

# **EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 16 January 2008

Session 3

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## EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

### 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting 2008, Session 3

#### CONVENER

\*Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

#### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

\*Aileen Campbell (South of Scotland) (SNP)

\*Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)

\*Christina McKelvie (Central Scotland) (SNP)

\*Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab)

\*Jeremy Purvis (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)

\*Elizabeth Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

#### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab)

Hugh O'Donnell (Central Scotland) (LD)

Shirley-Anne Somerville (Lothians) (SNP)

\*attended

#### THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Mark Adderley (National Trust for Scotland)

John Graham (Historic Scotland)

Diana Murray (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland)

Graham U'ren (Built Environment Forum Scotland)

#### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Eugene Windsor

#### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Nick Hawthorne

#### ASSISTANT CLERK

Andrew Proudfoot

#### LOCATION

Committee Room 2



## Scottish Parliament

### Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee

*Wednesday 16 January 2008*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:04*]

### Scotland's Built Heritage

**The Convener (Karen Whitefield):** Good morning. I welcome everyone to the first meeting in 2008 of the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee and rather belatedly wish everyone a happy new year.

Our first and only agenda item is an evidence-taking session on Scotland's built heritage to aid the committee's consideration of these issues in planning its future work programme. It is my pleasure to welcome for the first time to the committee John Graham, chief executive of Historic Scotland; Graham U'ren, director of the Built Environment Forum Scotland; Diana Murray, chief of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland; and—last but by no means least—Mark Adderley, chief executive of the National Trust for Scotland. I thank you all for attending the meeting and for your very helpful written submissions.

As this is your first appearance before the committee, you may make a brief opening statement to introduce yourselves and your organisations. We will then move to questions. It is entirely up to you which of you will go first.

**John Graham (Historic Scotland):** We are grateful for this opportunity to tell the committee about our organisations. Our submission gives a general introduction to Historic Scotland's activities, but I will take a couple of minutes to run through one or two current activities that it does not mention.

With regard to properties in care—by which I mean the various monuments that we look after on behalf of the Scottish ministers—we have a new visitor reception facility at Edinburgh castle. As it happens, that went live yesterday. Visitors will no longer have to queue at a glorified portakabin on the esplanade to get into the castle; instead, they will be able to buy tickets on the website associated with the new facility, which represents a £3 million investment in the welcome that we give to visitors at our top attraction.

We have also received the authority to go ahead with a big investment at Stirling castle, where we will spend in excess of £10 million on a three to

four-year project that we hope will recreate as closely as possible the interior of the palace as it might have looked in the 1540s, when it was new.

With regard to our regulatory activities, which cover listed building consents and so on, we have done a lot of work over the past few years to improve the turnaround times on the cases that we deal with and to have more discussion with applicants before they formally submit their proposals to ensure that, when they do so, we can clear them without difficulty.

We are also working with planning authorities and the planning side of the Scottish Government on what is called the e-planning project, which, by allowing information to be exchanged electronically with planning authorities, should make for more efficient and quicker handling of applications. Moreover, to improve our service to local authorities and applicants, we are working on a concordat with authorities that will more clearly set out what each party does and what we can expect of each other.

As far as policy is concerned, we are working on a programme of what we call Scottish historic environment policies. Scotland has never had a coherent and comprehensive set of ministerial policies for the historic environment, and a series of drafts has been put out for consultation at consultation meetings. The documents are now beginning to appear in their final form, as endorsed by ministers.

We are also working on the Scottish Government's greener Scotland strategic objective. As members know, a key challenge in reducing carbon dioxide emissions lies in improving the energy performance of the existing building stock. As the people in the Scottish Government who know most about the technicalities of traditional buildings, we have initiated a programme of studies to understand the energy performance of such buildings. For example, we are examining how the energy performance of traditional windows compares with that of double glazing, which many people would like to be installed in historic buildings, but which we have reservations about.

Lastly, our paper mentions our work on world heritage sites. We have nominated the Antonine wall to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to be granted world heritage site status. We received a visit from the expert evaluator last September, and we are awaiting a meeting of the world heritage committee this summer. It will take a final decision on whether the Antonine wall becomes a world heritage site.

**Diana Murray (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland):**

I welcome the opportunity to speak to the committee and present information. I asked whether it would be possible to give you information, and it was agreed that I could, so I have given you some annual reports and information about our organisation. The reason for that is that we are not terribly high profile.

We have been in existence for 100 years—we celebrate the anniversary in three weeks' time. I have worked for the organisation for nearly a third of that time—31 years. I became the chief executive, known as the secretary, in 2004. One characteristic of our organisation is that we have a long-serving and loyal staff who have real passion and enthusiasm. That makes it possible to be innovative and creative. Our name does not trip off the tongue and people have some trouble with it—although you did extremely well earlier, convener—but we are a modern and fit-for-purpose organisation that employs the latest technologies in its work.

We believe that the organisation is essential because the heritage record should be seen as independent from direct or indirect influence relating to interventions required for the protection and management of the built heritage. That, fortunately, has been the case in Scotland since we were founded in 1908. It is the job of our organisation to gather information and provide a publicly available and intellectually independent heritage record that can be used by anybody. For example, if there is a public inquiry on any matter in heritage, the record can be used by those on both sides of the argument.

We carry out that work through our strategic survey and research programmes, which we undertake to the highest professional standards. Our research has been recognised to the extent that we were one of only eight organisations outside the university sector to gain the Arts and Humanities Research Council academic analogue status—the equivalent for organisations that are not universities—and we were the only one in Scotland. Our research is of the highest standard.

Although work has been undertaken for 100 years, we respond to the requirements of the sector, which are constantly changing. Public expectation of heritage has also changed over the years. For example, we now find ourselves recording sites that were not in existence 100 years ago, such as the world war two remains around Scapa Flow, the Forth road bridge and this building. We recorded this building from its foundations to its completion because we recognised that future generations will want to understand and know about its development. We are also now recording sites that were fully

operational 100 years ago, such as Lady Victoria colliery, which recently won a treasured places online vote. That shows how the public are engaging with heritage information—they got really excited about it.

Since 2004, when I took over as chief executive, we have devoted a lot more of our resources to outreach and educational work. We have been successful in getting support for that, particularly from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It has been hard work trying to make our budget stretch in those directions, but we feel that it is essential to do that.

New technology means that we are now capable of mapping and recording extensive tracts of the Scottish landscape, both in the field and from desk-based survey. Monitoring how landscapes are used and change assists with landscape management and rural development issues, and it is essential to have that independent information before people take decisions on such matters. For example, we have worked with the national parks to help them to understand their rural landscape before they put policies in place.

10:15

In the coming years, we intend to concentrate much more of our resources on recording urban landscape change and the growth of townscapes, so that our research can better inform urban place making and the way in which people interact. People have a great appetite for a sense of place, but unless they know what they have, what is interesting and what they find interesting—which we are also trying to capture—there is no basis on which decisions can be made. We also survey individual sites and buildings.

There are many gaps in knowledge. The category of site that has been most in the public eye recently is battlefields, which are under-recorded. Some areas of Scotland have not been surveyed and researched as well as others. As a research-based organisation, we have a remit and experience that makes us well placed to undertake strategic work to plug gaps in knowledge, and we concentrate our efforts to best effect. That is one of our commissioners' main tasks.

