



33 Barony Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6NX
Tel: 0131 556 5353 Fax: 0131 556 3306
Email: info@befs.org.uk Website: www.befs.org.uk

Supporting the Voluntary Sector Consultation
Investment & Projects Team
Historic Scotland
Room 2.6
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh, EH9 1SH

By email and post

29th September 2006

Dear Sirs

Historic Scotland's Support for the Voluntary Sector – Consultation

Introduction

Thank you for consulting Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) on the above consultation. BEFS is a forum that brings together 25 non-governmental organisations – both professional and voluntary – that work within the built environment sector. A unique aspect about the membership is that it includes both voluntary sector organisations and professional institutes. In addition, BEFS aims to bring together in one forum representative organisations from both the contemporary and historic built environment sectors. The purpose of BEFS is to raise awareness of policy issues within the sector, encourage debate and share information, with a view to influencing policy and legislation.

In response to the consultation document, BEFS arranged a workshop which was attended by members of BEFS, along with individuals from stakeholder organisations with an interest in the consultation¹. This response should be read in conjunction with the workshop report which is enclosed and can be viewed on the BEFS website at www.befs.org.uk/latest. This response also represents the views of the undersigned members of BEFS.

Level of funding support to the voluntary sector and scope of proposals

Initial comment on the overall level of funding invested in voluntary sector organisations involved in the historic environment is necessary. The consultation document quotes a figure of £1.6M as being invested in the sector each year through the provision of support for voluntary organisations and various initiatives, the two mentioned being the Buildings at Risk Register and Doors Open Day – both of which are run by a voluntary organisation. This figure does not clearly relate to the information given in the Annual Accounts 2005:06, where the funding of voluntary bodies is given as £450, 637. The accounts refer to other organisational funding, such as funds directed towards the National Trust for Scotland, the Architectural Heritage Fund and the City Heritage Trusts, which

will cover building repair work as well as running costs. It is understood that some of this funding is included in the £1.6M but it is not exactly clear what the figure does and does not cover; and accordingly there is some confusion over the scope and application of the proposals contained within the document. Greater clarity is required on the scope of the proposals ie to which funding streams they would apply.

In considering the overall level of funding going into the historic environment sector, the response to question 6 is worth highlighting at this point. Question 6 looks at Historic Scotland's role in supporting local organisations. Providing support to organisations at this level would require considerable additional funding to that which is already available to Historic Scotland for distribution within the historic environment voluntary sector. Funding of local organisations should not be at the expense of national bodies as this would significantly undermine the corporate objective 'To build capacity in the voluntary historic environment sector'.

Question 1: Are there other roles played by the voluntary sector that have not been identified here but which are significant in the protection and conservation of the historic environment?

There are many other roles that the historic environment voluntary sector plays that the document should recognise. These cover:

- Developing knowledge and skills
- Providing technical advice on particular cases
- Education and research
- Developing understanding, enabling participation and enjoyment
- Providing access to the historic environment
- Encouraging networking
- The regeneration work carried out by Building Preservation Trusts
- Providing support to other organisations
- Records management/archiving
- Activity in relation to cultural landscapes

Question 2: Are these objectives for Historic Scotland's investment in the voluntary sector appropriate?

Records management and information should be covered under the listed objectives. Clarification is sought on the possible weighting of objectives in determining investment in the sector; in workshop discussion some felt that the objectives carry equal weight, while others felt that objective 1 (To care for, protect and enhance the historic environment) should have overriding priority.

Question 3: What are your views on providing funding on a FCR basis and making offers covering a maximum period of 3 years?

Full Cost Recovery (FCR): the principle of FCR is welcomed as it will encourage focus on an organisation's outcomes, improve forward planning, should increase transparency in funding arrangements and should strengthen a sense of collaborative working between the Scottish Executive and the historic environment voluntary sector.

There is however concern over the proposed implementation of FCR, the transition to this new regime, and how reporting systems will change. Further information on the detail of implementation as it becomes available, along with guidance, would be very welcome. There has been concern

expressed over the proposed timescale for implementing this new regime, however it is now understood that Historic Scotland has confirmed that 2007-08 will be treated as a transitional year. This is a positive response to the concerns expressed which is welcomed.

Proposed 3-year funding: The proposal is an improvement on current practice and is therefore welcomed, because it should help to reduce funding instability. The funding of ongoing work, and how this would be accommodated under a 3-year funding regime, is questioned. Further information on this would be appreciated.

