The Education and Culture Committee has launched a call for written evidence on the Historic Environment Scotland Bill, a Scottish Government Bill that was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 3 March 2014.

The purpose of the Bill is to establish a new lead body for Scotland’s historic environment, to be known as Historic Environment Scotland.

According to the Bill’s policy memorandum, the policy ambition of the Bill is—

“for a more outcome-focused, resilient, efficient and effective service in support of the historic environment and the people of Scotland, and for Historic Environment Scotland to be enabled to deliver on a range of National Outcomes.”

For further information on the Bill and its accompanying documents, please see the Historic Environment Scotland Bill page:
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/73219.aspx

The Scottish Government has also published an overarching strategy for Scotland’s historic environment alongside the Bill. The strategy is available via this link: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/Historic-environment/Strategy

The Education and Culture Committee is expected to be designated the lead committee at Stage 1 of the parliamentary process, which means that it must report to the Parliament on the Bill’s general principles. The report may also comment on the strategy.

To inform the Committee’s report, we would welcome your views on some or all of the following questions by 22 April 2014—

1. How will the creation of Historic Environment Scotland help to improve the overall management and promotion of Scotland’s historic environment? Will it help to make Scotland’s historic environment more attractive to communities, families and tourists?

2. Are the functions proposed for Historic Environment Scotland the correct ones or are there any omissions? Are the outcomes expected of the new body ambitious enough or could they be strengthened?

3. Does the Bill establish a clear and appropriate relationship between Historic Environment Scotland and all other public and private bodies with an interest in Scotland’s historic environment?

4. In what ways will the Bill help you/ your organisation to better manage and promote Scotland’s historic environment?

5. Are there any areas of the Bill that you consider could be strengthened or improved?

6. Do you consider that the Bill’s Policy Memorandum adequately sets out: the Bill’s policy objectives; whether alternative ways of meeting the objectives were considered; the consultation undertaken on the objectives; the Bill’s effects on equal
opportunities, human rights, island communities, local government and sustainable development?

7. The Scottish Government’s newly published historic environment strategy also seeks to improve enjoyment and understanding of Scotland’s historic environment. The Committee does not wish to repeat the extensive consultation undertaken on the strategy, but would welcome your views on whether it and the Bill together:

- establish clearly who is responsible and accountable for delivering the strategy;
- will involve appropriately all those public and private bodies with a role in improving the historic environment;
- lead to demonstrably better access to, and enjoyment and management of, the historic environment.

Please also add any further comments that you consider would assist the Committee’s scrutiny of the Bill, including on more specific areas such as:

- the possible benefits and disadvantages of Historic Environment Scotland being granted charitable status;
- the implications for staff in Historic Scotland and RCAHMS of the creation of Historic Environment Scotland;
- whether the Bill will improve existing policy and practice in relation to grants and loans; scheduled monuments; and listed buildings.

Oral evidence

The Committee expects to take oral evidence on the Bill in April and May, and to report to the Parliament in June. It would be helpful if your response could indicate whether you would like to provide oral evidence to the Committee. Please note, however, that there is no guarantee that such a request will be met by the Committee.

How to submit written evidence

Written evidence must be submitted by no later than 22 April 2014.

Before making a submission, please read the Parliament’s policy on treatment of written evidence by subject and mandatory committees.

Where possible, written submissions should be submitted electronically to: ec.committee@scottish.parliament.uk

The Committee particularly welcomes clear and concise submissions that avoid using jargon where at all possible. Where the submission refers to existing published material, it is preferable to provide hyperlinks or full citations (rather than including extensive extracts). The Committee welcomes written evidence in English, Gaelic or any other language.

Hard copy written submissions should be sent to: Education and Culture Committee, Room T3.40, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP.

You can contact the Clerk to the Committee on 0131 348 5222.