The majority of work is captured and stored digitally, so we are now extremely experienced in information management, long-term preservation of data and databases, and providing online access for users. User expectation and demand means that the online service needs to be refreshed and extended constantly. We need to be aware of user demands and what users want. One needs only to watch "Time Team" on a regular basis to see the kind of information that people expect to find online. We are well placed to play a role—as we do—in Scotland's digital access,

especially now that we are responsible for Scran, the organisation that I described in our written submission.

I should like to mention our important national collection, which results from and supports our research work and is intricately linked to the information and knowledge skills of our organisation. Much of the collection, including our extensive collection of air photographs—to which the second world war allies collection was recently added—requires specialised interpretative and retrieval skills. We have archaeological and architectural records that are the primary data retrieved from sites that have now disappeared. We are selecting highlights of that collection to present to the public in our centenary celebrations. We are also looking forward to our new, purpose-built archive facility, which is due to be completed by 2010 and will contribute to what is likely to be the exciting development of a cultural campus at Edinburgh's waterfront development in Granton.

We could not work as successfully as we do without the many partnerships that we have, with the organisations that are represented here today and many others, especially the other national collections. Because we are regarded as a national collection, we have charitable status. We have partners in Wales with which we share our information systems. That helps to fund our work. We also have partnerships with organisations such as the Ministry of Defence and the national parks, which I mentioned. We can provide the independent research that is necessary for them to understand their estates.

**Graham U'ren (Built Environment Forum Scotland):** We, too, are delighted to be here today. On behalf of BEFS, I will speak essentially for the voluntary sector.

Our constitutional arrangements raise two important issues. First, in the voluntary sector we represent not just non-governmental organisations but the professional institutes that are involved with the built environment in Scotland. I am a member of and used to work for the Royal Town Planning Institute, as the convener knows. We also represent the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in Scotland and others. Of the NGOs, we number the National Trust for Scotland among our members, so I will try not to intrude on that territory today. Because of the range of our membership, we believe that since our establishment four years ago we have met our first objective, which was to become a credible representative body for the whole sector. We are delighted to be recognised as that for the purposes of today's meeting.

The second point that I would like to make is that, although I am here to give evidence on the

historic environment, the Built Environment Forum seeks to take an overview of the totality of the built environment, which is why the professional bodies are so important to us in relation to architecture, urban design, change in the built environment and, particularly in relation to the quality of the built environment, planning issues. We are concerned with the future of the built environment as well as its past. Diana Murray used the term "place making". That might mean different things to different people but, these days, the usual suspects know what we mean by it. It is very much about places for people and about taking a comprehensive view of how places work for people. That involves design and planning issues and a consideration of how to get the values right with regard to the historic environment. We have an overarching view in that regard.

Having made that point, I will deal with how we view the historic environment. The paper that we submitted flags up a few issues that we have championed in the past. About a year ago, we produced a manifesto that I would be happy to make available to the committee, if you would like to see it. Last year's review, which goes up to March 2007, can also be made available to you. It will enable you to see the activities that we undertook in that time and what we aspire to do.

We are in the process of preparing a new long-term strategy. That is being done against a background of some difficulty because, although we feel that we have moved up to the first rung of the ladder in our first years, in that we have become a credible representative body, we certainly have a problem with creating the critical mass that will enable us to meet the expectations of our member bodies and important external stakeholders such as the Parliament, the Government and others, given the resources that are available to us.

Our main funding sponsor—Historic Scotland—is sitting on my right at the moment. We are in discussion with Historic Scotland in relation to what it can do to help us with regard to our relevance to its work and about how we can raise our critical mass. We have only two part-time staff and, when there is a bit of staff turnover and so on, huge weight must be carried by the voluntary directors. I am listed as a director, and I am a member of the board. There are also seven volunteers who pitch in a great deal to the work of the forum. We would like to shift the emphasis a little by having a greater staff complement, so that we can deliver more activities that are of use to people.

Our main activity that contributes to the debates that we are involved in today is the organising of workshops in which our forum members and others can join together to contribute to

consultation exercises, many of which have been quite prominent in the recent past, such as those of Historic Scotland on Scottish historic environment policies and those of the Historic Environment Advisory Council, which are conducted in relation to its reports to Government. As I have said, we are involved in the architecture and urban design agenda and, some time ago, we helped the architecture policy unit with its first review of the architecture policy by holding a series of workshops. Working with people and putting forward our views has been our core activity.

We contribute relatively comfortably to the policy agenda, but we would like to do more with regard to contributing to the best practice agenda in order to help practitioners with their skills and to enable them to contribute more to the wider environment by using those skills.

One of our campaigning stances included the need for a historic environment audit. We are pleased that that has been supported. We also stood up for a legislative review of the historic environment. The minister is not intending to do that any time soon, but we are making the point that a number of things have been listed for legislative review that raise policy issues that will not go away and which might be dealt with in other ways. Perhaps those things can remain under discussion.

We contribute to the sustainability agenda. One of our areas of activity relates specifically to the sustainable development working group and involves consideration of ways in which we can reduce Scotland's carbon footprint through the ways in which existing and future building stock is managed. We have had extensive dialogue with Historic Scotland on that very question.

My final point is that we are all engaged in a much more cross-cutting policy environment these days. We have welcomed our dialogues with Historic Scotland and other organisations about seeing the bigger picture. That is what we stand for, so even when we are talking about the historic environment, we think that it is important always to put it in a wider context. What does it do for the wider cultural values of our society? What does it do for tourism and the economy? What does it do for place making and planning and the way in which communities get involved in the future shaping of their places?

**Mark Adderley (National Trust for Scotland):** Thank you for inviting us to speak to the committee. It is critical not only that we get the opportunity to engage, but that the committee has the opportunity to ask us questions and learn a bit about what we do. You have had a written submission from us, but it is important to give you a quick summary of one or two things in it, as well

as an introduction to the National Trust for Scotland.

We were established 76 years ago, and we are now Scotland's largest conservation charity. We have 320,000 members and 129 properties that are open to the public. I have a couple of leaflets that I will leave with the committee, one of which is a brief guide to our properties. Roughly speaking, half of those are in the built environment and half are in the countryside, including 46 Munros. Many of you who have been out walking will, knowingly or unknowingly, have been walking on trust land.

Our strength lies in our diversity. We look after a massive range of things, from wild land to fine art—we have some wonderful collections. There is industrial heritage, such as printing works. We look after historic buildings, mountains, gardens and islands on behalf of the nation. One of the important things that we do is to make those things accessible to people and to try to ensure that we interpret them in a way that really engages the public. We are a large organisation—we have a staff of about 1,350 and about 3,500 volunteers. In the context of lifelong learning, volunteering for the trust is a great opportunity to keep learning throughout life. We do about a month's formal and informal training for all our volunteers.

The heritage sector is well represented here. As other witnesses have said, we work well together. We have a number of different partners, some of which are here today. We also have the historic properties group, which includes some privately owned houses. We are working together throughout the sector. We feel that the trust and its heritage make an enormous contribution, not just to the economic benefit and value of Scotland, but to Scotland's social and cultural heritage and education. What we do and what we make available to people day in, day out, enriches their lives. The collections are one of the nation's most precious assets. Politically, it is an asset that does not get many votes, but we think that it is important to Scotland. The stunning locations and the distinctiveness of Scotland's land, history and people are important not just for today's generation but future generations.

Like many charities, we face funding issues. Although we get a fair chunk of our revenue from membership, we are always struggling to ensure that we make ends meet.

