

HEACS

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
ADVISORY COUNCIL
for SCOTLAND

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Linda Fabiani MSP
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The Scottish Government
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11 April 2008

Dear Ms Fabiani

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

I write further to our meeting with you on 5 February to discuss the Government's decision to abolish all advisory bodies during the course of this Parliament, including the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (HEACS).

At that meeting you asked HEACS to complete its current work programme. As you know, however, members were concerned about the potential impact of the decision on Council's ability to carry out its work.

At its meeting on 14 March, members reaffirmed their commitment to the important topics on which Scottish Ministers have requested Council's advice. I am therefore writing now to tell you that, after careful consideration, Council has agreed to continue its work programme as you requested. We expect to submit the final four reports to you by the end of December 2008. This is a challenging timetable, but we see it as of considerable importance that Council receives Ministerial responses to the final four reports while it continues in being. We would therefore welcome your assurance that considered responses to the reports will be received before the end of May 2009.

In reaching this decision to continue, we have taken into account that members' or staff circumstances may change and that the programme and methods of working may have to be revised accordingly. In this respect Council is grateful to Historic Scotland for increasing its budget in 2008/9 and looks to you to ensure that it continues to receive all the support it needs to complete its work programme.

During 2008 Council will continue to hold meetings around the country and meet local people active in the historic environment (in Inverness, Edinburgh and Perth). Council will undertake a Study Tour of Caithness in June to inform work on the four core topics, and will hold a Public Meeting in Edinburgh in September. The Annual Report for 2007-2008 will be laid before Parliament prior to the Public Meeting.

Council has also decided to hold a final conference in May 2009. The purpose of this closing event will be to encourage discussion of the results of Council's work by the wider historic environment sector, and to encourage others to look forward by inviting key bodies to showcase their own work and outline their vision for the future. HEACS' closing Annual Report will also be presented at the conference. We would be grateful if you would consider attending this conference, which will take place in Edinburgh on either 20 or 27 May 2009.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Elizabeth Burns CMG OBE
Chair

cc. John Graham, Chief Executive, Historic Scotland