

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

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Scottish Executive
Area 2G(S)
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Dear Ms Ronald

AGE AND EXPERIENCE: DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY FOR A SCOTLAND WITH AN AGEING POPULATION

I am pleased to submit this brief response to the consultation on the development of a strategy for a Scotland with an Ageing Population, on behalf of the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (HEACS). HEACS is an advisory NDPB, charged with providing independent strategic advice to Scottish Ministers on matters related to the historic environment.

HEACS welcomes the Executive's initiative to develop this Strategy, and is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the consultation.

1. Older people are, and will continue to be, an important constituency for organisations and agencies working in the field of the historic environment.
 - They are strongly represented among the thousands of volunteers who give their time to helping to protect, promote and interpret the historic environment. They work in management committees; act as guides; help in the practical tasks of conservation and maintenance of sites, buildings, gardens and landscapes; staff shops and cafes; and are actively engaged in archaeological digs and surveys and in local heritage centres. Many are also effective advocates for the protection and preservation of historic buildings and sites.
 - Many organisations in this field could not function without the contribution of older volunteers. An increase in the older population is therefore a good potential resource for the sector, and should be seen and welcomed as such. This is particularly the case when we recognise that the new generations of older people are better educated, better informed, enjoy better health and stay active for longer than previous generations. The historic environment sector is uniquely well placed to benefit from this significant new resource by

continuing to create interesting and meaningful opportunities for engagement.

- It is worth noting that this area of volunteer activity offers many good examples of inter-generational volunteering, older and younger people working alongside each other as part of a team.
- Older people are also strongly represented among the visitors to historic buildings and sites, thus helping to keep them open and viable. Some are also, as volunteers, acting as escorts and/or drivers to enable others to visit.
- It should not be forgotten that older people represent a 'living memory' of places, place names, characters, customs, events and localities, a vital connection between the past and the present.
- Older people can also be a resource in terms of preserving and handing on older craft skills which are of particular importance and relevance to the historic environment, and are at risk of being lost.
- This active engagement of older people in the historic environment contributes to a range of government policies and priorities, on the historic environment, on volunteering and civic engagement, on life-long learning and active ageing. It can be a strong factor in helping older people to stay healthy and active, thus helping to reduce the burden on health and caring services.

2. HEACS notes the implications of an ageing population for all aspects of planning. It is essential that the work on the new Planning Bill takes this fully into account, and that planning authorities factor it in at all stages.

3. Similarly, the shifting balance in the population will have an impact on the design of towns, cities, houses, furniture and equipment. This should be seen as an opportunity for imaginative new approaches, especially as it is recognised that the new generations of older people are generally better educated, better informed and more affluent than previous generations.

4. It is possible that the shifting age balance may also be a factor in the regeneration of the 'high street', in that a functional and functioning high street is likely to be of more importance to older people. In turn, this points to the need for accessible accommodation, close to the High Street and within reach of facilities.

The information requested in section 4 of the proforma is attached.

Yours sincerely

Liz Burns
Chair