We have about 3 million visitors a year to our properties. We have an education programme, which is focused on schools—I will leave a leaflet with you. We have 47 properties that do events at schools and 600-plus schools that are members of the National Trust for Scotland's educational scheme. More than 100,000 school children visit our properties annually. Some of the properties we

look after are embedded in Scotland's school curriculum.

Our written submission also mentions issues around funding, legislation and the scope to create lifelong learning opportunities not just in education, but for volunteers and the people of Scotland in general. I will not go over those issues, but committee members may want to ask about them.

10:30

**The Convener:** Thank you all for your statements. I am sure that you have generated a number of subject areas about which the committee would like to ask questions. Before we move to questions, I ask Aileen Campbell to make a short declaration of interests.

**Aileen Campbell (South of Scotland) (SNP):** My partner works for a private consultancy that is currently contracted to evaluate two projects for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland.

**The Convener:** Thank you.

**Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** Fundamentally, we need to review how we are going to attract people to the heritage that you look after. We will have to face up to the complexity of the funding packages and ensure that the charities and agencies are providing the kind of service that is fit for the interests of the population of the country, as well as visitors. That will be quite a complex task, but it is clear that there is a problem with the number of people who are visiting the kind of sites that my parents took me to visit when I was young—castles and things like that. One wonders whether there is much of that going on now.

I ask each of our witnesses to reflect on that issue in general terms. That might throw up issues that allow us to see ways forward through further co-operation, for example, and it might enlighten us as to how you envisage making your activities more attractive.

**John Graham:** I have never seen any numbers that would shed any light on Mr Gibson's theory that the habit of visiting historic attractions is decreasing. I take it that you are talking mainly about the domestic market. The number of visits to Historic Scotland's sites has been broadly stable over the past 10 or 15 years—in fact, it has gone up slightly—but the mix of overseas visitors and domestic visitors has shifted slightly in the direction of overseas visitors.

You must remember that we have numbers only for the 70 sites at which we charge admission. We have another 270 sites that anybody can walk into at any time. We have not conducted surveys at many of those unstaffed sites, but we did a rough

count at the ring of Brodgar in Orkney a year or two ago, which showed that nearly 100,000 people visit the site each year. There is at least a question about the numbers.

What are we doing to attract people? I believe that we are offering a high-quality service at the sites. We regularly conduct customer surveys, which show satisfaction levels of well over 90 per cent. The figure is the same for value for money. Like the NTS, we have an active schools programme that encourages school parties to visit the sites, and we are developing more activities for lifelong learning groups at the sites, to bring in people who, unlike Mr Gibson, have not been brought up in the habit of visiting such sites.

We have a number of irons in the fire, but there is no doubt that there are still groups in society who do not regard that kind of activity as being for them. To reach them, we run a programme of events at our sites throughout the summer, which generally do not carry any additional charges over the admission charge to the site. The events cover everything from story telling at some of the smaller sites to jousting and re-enactments at some of the bigger sites, where we have the space for them. We regard that as the most powerful way of drawing in people who would not normally visit the sites. If we lay on something special such as those events, we engage their interest and often get repeat visits from them.

**Rob Gibson:** Would anyone else like to comment?

**Mark Adderley:** Yes. A couple of things are worth pointing out. I concur with John Graham's comments about the overall number of visitors to attractions. Over the long term, we have found that visitor numbers have been going down slightly, but last year they rose by 2 per cent during the season. There is an interesting balance between membership numbers and visitor numbers. Our membership has been going up; we have found that more people are interested in supporting the sector as a whole, but they might visit a number of properties for free rather than as paying visitors.

We are looking at all the new technologies. We have a new website that people can visit to see what events are going on within 30 miles of where they live—they can enter their postcode and get directions and book tickets online. As John Graham said, we are getting people to the properties and events, but we are also attracting them through new media. We are using the web and forms of direct marketing successfully to identify the segments of the public of Scotland who are most likely to visit our properties.

We are holding events such as jousting, as John Graham also said. We have to make our properties more contemporary, but that requires

investment, which is difficult to get. We have found it easier to get investment for big projects such as the new centre at Culloden, which opened recently and which, by all accounts, has gone down very well. It is worth having a good look at the centre, which is an example of a property where the genuine history has been interpreted incredibly well, using great technology, in a way that is appropriate for people of all ages. We are getting a lot of children through the door, but developing that sort of attraction takes a lot of time and resources. It would cost a lot to do that sort of work in all our 129 properties. We cannot develop them all at once, but we are conscious that we need to ensure that we keep refreshing the things that people come to see. Our big challenge is ensuring that we get the money in to enable us to develop more and more properties.

**Graham U'ren:** I support what Mark Adderley has said. Although BEFS does not have a direct interest in this issue—it helps its member organisations deal with these sorts of problems—I have been involved in the world heritage site at New Lanark for more than 30 years. I worked for the local authority in that area for 20 years and, for the past 10 years, I have been involved in a voluntary capacity. New Lanark, like many sites, is a rural site and, despite its world heritage rating, there are issues with accessing it. Sites that face such adversity need an extra special resource and method for marketing.

New Lanark does an incredible job with its educational resource. Its gets something like 30,000 kids in organised school parties every year, yet it has difficulty funding its education staff and spreading the message to the wider public because it is off the beaten track. It is run by an independent trust, which does not have the resources to market it aggressively or to refresh what the visitor attraction element of the historic site has to offer. That is a particular characteristic of rural attractions.

**Rob Gibson:** It might be interesting to consider the commonality of the problem of getting money and what should be done with the sites. Some kind of review of that might be welcome. Historic Scotland and the National Trust get roughly the same number of visitors—I am referring to clocked visitors, because you cannot judge the number of people who are climbing over mountains or going to ungated sites. Do you think that a review of the way in which we invest in properties would be a good thing?

**John Graham:** That is the sort of thing that the historic properties group, which Mark Adderley mentioned, is considering. We set up that group a couple of years ago and drew in the Historic Houses Association, which includes the operators of the big private houses in Scotland that attract

large numbers of visitors, such as Blair castle and Scone palace, each of which attract well over 100,000 visitors a year. In the historic properties group, we talk about how best to draw in visitors and deal with them once we have them, and how to organise effective educational activities for the various groups that we welcome at the properties. We are sharing experience, trying to learn from one another and trying to present a consistent high-quality experience to visitors. A review of investment priorities raises a different set of questions because the sources of funding are, obviously, different.

**Rob Gibson:** We do not know a great deal about the complexity of that, but it would probably be quite beneficial for members to understand it better, if we are to make sense of how we deal with the matter in the future.

I want to deal with one issue relating to Historic Scotland on the finance front before I let others take over. You say in your submission that you have 3 million visitors to your sites each year,

“the most important being Edinburgh, Stirling and Urquhart Castles”.

As a representative of the Highlands and Islands, I am well aware of the developments at Urquhart castle. In relation to your remit, which includes making

“the best use of the historic environment to achieve ... wider aims of social and economic regeneration”,

what effect do you think the income that you achieve from Urquhart castle activities has on the community of Drumnadrochit and other places round about?

**John Graham:** I do not think that we, or Highlands and Islands Enterprise, or anybody, have done a proper evaluation of that. The investment at Urquhart has raised the visitor numbers there by something like 75,000 or 80,000 a year. It has increased the number of people we employ at the site, and the catering firm that we use at Urquhart is a local business. All that will have had some positive impact. We have had a number of representations from operators of existing attractions in Drumnadrochit who have said that the arrival of our new visitor centre has taken trade away from them, but we are not really in a position to quantify that ourselves.

