Dear Mark

Thank you for your e-mail following the Committee session on 3 September. I am now providing additional information on the two points requested.

1. Funding

An announcement of additional funding to Historic Environment Scotland (HES) was made by Scottish Government on 28 August 2020. This funding contributes to addressing the significant impact on the HES budget, which I outlined to the Committee on 3 September, due to the impact of COVID-19 and in particular the impact on our commercial income as a consequence of the reduction in visitor numbers to HES sites.

The funding announced amounted to £27.2m, split into two distinct components. £21.3m will support the continued delivery of the range of HES functions, staff costs and operational expenditure incurred on reopening and running the properties in care. In providing financial support to HES there will be a follow through benefit to many suppliers and small and medium sized enterprises (SME’s) with whom we work.

The second component of £5.9m is specifically to support our grants programmes through which we provide funding to organisations and to historic environment projects across the country. The funding will ensure we can deliver our existing grants commitments of £11.9m this financial year. All of this sum will be disbursed to third-party organisations.

2. Black Lives Matter and the Legacies of Slavery

In my comments at the Committee session I mentioned a new project which HES is embarking on in partnership with Edinburgh University and the Coalition for Race Equality and Rights. I have sought to provide some further information on this below.
The partnership is a two-year project (June 2020 – June 2022) fully funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Working with researchers, public bodies, third sector partners, and broader communities (both within and out with Scotland) the aim of the project is to explore how we can better include the legacies of Empire and in particular, the Trans-Atlantic slave economy within the interpretation and management of, and policies on, Scotland’s built environment. The project will enable HES and our partners to begin this exploration and given the emerging work of others including museums and galleries, there will be opportunities for collaboration both during and beyond the life of the project.

The project will provide space for contributions for local, national and international heritage researchers and academics as well as Black and Minority communities to contribute to our collective understanding on issues including:

- The geographic range, and architectural scope of the impact of the trans-Atlantic slave economy on shaping Scotland’s built environment in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- How widely the legacies of Empire are known, and engaged with, in Scotland.
- How to better include discussions on the Trans-Atlantic slave economy and Empire within conversations on our built environment and how to ensure the creation of space and platforms for BAME communities in Scotland to lead on these narratives.
- Where and how policies and management of the historic built environment can support and enhance the above (taking reference from organisations outside of Scotland who have already engaged with these questions in their own countries.)

HES’s contribution to the project was assisted by a scoping exercise carried out in 2019 by Dr Stephen Mullen which covered the identification of properties in care that might be included in the research. The identification of properties will provide for the involvement of a range of HES specialist functions including designations and statements of significance; collections, archives, and our interpretation team thereby ensuring the outputs of the project are integrated into our work.

While the project will be Scotland wide, the HES contribution will focus on historic buildings in our care which means this is likely to have a city connection e.g. Stanley Mills and Glasgow Cathedral. The project will encourage contributions from academics and other heritage researchers, and we would be interested in contributions from researchers and academics who have researched the connections of ports such as Greenock and Port Glasgow to plantation grown goods such as sugar, rum and tobacco.

Over the life of the project all partners are keen to work with community groups and particularly Black and Minority communities as well as researchers and heritage...
professionals who can help to unearth these often-hidden narratives as part of Scotland’s history.

The project outputs will include a website, e-newsletter, a range of digital events and discussion which will contribute to an improved body of knowledge about the links between our built environment and legacy from Empire and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

As a condition of funding the project will report on progress annually to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. However, through the website the key partners will co-produce six monthly progress updates to be published on the website and invite community responses on progress and next steps.

I hope this additional information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

ALEX PATERSON