

Historic Environment Scotland launches first public consultation



If you want to know what is going to happen in the future you should always look at the history, according to historians.

Today, Scotland's new lead heritage body Historic Environment Scotland (HES) launches its first public [consultation](#) on a draft Corporate Plan, which outlines the organisation's approach to safeguarding some of the country's most precious assets over the next three years.

The new organisation – which came into existence on the 1st October- has brought together two of Scotland's leading heritage bodies, Historic Scotland and The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments Scotland (RCAHMS) to create a new organisation at the heart of a sector which contributes £2.3 billion annually to Scotland's GVA and helps to support over 60,000 jobs.

Historic Environment Scotland has over 300 properties in its care ranging from Edinburgh Castle, to hidden gems up and down the country, as well as extensive archives and collections. Its employees have skills ranging from conservation to aerial surveying, allowing the new body to play a key role in helping to deliver Scotland's first strategy for the Historic Environment, 'Our Place in Time'.

A key aim of the new body, and the strategy, is to work in collaboration with others to engage individuals and groups from volunteers to communities across Scotland, to enhance the cultural, social and economic benefits of Scotland's heritage.

Commenting on the launch of the consultation, Jane Ryder, OBE, Chair of Historic Environment Scotland, said: “The historic environment is a living, breathing part of the fabric of Scotland, and as Scotland’s new lead public heritage body Historic Environment Scotland touches people’s lives in many different ways whether you are one of more than the 3 million annual visitors to an HES attraction or one of the 60,000 people who work in the sector.

“Historic Environment Scotland also makes a tangible difference to communities up and down the country in other ways from initiatives such as our Building Repair Grants scheme which sees us work with partners to help bring a sustainable use to redundant buildings, to projects such as Scotland’s Urban Past which is encouraging people to share, record and celebrate the heritage on their doorstep.

“These are just some of the great foundations we can build on and through our draft corporate plan we have set out the vision, mission, values and strategic objectives of the new body which places a key emphasis on working in collaboration to help to enable and empower people to play a greater role in Scotland’s historic environment. Our historic environment is not owned by one group or organisation but by the people of Scotland, and a critically important reflection of this is creating a dialogue with people and up and down the country to help inform our approach.

“Our vision is that Scotland’s heritage is cherished, understood, shared and enjoyed by everyone. We want to work collaboratively in constructive and creative ways to grow our knowledge and understanding of our historic environment as well as encouraging wider engagement, participation in, and enjoyment of the historic environment, including those who may have never engaged with the sector before. By doing so we will make Scotland a better place to live, work, invest, and visit – protecting and celebrating our past whilst shaping our future. We look forward to receiving views over the coming

weeks and months.”

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary, for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, said: “The historic environment lies at the heart of our cultural identity and plays a key role in defining who we are and our place in the world.

“As well as being central to telling the story of our nation, the historic environment already helps to support more than 60,000 jobs, contributes well over £2 billion a year to Scotland’s economy, and contributes to the wellbeing of our communities.

“Scotland’s heritage belongs to everyone, and this consultation gives people all over the country a chance to shape how our new heritage body, Historic Environment Scotland, will work over the next three years.”

The consultation launches today and will run until week commencing 8 February 2016. To be part of the future of how we tell Scotland’s story, please visit www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/hesconsult or join in the conversation on twitter by tweeting them at @histenvscot and using the hashtag #HESstory.