**Rob Gibson:** Given the social and economic regeneration job that you have, do you think that it might be a good idea, now that the visitor centre has bedded in, to do such an audit and come to some sort of discussion with the local community and the wider community about the impact of that money-raising scheme?

**John Graham:** Our feeling is that questions about wider economic development in the area are

matters for Highlands and Islands Enterprise rather than for us—if an evaluation of that sort needs to be carried out, HIE should probably do it.

**Elizabeth Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife)**

**(Con):** I would like to explore the structure under which you all operate. I am strongly of the opinion that you all do fantastic work, and I would like to compliment all the individual groups that participate in what I consider to be a very important part of our heritage in Scotland. The public sometimes feel that there are quite a lot of different groups and that it is difficult to understand who has the authority to make a decision about a particular historic site.

One example is the Roman road on the Gask ridge in the Strathearn area of Perthshire. It is a very interesting part of the country—there are a lot of local interests, and lots of people asked different things about how best to use the site. Throughout the process, we were involved in consultations with numerous groups, including the local council, through planning. We were provided with excellent advice through the individual groups, but I found it difficult to establish who had overall responsibility for taking a decision—where the buck stopped—and so did the community council and various other groups. Is an appropriate structure in place to allow you to streamline decisions on best practice for preserving Scottish heritage?

10:45

**John Graham:** A number of funding sources exist. In particular, the Heritage Lottery Fund has become a very important funding source for the historic environment; the fund has spent a lot more than we have on supporting the historic environment in Scotland over the past decade. Any historic environment project tends to involve approaches to us and to the Heritage Lottery Fund, but many other sources of funding exist. We try our best to explain to people the roles of the various organisations.

When it comes to regulation and control, the division of responsibility is, in essence, between us and the local authority. The local authority is on the front line in all listed building consent cases, but the Roman road on the Gask ridge is a scheduled monument and the buck stops with us. The control framework is relatively clear, although it is understandable that people are sometimes unclear about our role vis-à-vis the local authority. As I said, we are pursuing the concordat.

The sources of funding are complex. The best that we can do is try to explain to people what the sources are and what the priorities of the various funding bodies are.

**Elizabeth Smith:** Are you confident that Historic Scotland's relationship with local authorities will improve with the concordat? The new relationship is perhaps different from the old one.

**John Graham:** The concordat will bring clarity and I hope that that will improve the relationship. I do not want to give the impression that the working relationship is poor at the moment, because by and large it is very constructive and a lot of excellent work is done in local authorities. Our main concern is that conservation departments in local authorities are not consistently strongly staffed. Some authorities, as is their prerogative, give more priority than others to this area of activity. We can therefore encounter more difficulty in some parts of the country than others, because sufficient professional expertise will not have been brought to bear on a particular case before we see it.

**Elizabeth Smith:** Is that a funding issue?

**John Graham:** The local authority would say that it is a funding issue, but we would say that it is about priorities.

**Mark Adderley:** I would like to add to that because we miss some important points if we focus so much on the built heritage. Elizabeth Smith asked whether the best framework is in place to deliver best practice in preserving Scotland's heritage—but what do we mean by Scotland's heritage? That is a big question. The heritage is more than just the built environment; it is also, for example, the language, the culture, the countryside and the battlefields. Best practice therefore comes at different levels, one of which is the legislative level. As we pointed out in our submission—and as others did in theirs—gaps exist in the legislation on Scotland's heritage.

Then there is the planning level. We all have an input into planning processes. Then there is the control level. As John Graham said, Historic Scotland and local authorities are involved in that. Scottish Natural Heritage and a number of other organisations are also involved, depending on what is defined as being heritage.

Finally there is the level at which best practice is genuinely considered: groups of people such as ourselves will work together to share best practice at an operational level. We do a lot of work at that final level, in the absence of some activity at the other three levels on the different aspects of Scottish heritage.

**Elizabeth Smith:** Is that forum of co-operation between your individual groups sufficient to inform Government about what needs to be done in policy?

**Mark Adderley:** I would be keen to hear the views of others, but I would argue that it probably

is not sufficient. We do not necessarily have access to the right people at the right times to get our views across. When we are asked, we give our views, but we do not necessarily use the forum to feed directly into Government policy.

**Graham U'ren:** The planning system has been mentioned. I am a planner and I am acutely aware of the problem that John Graham has raised. It is for local authorities to prioritise, but sometimes quite small resources might be sufficient to provide an effective conservation service. Those resources will be provided by some local authorities, but unfortunately by relatively few.

Authorities that are not able to provide such a service must be focused on, which does not take much. We must promote the provision of effective conservation services through local government planning departments to serve the wider interests of communities. In the past, services have been seen as focusing on the elite interest in historic buildings. They were very technical and anorakish, but we have said that the values that are embodied in our built environment—not just in the historic environment—are important in respect of engaging communities with their places and understanding their character. I tried to convey that in my introductory remarks. An expert conservation resource in local authorities could contribute greatly to communities' wider views on place making. I would dearly love to see such resources coming back.

**Diana Murray:** I would like to add something about local authorities, which I have mentioned little, although they are mentioned in our submission.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland does not give advice, we do not have a regulatory role and we do not have any properties; rather, we provide crucial independent information that anybody—people who are submitting HLF bids, for example—can use. We work closely with local authorities, and we have a co-operation statement on information with them, as they also gather information. It is important that there is local and national information.

We provide an online service—a one-stop shop for heritage information—with the local authorities, which Historic Scotland helps with. That has been a big and useful information management development—people throughout Scotland can get that information locally or nationally—but we have no regulatory or planning role. Under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, we have the right to record buildings that are under severe threat—we can go into them and make a record of them if they are to be severely changed or destroyed—but we do not get involved

in the planning system. The act made a window for us to make records of buildings.

**The Convener:** Mr Adderley mentioned the legislation; Mr U'ren's written submission also mentions it. I understand that the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland recommended to the previous Government that the legislation that protects our historic built environment be modernised, but the Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture has said that it is unlikely that she will do that in the short term, although she might decide to come back to that decision. Do you think that the legislation needs to be modernised? If we simply work to improve the current regulations, might we miss an opportunity to ensure that our historic monuments are properly protected?

**John Graham:** Historic Scotland advises the minister on that matter, so I cannot really comment on it. The other witnesses may wish to do so.

**The Convener:** I appreciate that, Mr Graham.

**Diana Murray:** I have no real role on the legislative side of things, so I do not wish to comment. The only thing that I will say is that, on the recording side, we have moved much more to looking at whole landscapes, as I have said, but the legislation finds that—and indeed protection of any kind—quite difficult to address. We work with Historic Scotland on the matter. I do not know whether that helps with the question whether there should be a change in the legislation.

**Mark Adderley:** I return to what I said earlier about what we mean by heritage and how we can ensure that everything is picked up. A holistic review might be helpful, but we will work with whatever exists and ensure that we do the right things. As a charity, the trust has its own obligations.

I understand that the agreement with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities contains a local authority objective to improve the state of Scotland's historic buildings, monuments and environment. Therefore, something is being put in place in principle for the local authorities, but there are no measures yet. It will be interesting to see what those measures are.