Question 4: What are your views on the potential to merge organisations or share common services?

In order to respond effectively to the issues raised at 6.2 in the consultation document, organisations would welcome greater clarity on what Historic Scotland envisages for the sector in terms of providing support for joint working *at different levels*. Many organisations do already work in partnership on particular projects on an 'as needs' basis. This is a positive and flexible way of sharing expertise and skills. In terms of sharing common services, it is recognised that benefits certainly arise from sharing certain services such as space and equipment. However the merging of organisations at a more fundamental level brings into this proposal the merging of objectives and aspirations and considerable concern is expressed in this regard. A focus on combining outputs and outcomes through partnership working and strengthening networks is seen as a more realistic proposal, which builds on the strengths of existing organisations.

Question 5: Should Historic Scotland ensure that funding of gaps in the infrastructure of the historic environment is plugged?

In a similar vein, it is felt that the funding of gaps in the infrastructure of the historic environment should be directed towards existing organisations that could develop their activities to cover such gaps. Historic Scotland should seek to increase its own funds in order to fill gaps in provision.

Question 6: Should Historic Scotland support local projects and if so, how and what should be the priorities?

Support at the local level is appropriate, however this should not be at the expense of funding the more strategic operations of national bodies. The funding of local organisations would need to be assessed and justified in terms of how effectively this would build capacity within the sector. It is noted that many local projects can be packaged as national projects, and that national bodies already deliver local initiatives. Continued support to these bodies, where existing structures are already in place, would be a more effective way of retaining and building on existing capacity. In addition, it is noted that according to the compact between the Scottish Executive and the Voluntary Sector, support to national bodies does tend to come from the Executive while funding for the delivery of local projects tends to come from a variety of other sources.

Question 7: How might Historic Scotland provide additional support to the Building Preservation Trusts movement?

Due to the lengthy nature of project planning and lead in, Building Preservation Trusts currently can work at risk for years. Additional support to cover ongoing project management costs is needed, as project management grants currently do not cover the full cost. Such additional support would be

welcomed. Clawback of grant from projects where a surplus is made also works against BPTs' ability to build up reserves, or revolving funds, to invest in future feasibility and project development work.

Question 8: How should Historic Scotland support Building Preservation Trusts in tackling the Buildings at Risk Register?

The tackling of projects on the Buildings at Risk Register requires collaborative involvement by owners, BPTs and local authorities. More support to local authorities is required to enable them to use the Compulsory Purchase Powers and enforcement options that are available to them. This would help guard against ongoing deterioration of buildings on the Register. An emergency works grant scheme could also be valuable. It must be noted that the Buildings at Risk Register is by no means complete, and development of the dataset presents a key opportunity in improving knowledge of the state of the historic environment.

Question 9: What are your views on these proposals for deciding grant awards?

The proposals are welcomed – in particular the earlier timeframe for decision-making on grant awards, and opportunities for developing more collaborative relationships with Historic Scotland. It is understood that there will be greater flexibility in managing outputs within a 3-year funding timeframe, which is very positive. On a cautionary note, the style and ease of reporting should not become overly burdensome for very small organisations.

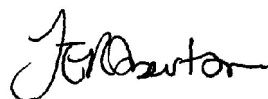
It should be noted that there is some confusion over the particular grants that this consultation document is addressing – clarification on this would be appreciated.

Question 10: What are your views on these proposals for deciding grant awards from the sponsorship fund?

Greater transparency in the operation of this fund would be welcomed, with policies in place to assist and explain application and decision-making processes.

I hope these comments are useful – if you have any questions please get in touch. I would be grateful if you could keep me informed of the outcome of the consultation process.

Yours sincerely



Jo Robertson
Forum Co-ordinator
Built Environment Forum Scotland

Enc: Workshop Report
Respondent Information Form

ⁱ The workshop was attended by representatives from the following organisations:

Architectural Heritage Fund; Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland; Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers – Scotland; Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland; Association of Preservation Trusts – Scottish Committee; Buildings of Scotland Trust; Built Environment Forum Scotland; Council for Scottish Archaeology; Edinburgh World Heritage; Garden History Society in Scotland; Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland; National Trust for Scotland; SCAPE Trust; Scottish Civic Trust; Scottish Lime Centre Trust; Scottish Redundant Churches Trust; Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in Scotland.

This response also represents the views of the following members of BEFS: Garden History Society in Scotland; Historic Houses Association for Scotland; Scottish Civic Trust; Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.