuments and historic sites within the park, these did not necessarily prevent future opportunities.

37. The Board understood the potential impact of City of Edinburgh Council Traffic Management Plans. It was agreed that further discussions with City of Edinburgh Council should be encouraged and noted that the next meeting will be held on 26 August.

ACTION: Director of External Relations and Partnerships

38. The Board noted the update.

Project Manager – NIP Team left, Head of Policy, Strategy and Systems and Analytics Manager joined the meeting.

Properties in Care Strategy

39. The Board received an update on the progress of the development of the Properties in Care (PIC) Strategy, including the staff resources committed to developing and taking it forward. A period of time is now required to work through information gathering and modelling. Engagement was going well and had been productive.
40. The Board received an overview of investment trends and identified needs over 5- and 10-year periods. It was noted that, on the current trajectory, the required investment levels would be unachievable.
41. A number of case studies were presented, highlighting the current position and the impact PICs can have on local communities and economies. There are opportunities to explore new and additional uses for PICs, including education centres, hospitality venues, and event spaces.
42. The Board requested a broader strategic analysis of the portfolio, showing the number and condition of Properties in Care (PICs). This analysis would support informed decision-making regarding future priorities and the resources needed for preservation. It was also noted that a clear narrative and background information would be necessary to explain the approach to managing the portfolio. The balance between having evidence to support decision making versus pace of progress had to be considered.

ACTION: Director of Cultural Assets

43. It was agreed that additional funding would be needed to achieve the kind of options presented in the case studies. It was possible that ancillary properties could be addressed through a commercial approach.
44. The Board were interested in the idea of undertaking the development of one property and using this as an exemplar to generate interest.
45. The Board expressed a desire to discuss this further when a paper is presented for approval, which should include suggestions for how to approach these decisions.

Head of Policy, Strategy and Systems and Analytics Manager left the meeting.

Corporate Plan

46. Alison Turnbull introduced the plan and thanked Board Members Ann Leslie and Ian Brennan for their help and input.
47. HES is required to produce and have a corporate plan in place by 1 April 2025. Previous Board and ELT comments had been taken into account and the proposal was to develop a shorter, more focused plan with meaningful

measures. The consultation phase indicates that the original title 'Heritage for All' remains preferred.

48. The challenge was to achieve the balance between realism and ambition. There was a strong emphasis that colleagues wanted to see their work reflected in the plan.

49. Based on comments and inputs, the plan was now in the process of being drafted. Going forward there would be a 'deep dive' with the new CEO and thereafter with Board Members Ann Leslie and Ian Brennan.

50. The Board endorsed the proposed approach.

Committee Updates

51. ARAC

- Ian Brennan, Chair of ARAC, reported that the HESe accounts have been reviewed by ARAC with no issues highlighted. As part of the risk management process, six new risks have been identified. Additionally, a lessons learned report will be created upon the completion of the high-level masonry project. The internal audit on the PMO indicated overall satisfaction with its performance.

52. Finance Committee

- Andrew Davis, Chair of the Finance Committee, updated the Board on the status of ongoing projects, highlighting two that are facing significant challenges mainly due to resource constraints. The Chair emphasised the need to refine the processes for determining which projects should be submitted for approval through the Finance Committee and which should be managed through the PMO, requiring further evaluation to optimise project oversight and prioritisation.

53. People Committee

- Lindsey Ross, People Director, provided the Board with an update on Strategic Workforce Planning on behalf of the Chair of the People Committee.

54. Heritage Assets Committee

- Terry Levinthal, Chair of the Heritage Assets Committee, updated the Board on the latest meeting, including issues around collections at Stanley Mill and Dallas Dhu. The Chair highlighted the importance of making informed decisions regarding collections in the near future, specifically concerning facilities and investments.

55. HESe Board

- Ian Robertson, Chair of the HESe Board gave an update on the previous day's meeting, praised the papers presented and suggested sharing some of them with the Board. They also noted that, while HESe are in a position to repay more of the commercial loan than initially planned, this is contingent upon the organisation's needs.

Meeting closed.