**Graham U'ren:** There is a long list of issues on which people would like to see new legislation. Some of those could be dealt with in other ways, through procedure and policy, or simply by putting a new perspective on how money is spent. About five years ago, when the Planning etc (Scotland) Bill was being prepared, it was seen as an opportunity to address some of the deficiencies in historic environment legislation, because some of that is delivered through the planning acts. At that time, the matter was deliberately put to one side, to be dealt with in possible future legislation

specifically on the historic environment. It would be a pity if we failed to remember that a number of possible legislative measures have been in people's minds for quite a while.

Some of the key philosophical points do not involve modernising legislation or tightening up the regulatory environment. The idea of placing a statutory duty of care for the historic environment on all relevant public authorities may be worth pursuing. Such a duty might readily be attached to other legislation. One wonders whether we might use the culture bill that is in the offing as an opportunity to do that—we may want to say that how we value the historic environment should be part of the cultural strategy.

The Built Environment Forum Scotland would like the role of the historic environment to be integrated much more fully into the cultural agenda. The culture bill is one possible way of skinning the cat. It is not just about whacking up the regulatory environment, but about modernising our perspective on the policy environment and how we determine priorities in the future. How we address a number of issues is still on the table for discussion, even if there is no immediate prospect of a legislative review.

**Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab):** Good morning. My question runs alongside Elizabeth Smith's. I value the work that each of your organisations does to preserve our heritage. However, I wonder how you involve people in your decisions. I acknowledge some of the issues that you have mentioned, such as limited budgets and the need to decide your priorities. In his introductory remarks, Mr Graham referred to the work that is being done at Stirling castle. Over the past 10 years, real improvements have been made that have encouraged people to visit the castle, which is good. How do you decide your priorities? How involved are local communities in that process and in deciding what needs to be supported financially?

I am pleased to have Linlithgow palace, which is a great attraction for many people, in my constituency. There have often been suggestions of work that could be done there, but such work does not always seem to be carried out. There may be reasons for that, but I am not sure that the people of Linlithgow town know what is happening at the palace and, when things do not happen, why they do not. How do you communicate with the communities that live around our built heritage? How do we ensure that we balance the demands that are placed on you?

**John Graham:** We are under instructions from ministers to run the properties in our care as a business. We have an overriding duty to preserve the properties that are in ministers' care, so any work that needs to be done to conserve the

properties and to keep them in good condition is our first priority. The next priority is the priority that any commercial operator running the sites would have: to identify where the service to the visitor is inadequate and where there are opportunities to tell a better story at a site that will be more interesting to the visitor, will communicate more of the excitement and interest of the site to them and will generate extra revenue for us, because more visitors will come or visitors will stay longer as there is more to see.

Such considerations led us to decide recently to make the big investment at Stirling. It is an investment that we believe will pay for itself, perhaps not over the kind of period over which a purely commercial business would look for a payback, but it will pay for itself in due course in terms of extra visitors staying longer, spending more on the site and so on.

11:00

We tend to talk to local communities more about how we develop sites. The most obvious recent example of that is Stanley mills, where we have been engaged with the Heritage Lottery Fund in a long-running project to conserve and find new uses for an extremely important industrial heritage complex. Early in the summer, we will open the original bell mill at Stanley as an attraction. We have worked closely with the local community in developing that and have benefited enormously from its input, as a lot of people still live in the village who worked in the complex when it was a live industrial complex. We see Stanley much more as a community resource—in particular, as an education resource—than as an attraction for overseas visitors.

**Mark Adderley:** Obviously, the National Trust for Scotland is different because we are a membership organisation; therefore, we respond primarily to the needs and demands of our members. We are, first and foremost, a conservation organisation. We have revenue expenditure and project expenditure. Our revenue expenditure is spent on the things that we just have to do; there are then a number of projects that we assess and prioritise at the beginning of each year. We would always like to spend more out of the pot on projects than we are able to, so you are right—we have to prioritise.

We assess our projects according to several criteria. We measure them against our conservation principles to determine whether they deliver on those principles. We also have to consider the need to address health and safety issues, compliance with legislation—with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, for example—and other such issues. The more of those things that we have to do, the less money is available to

be spent on other work. There is also maintenance work relating to the conservation of our properties, and other projects that can be commercial in nature—the development of a new retail store or the refitting of an outlet in one of our properties, for example. Such projects are assessed on a return basis, according to which the consideration is financial. Therefore we make a list of projects and prioritise them on the basis of conservation need, maintenance need, legislative need and commercial return. We then decide what we need to do.

Although this does not always happen, the local community may have an input into the defining of a project if those people have visited the property and have suggested to the property manager things that need to be done. Those suggestions might then be set up as projects, but they will be prioritised along with the rest. Once we decide to go ahead with a project, we work with the local community, especially if the project involves building or development. We do that through either the local authority or the local community council, whichever is most appropriate for the property. However, that is done much more at the back end and applies more to bigger projects than to smaller projects, which are more to do with maintenance and on-going work.

**Mary Mulligan:** You have given examples of places where local people have been involved and of how you develop your priorities for the works that you carry out, on which there are some restrictions. However, my concern is that people sometimes feel that things are done without their being involved. If something is part of a community's heritage, we need to develop ways of ensuring that the community is involved. I suspect that membership of your organisation helps; however, if your members from Orkney are deciding what happens in the Borders, for example, something could be lost. The issue is how a balance can be struck and how you can ensure that people do not feel that things are being done without their involvement. If people are encouraged to buy into what is happening, they are more likely to feel ownership of the developments that you decide to go ahead with.

**Mark Adderley:** I would not want to underplay the level of local involvement. As soon as we have anything major, we get involved with the local community. Typically, we do not have a lot of money to spend, so not a lot of big projects go on. The big projects that have happened, such as the Culloden project, had major community involvement. That project did not just concern economic development; it was also about how the site was going to be designed and how the collections were being brought in and presented. We took the views of a number of people—the local community had a big say in it.

**Christina McKelvie (Central Scotland) (SNP):**

I hope that you can elaborate on the concordat with local authorities. I am particularly interested in the Hamilton mausoleum, which was recently taken over by the local authority. Why did that happen? It is difficult to get information on exactly why it was handed over to the local authority, and not to the National Trust for Scotland or another body. Is that the best way to manage and look after our built heritage? Are you confident that the local council has the expertise to look after that site?

**John Graham:** I am afraid that I do not know the details of that case. I would be happy to drop you a note about it in a day or two, once I have found out a little more about the background.

I will make a general point. We are not out to build an empire in which we look after everything of historical importance throughout Scotland. Our stance is very much to encourage and, where we can, to support owners in looking after historic buildings themselves. The vast majority of the historic environment, important buildings and archaeological sites in Scotland are in private hands. We regard it as a key part of our responsibility to give private owners technical information, advice and support to help them look after their sites and, to the extent that our budget allows, to give them financial support to do that.

The Historic Houses Association is a conspicuous example of a group of people who have hugely important historic environment assets, which are being looked after with private money and with very limited assistance from us or from other public sources.

I will happily look into the Hamilton mausoleum case. I have been there, but I did not know about the recent transfer. I will drop you a note about it.

**Christina McKelvie:** Could you elaborate on the concordat with local authorities? How do you see it working? How important is the concordat for the teamwork approach to looking after heritage?

**John Graham:** The concordat that we are working on with local authorities is essentially about our regulatory work—how we handle listed building consent cases and the cases in which both we and the local authority become involved. The object of the concordat is to clarify what we expect the local authority to do in such cases and, when a case has to be referred to us, the information that we expect to get when the case comes to us. We also want to clarify for the local authority how we deal with such cases and what the authority can expect from us.

