

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

REVIEW OF HISTORIC SCOTLAND – *Second Submission*

1. The purpose of this paper is to finalise the submission from the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland in response to the consultation paper on the Review of Historic Scotland.
2. Paragraph 5.11 of HEACS' first submission stated that HEACS 'reserves its final position on the crucial issue of the continuation of Executive Agency status or transition to Non-Departmental Public Body status until it has the opportunity to discuss the matter at full Council...' This paper sets out the conclusions reached by Council on this matter at its meeting on 7 October 2003 in St Andrews.
3. Council was unanimous in its view that the status quo is not an option, and that significant and substantial change is needed, both within Historic Scotland and in other parts of the sector. Council gave careful consideration to the potential gains and losses which would result from a shift to NDPB status, and in particular to the value of the central presence within Government of Historic Scotland as an Executive Agency balanced against the ability of an NDPB to exercise a critical role from outside the central core of Government operations. The question of who would speak for the Historic Environment within the core of central Government at all levels if Historic Scotland were outside the core was seen as of great importance, given the absence of a DCMS equivalent in Scotland.
4. Council came to the view that in strategic terms a change from Executive Agency status at this time would be a move into unknown territory with potential inherent and unforeseen dangers, and that the capacity of Historic Scotland to carry out its role could meantime be adversely affected. Council favoured a more incremental approach based on planned and measurable changes. In coming to this view, it stressed the importance of introducing a programme of changes in management, in internal culture and in working practices as identified in the original submission from HEACS, setting appropriate targets for achievement, and ensuring regular review and reporting.
5. Council noted and shared the widely expressed concern at the lack of leadership on the Historic Environment, and that Historic Scotland needed a more visionary outlook, matched by changes in its internal culture. An expanded Board will be essential to achieve this. Clear and consistent leadership from Parliament and from Ministers is also key.
6. Council was very clear that the changes within Historic Scotland need to be part of a wider strategy to strengthen the infrastructure for the Historic Environment at national and local levels, and that its recommendations on closer working with CoSLA and local Government, and on capacity building in the voluntary sector must be a priority.

7. HEACS therefore recommends that in order to best ensure the continuing protection and promotion of the Historic Environment
 - Historic Scotland should continue as an Executive Agency.
 - A number of significant and measurable changes must nevertheless be introduced to transform the performance, profile and accountability of Historic Scotland.
 - Implementation of the changes should be monitored and reviewed.
 - Development of the wider infrastructure at local and national levels is of equal importance and must be seen as an urgent priority.
 - A further quinquennial review should be conducted at the due date.
8. Council fully endorsed the First Submission and its recommendations.
9. HEACS will be pleased to provide further comment and advice on the strategies for implementing the necessary changes.

HEACS,
October 2003