**Christina McKelvie:** As a wee aside, after having visited two castles with my kids over the holidays, I realised the benefits of becoming a

Historic Scotland member, and I got a membership form.

**John Graham:** Tell all your friends.

**Christina McKelvie:** The kids needed to have their souvenirs, and it was an expensive day out, but I now see the benefits of membership. My application is in the post.

**John Graham:** Good.

**Jeremy Purvis (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD):** I return to the legislation. I was interested in Mrs Murray's written evidence on the draft culture bill. Commenting on some of the proposed changes, you said:

"As drafted, the Bill provided consistency of purpose and governance across the 5 national collection institutions."

What discussions have recently taken place with Government? What is the current position, from your perspective?

**Diana Murray:** Prior to the election, the intention was that the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland would change its status, under the draft culture bill, to become normalised, as a non-departmental public body. We were already regarded as a national collection, because of our charitable status, and we are exempt under charities legislation, like the other national collections—the National Library of Scotland, the National Museums of Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland. We have already started a national collections forum, which includes the National Archives of Scotland, and we have a common purpose and common interest on the collections side.

The legislation would have normalised that. It would have got rid of our royal commission status and created a new body—a non-departmental public body—which would have been called the national survey and record of Scotland, or something like that. We would have transferred our whole role, purpose and staffing into that new body. The royal commission would, eventually, have been abolished. Royal commissions are a mechanism for carrying out investigations—they do not normally last for 100 years. It is recognised that our role and purpose are valuable and should continue; I do not think that there has been any question about that.

The Scottish National Party said in its manifesto that it wished to merge us with Historic Scotland. When it came into government, that proposal had to be looked at, because it rather undermined the culture bill as drafted and the direction in which we had been moving. The minister is still considering the issue. I have been asked to say that the situation is as described in the reply to a parliamentary question, which was that ministers are currently considering the commitment to

merge the royal commission with Historic Scotland within its wider proposals to simplify the Scottish public sector landscape.

**Jeremy Purvis:** I assume that it was the Government that asked you to say that. Is that right?

**Diana Murray** *indicated agreement.*

**Jeremy Purvis:** We might well return to consideration of the culture bill. Your written evidence was interesting.

What is the process for deciding on an application for world heritage site status? Who makes the decision?

**John Graham:** At the moment, that is United Kingdom Government business, because it is an international issue. The UK Government maintains what it calls the tentative list, which is a long list of potential candidates for world heritage status. The various UK departments involved, including us, and ministers discuss which sites on the tentative list are put forward for world heritage site status. Sites get on to the tentative list as a result of expressions of interest, followed by discussions with us, followed by decisions by our ministers on which Scottish sites they want to place on the list. The final decision on which sites are nominated lies with the UNESCO world heritage committee.

**Aileen Campbell:** Some of you have mentioned education and the outreach work that you do, which sits well with this committee's broad remit. Will you explain what your outreach work involves? Do you think that it concentrates too much on primary schools? Do you think that you get enough engagement with older children? Will you comment on ways in which you can engage with young adults and other groups? Rob Gibson asked whether visitor numbers were going up or down. Are visitors being double counted by each organisation? Do the same type of people go to all the sites? How can we attract a broader range of people to the sites? I know that I have given you a lot of questions to deal with, but it would be helpful to hear your response.

11:15

**Mark Adderley:** You asked a lot of questions. I can probably answer some of them—we will see how we get on. We have a number of programmes of work to try to engage the broader population of Scotland. We say that we are a place for everyone, because we genuinely think that bits of what we look after are important for every single person in Scotland.

We do a lot of work with primary and secondary schools. I will leave some information on that work with the committee; I recommend that members look at it. We have 47 properties and a number of

what we used to call education officers, who work with schools and develop programmes. We do that on a commercial basis, as we are a charity and must ensure that the work is funded. We do not receive Government support for it and cannot subsidise school trips to our properties, so sometimes schools find it quite expensive to come to us. I have already mentioned the issue of access, including rural access.

We also hold camps or events with younger adults and underprivileged children. We do some of that work through charities. We involve them in outdoor conservation projects, rather than indoor projects. Recently we gave a bunch of kids from Livingston the project of building a shed. That may not sound very exciting, but it was a big shed—it was to take three tractors—with posts the size of telegraph poles. At the end of the week, the kids had built the shed, learned some skills and done some conservation work. As a result, they felt that they owned part of Scotland's heritage and had built some self-esteem. Again, we require funding to do that work. Either we seek sponsorship or the charity with which we work must fund the kids to come to us. We provide the project manager, the tools and the facilities.

We also have a volunteering programme. We do not have a breakdown of our volunteers, but the older population tends to volunteer in our houses and castles—they are the typical tour guides that people see. The younger population—the under-40s—does work such as building footpaths and dry-stone dyking. The number of footpaths that we have to manage on our 46 Munros is enormous. Younger volunteers also work at our camps and do outdoor work with us. We work with the whole breadth of the population on different things. However, as a charity, we must ensure that all our activities are funded, either as commercial enterprises or through sponsorship. I hope that I have answered at least some of your questions.

**Aileen Campbell:** Your comments are very helpful.

**Diana Murray:** You are focusing on users of and visitors to places, but we do not have places for people to visit. Apart from visiting the wonderful attractions that have been mentioned, people want to get involved, either physically or intellectually, in order to understand their heritage.

I will give members some examples of the things that we do. We are involved in a project called Scotland's rural past. I have not given the committee much information on that so far, because it is a fairly new project. We can fund the project only by working in partnership with Historic Scotland, the National Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Scotland's rural past is a way of getting expertise out to community groups that want to get involved in their own projects. We

support them by having experts explain to them—usually in the pouring rain—how to see and record things in the field. They may want to produce a leaflet about their village or do something more intense to record their local archaeology, especially in relation to rural settlement. There are huge remains of rural settlement around Scotland that people trip over every day and do not understand. At the end of the process, they can put that information into our online records, so that their work can be seen nationally. It gives people a big buzz to be able to talk to an expert and learn their skills.

We have also done work—often funded by the lottery—on the Sir Basil Spence archive project. We have worked with the National Galleries of Scotland on the big exhibition on Basil Spence that is currently at the Dean gallery. We have held some really exciting workshops in the buildings that Basil Spence put up—apart from the one in the Gorbals, which, famously, is no longer there. We have also held workshops for visually impaired people and organised lecture series.

We worked with the soldiers in Hyde Park barracks, which was a bit of an uphill struggle. Their attitude was, "We're here because we've been told to be here." However, at the end of the day, they really engaged with the project. We took the archive to them and got them to put on the white gloves and touch the original drawings in order to understand what it was all about. They began to understand the building in which they lived. They took photographs, which they then put up and blogged about.

We worked in Glasgow airport with the old employees who had been there when Basil Spence walked in and became part of designing and building the airport. Wonderful stories came out of that. We also worked with the Gorbals community and with communities in Coventry and the associated churches. We have revived quite an interest in Basil Spence. I hope that we have left a legacy whereby people actually look at their surroundings.

We are doing the same in the treasured places project. So far, we have worked with scouts on a bridge-building exercise, looking at the Forth road bridge, which the scout group is just next to. We had a prize for the best bridge.

We worked with world war two veterans, who wrote poetry round about remembrance day. They were fascinating; the eldest one was over 90. They had never written poetry before, but we used archive material to stimulate their writing. They read their poetry in the Scottish Poetry Library and moved those there to tears. That was really exciting and interesting.

We have had a youth group in Benbecula, and adults and youngsters in Orkney doing an art project. We now have a multicultural group looking at an archive relating to the different faiths in Glasgow. That project will go on the treasured places site as part of our centenary celebrations. We did not want to look back for our centenary; we want to look forward and get people involved.

Another area is family history, and we are working with the National Archives of Scotland, which has a family history project. We want to extend that so that when people have found out about their ancestors, they then link into asking questions about where their families lived and so on. What did the place look like then and what does it look like now? How has it changed? What did their ancestors do? What industries were they involved in? Were they miners or shipbuilders? We have information about all of that.

Therefore, our role is not about taking people to attractions; it is about taking the archive out to them and engaging them online to contribute their own information to the national record. At the end of our treasured places project, which is our centenary project, we will build something that will resemble Wikipedia, to which people can contribute their own experiences—for example, they can add to what is the national record what their grandfather did and how he engaged with a particular place, so that everybody can see it online.

**John Graham:** There is endless scope in the historic environment. There are lots of people with wonderful ideas about what you can do and the kinds of activities and interests that you can create, which Mark Adderley and Diana Murray have talked about.

To be a bit hard-headed for a moment, there is an issue about the curriculum. We do not find it difficult to attract primary school parties to our properties, but the curriculum takes over in secondary school, as members will know, and it is difficult for schools to cover the time for visits, unless they can demonstrate a clear link with the curriculum. The challenge for our educational team, which includes a number of ex-teachers, is to try to find points of contact with the curriculum. Given that a lot of the history curriculum does not particularly relate to Scotland, we have to look at other areas of the curriculum to which we can contribute. For example, our team has laid on interesting sessions for kids up at Edinburgh castle that key into the citizenship part of the curriculum. The team has devised teaching materials about knights, codes of honour and codes of behaviour. We have run sessions in practical skills for children in which they can get hold of stonemasonry and slating materials and have a go at seeing how those traditional crafts

work. That is another point of contact with the curriculum. Finding such points is an important challenge.

The other, more mundane challenge that we have but which Mark Adderley does not is that if a school party visits one of our properties, they generally want somewhere with a roof so that the children can sit down and do activities, eat their lunch and what have you. However, the vast majority of our properties do not have a roof.

**Aileen Campbell:** The committee went to Cumbernauld College. When we talk about built heritage, we often think about historic sites and old buildings, but we were told that the college is a listed building by Gillespie, Kidd and Coia—I am not sure, but I think I got them in the right order. There is an exhibition about their work at the Lighthouse, and there seems to have been a lot of community involvement with that. On the face of it, that seems to be a good example of what we are talking about.

There seems to be a broader appeal to some of the things that you mentioned. There are BBC programmes on genealogy such as “Who Do You Think You Are?” and a radio programme that is on at the weekends. Do you have links with the BBC, which often tries to chart historic events and runs its own initiatives? Do you work with the BBC and other media outlets?

**John Graham:** We have certainly worked with the BBC in the past. We are considering family history and genealogy in the context of the Government’s plans for the year of homecoming in 2009. We are considering the scope of laying on visits, for example, for people called Mackay to visit our properties that are associated with the Mackay clan. That will be done in conjunction with the family history centre, which Diana Murray mentioned.

**Mark Adderley:** We work with the media, including the BBC and newspapers. If they want to do a review of the top 10 places to visit in Scotland or that kind of thing, we will work with them and ensure that we get our places represented.

The other point in relation to genealogy is the research that goes on in tertiary education. We did not talk about that earlier. We do quite a lot of work to make our archives available to researchers.

**Graham U’reen:** It is difficult to engage the media in the wider question of how people value their own patch, whether the buildings were built 500 years ago, 50 years ago or last week. Understanding the built environment for its intrinsic qualities and describing them other than by using language such as “it’s old” is actually a difficult thing to do. I would like the Scottish media to tackle that issue better.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** I return to a couple of points that were made earlier. I will not ask Diana Murray to respond because I do not think that she can answer this, but I ask Mark Adderley or Graham U'ren to comment on the need for institutional reform. Do we need structural reform of the organisations that are involved in built heritage? There is not a political imperative for that, but there is a lot of political discussion, which creates anxiety. Is there a need or desire within the sector for reform of the various institutions? Is anybody pushing for that?

**Mark Adderley:** My view is that nobody is pushing for that. There is some confusion in the public's minds about what we all do and why we are here. That is one of the things that we talk about at the historic properties group. Visitors to Scotland say, "I want to visit an old house," or "I want to visit a wonderful collection." They go to a property and they buy a ticket to all the Historic Scotland properties, all the National Trust for Scotland properties, or all the Historic Houses Association properties. The next day, they go to another property, but it belongs to a different organisation. There is some confusion externally about why we are what we are and why we are different. Internally, I do not think that there is a major push for reform, and we do not envisage that there will be a desire for that in the immediate future.

**Graham U'ren:** I tend to agree. The issues that we focus on, for example, do not primarily suggest the need for structural reform. It is more a question of the need for joined-up policy. Mark Adderley adduced the question of marketing at the visitor level to allow the visitor to understand. I would like to champion for a moment—it is fairly obvious that I have done it already—the community view of heritage and the built environment. We do not have a tourist offer unless local people make the area what it is, value the collections and other things that they want Government to spend money on, and use their voting power to make that happen. There has to be a bottom-up element. We have to make the public at community level better informed and make it easier for them to access and understand the arrangements that exist. I would be less inclined to support a restructuring than a clearer mapping out of what goes on.

11:30

**Ken Macintosh:** I echo the comments from Elizabeth Smith and Mary Mulligan, and say how much I appreciate the work that you all do in your organisations.

Picking up on the issue of access and funding, I ask Mark Adderley whether he has ever considered joint access schemes. I am a member of the National Trust for Scotland. I am not yet a

member of Historic Scotland, although I will be looking at the membership form today. Have you considered working with VisitScotland or some other organisation on a common entrance scheme?

**Mark Adderley:** We have. We have had a reasonably successful pilot in Edinburgh. VisitScotland has a card that allows someone to get into a number of visitor attractions around Edinburgh. There have been discussions in the past. I am relatively new at the trust—I have been there less than 12 months—but it is not high on my agenda. We keep talking about how we can present a better picture to visitors to Scotland. John Graham mentioned our differences. Some people say that Historic Scotland has buildings that do not have roofs and that we have buildings that do, although it is not quite that straightforward. However, each organisation looks after a different type of property and some people want to go round just one type of property.

**Ken Macintosh:** The first question was about access. John Graham commented that people who visit Historic Scotland sites have a high rate of satisfaction. If the committee wished to pursue further the issue of funding and access—particularly widening access—would that be something for the Historic Environment Advisory Council or the forum to consider, or is there an obvious body that considers such issues, to which you would normally refer?

**John Graham:** It depends on what you mean by "access". One of the issues is charging, which is a matter of ministerial policy. It is ministers' current policy that we should charge for admission at sites where we have someone on site and provide a service to visitors, and that we should aim to keep the charges broadly in line with those of the rest of the historic environment sector. If you want to pursue the charges aspect, you have to pursue it with the ministers because they are the ones who set the policies in that area. If you are more interested in what we are doing to encourage a wider range of people to visit the sites, you need to talk to us. I and some of my colleagues would be happy to give you more detail about some of the initiatives that we have taken to try to address that issue.

**Diana Murray:** We are a bit of a litmus test on sensitivity on the business of organisational change—we are at the sharp end of it. What I am noticing most is that it is distracting the organisations that have been co-operating with us. Last year, we were moving together quite fast and firmly in co-operative ventures and on working together to try to solve problems, not so much with properties but with other aspects, particularly with information and the national collections, which we touched on this morning. Because everyone is

now so uncertain, there is a big retrenchment. Everyone is going back into their shell, and people are not as willing to go into co-operative ventures and work together as they were before. I am very much looking forward to that being solved and out of the way so that we can move forward.

**Ken Macintosh:** It helps to have that on the record. No one in the committee will be in any doubt that those issues cause anxiety. With regard to the earlier question, “access” refers to both the issue of widening access and the issue of funding. These days, funding tends to be available for widening access. It is a question for the committee to decide.

**Mark Adderley:** One of the challenges that we all face is to ensure that we have a broader appeal and are much more effective at selling what we have. That responsibility falls on all of us, and it applies across the age range, both inside and outside Scotland. We try to work together closely on marketing initiatives—for example, this winter we are running a keeping the Borders open initiative.

I return to a subject that we discussed earlier—the media. We can use the media to do some of that work for us. Members are probably aware that the formal opening of the new Culloden visitor centre will take place in April. Today we have announced a search for a couple of children who, ideally, will have ancestors on both sides of the battle to tell some of the real story. The media are helping us with that initiative, which is about selling interest in Culloden to a much broader range of people, including children, and linking it to genealogy, which we talked about earlier. We can use the media to generate a broader range of interest and to increase access. We have a fantastic asset and it is incumbent on all of us, with Government support, to ensure that we are doing the right things to sell it to people in Scotland and beyond.

**Jeremy Purvis:** I have two questions for the RCAHMS’s representative. In answer to an earlier question, you read out what you were told to say and I appreciate that you may do the same in reply to mine, which follows on from Mr Macintosh’s question about the environment that you are in, given the uncertainty that exists about your future. Have you been given an indication of when the Government will reach a conclusion on your future?

**Diana Murray:** I believe that the Government will make a statement some time at the end of this month. My understanding is that our organisation will be mentioned in some way in that statement, but I do not know what will be said.

**Jeremy Purvis:** It would be right for us to ask the minister about that.

I have a final question about Historic Scotland’s budget over the spending review period. According to the information that you have provided in your submission, if we take out the one-off capital investment next year for new accommodation, we are talking about a fairly considerable real-terms cut over the next three years. Your cash budget falls and then picks up—in effect, it stands still. If we include inflation, your ability to deliver will be considerably reduced. I also noted that you are planning a real-terms cut in your programme. What impact will that have on your work?

**John Graham:** I have two points to make about the numbers. The figure on funding from the Scottish Government takes account of the requirement to achieve 2 per cent efficiency savings that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth has imposed on all public bodies. If we achieve that target, the money that we save will be redeployed into front-line spending, so the impact will not be as severe as the crude figures suggest.

The other point to make about the numbers is that the amount of resource that will be available to us over the spending review period depends to a significant extent on how successful we are in growing the third or so of our overall income that we generate ourselves.

As regards the impact of the spending review settlement, we are satisfied that it will enable us to carry through the big investment at Stirling and to keep the rest of the estate in good condition. We expect to be able to sustain our grant programme at broadly the same level, so we do not anticipate that the settlement will have severe impacts. Clearly, we would like to have had a bigger allocation, but we do not think that the settlement will have a drastic impact on any of our clients.

**Rob Gibson:** I could not help but note the question about the Culloden developments, where you look after the battlefield. It would be remiss if, in this session, we did not think about a couple of other battlefields that have been in the news—Sheriffmuir, because of the potential power line there; and the National Trust’s heritage at Bannockburn, which languishes compared with Culloden in terms of the money that has been levered in. Should we have a specific review of the way in which the battlefields of Scotland are dealt with? We are aware of different approaches in England. Is it time that we started to give a higher priority to those pieces of land?

**John Graham:** There was a commitment in the Scottish National Party manifesto to look at greater protection for battlefields.

**Rob Gibson:** Yes, I am aware of that.

**John Graham:** Following that through, the minister has asked us to put together a draft Scottish historic environment policy on the protection of battlefields. We are engaged in that at the moment and we intend to launch the draft policy for consultation within the next few months.

**Rob Gibson:** That is excellent. You see the issue as something that you can comment on and on which you can respond to the priorities. What about the National Trust?

**Mark Adderley:** I agree that it is important to have a review of battlefields. With regard to Bannockburn in particular, 2014 is obviously an opportunity to do something. There is a limit to the number of projects that we can undertake at any one point in time, but it is something that we will be considering.

**Graham U'ren:** We look forward to the consultation stage on the historic environment policy for battlefields. A number of our member organisations are obviously very interested in that question, but it is not an easy one to solve at all. The sooner we have a structure, the better.

**Rob Gibson:** I note the BEFS submission concerning

"VAT on repair and maintenance, but not on alteration work"

and so on. How much is your sector affected by the requirement to pay VAT on some of the work that you do?

**John Graham:** That is a big issue. When somebody is considering whether to demolish and rebuild or to conserve, the VAT issues arise, because there will be no VAT on the rebuild but there will be VAT on the conservation and repair work. Past Scottish Administrations have made regular representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer about that in the context of the budget. I would be surprised if this Administration does not do the same when, as happens every year, the Administration is asked what it would like to see in the budget.

**Rob Gibson:** So would I, but we have the council directive that applies until December 2010, after which something else might take over. Is there good reason to make the case in more detail at this stage in order to try to quantify the extra cost to your organisations, so that there is different ammunition being used in any kind of advocacy from Scotland?

**Mark Adderley:** There probably would be. I would like to go back and take a look at the numbers—I do not have them to hand, but I will come back to you and let you know what the financial impact is. The point that John Graham made is right, particularly in relation to the National Trust for Scotland as a charity that has an

obligation to ensure that the heritage of Scotland is conserved. We have a scheme called the little house improvement scheme, in which we are quite often fighting with developers—when they are looking at the options, it is much cheaper and more efficient from a business perspective to knock down a building and rebuild than it is to maintain an old one. From a conservation and a policy perspective, it is important for the conservation of heritage, but from a financial perspective it has an impact. I will come back to you to confirm some numbers.

**Diana Murray:** It is also a green issue, because reusing buildings obviously uses less energy than rebuilding—it ought to go on to that agenda.

**Rob Gibson:** It is good that it is cross cutting.

**Graham U'ren:** I was going to raise that point. There is a lot of research on this area, so we do not have to look too far to find figures for you. Plenty of people have campaigned on this issue in the past, so we ought to be able to pick it up quite easily. It now crosses over with the sustainability question. For example, what should be done to a large stone and slate building to maintain it properly from a sustainability point of view is probably largely what should be done to it to maintain its historic character, but that is perhaps not always the case. The need for a separate set of criteria for VAT exemption for proper sustainable management of the building, vis-à-vis the fact that it is also a listed building, is another issue that rapidly needs to be examined.

**Rob Gibson:** So refreshed information should be available from several sources that you could provide for us.

**The Convener:** That concludes the committee's questions this morning. I thank the witnesses for their attendance. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 23 January.

*Meeting closed at 11:45.*

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