



HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND
MINUTES OF HES BOARD MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2019
LONGMORE HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Present:

Jane Ryder, Chair
Janet Brennan
Andrew Holmes
Coinneach Maclean
Fiona McLean
Paul Stollard
Ken Thomson

In attendance:

Alex Paterson, Chief Executive
Stephen Duncan, Director of Commercial and Tourism
Gary Love, Director of Corporate Services
David Mitchell, Director of Conservation
Lindsey Ross, Director of People
Kirsteen Rowlands, Director of Communications
Donella Steel, Director of Finance
Alison Turnbull, Director of Development and Partnerships
Lorna Ewan, Head of Visitor Experience, Content and Learning (part)
Kit Reid, Senior Interpretation Manager (part)
Denise Mattison, Head of Corporate Analysis and Performance (part)
Susan Loch, Head of Visitor Operations and Customer Service (part)
Hayley Shields, Quality Services Manager (part)
Suzanne Casey, Head of the Chief Executive's Office
Jules Davidson-Welch, Board Secretariat

Introduction and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ian Brennan, Ian Robertson and Trudi Craggs.
2. The Chair noted that Andrew Holmes and Trudi Craggs are due to leave the Board in January, so this was their last Board meeting. The Board all thanked

them for their invaluable contribution since the formation of Historic Environment Scotland in 2015.

Minutes of the 02 October Board Meeting and Action Tracker

3. The Board approved the minutes of the August meeting. The table of actions was reviewed, and progress discussed, noting a number of items which are due to be presented in the coming year, as well as a number of actions which will now be closed.

Chair's Update

4. The Chair noted the formal signing of a lease for Archive House, observing that this is a very satisfactory solution in fulfilment of the commitment to ensuring investment in the former RCAHMS archives which had been a significant policy consideration in the formation of HES.
5. The Chair thanked those who contributed to the considerable revisions to the papers which had been put forward by the Built Heritage Investment Group to the Strategic Historic Environment Forum (SHEF). The Chair reported Forum members had discussed the paper, including discussion on the realities of the climate emergency and the principle of managed decline in the historic environment. The timelines set out in the paper had been broadly agreed so work continues. The Chair also noted a convergence in the direction of the various Working Groups, and invited members to reflect on how the HES Board should contribute to this process as part of forward planning for 2020.

Chief Executive's Report

6. The Chief Executive presented his update to the Board, including:
 - Performance to the end of November is strong on a number of fronts. Delivery of annual indicators is good, as is financial performance to date.
 - His recent positive meeting with the Cabinet Secretary, with discussion focusing on climate change, visitor numbers and St Peters, Cardross. The Scottish Government Spending Review, was also discussed, noting that it will be affected by the timing of UK and Scottish budgets.
 - The Chief Executive briefed the Board on a potential request for a property to be considered for state care and updated on the Stone of Destiny with matters still being considered by the Commissioners of the Regalia.
7. Reflecting on the Corporate Performance Update, the Board noted the good progress against the Corporate Plan and Annual Operating Plan indicators and discussed the following points:
 - Regarding the request to alter the indicator relating to the Built Heritage Group, the Board felt the wording should remain unchanged at this time.

Instead, an explanation will be provided for why the indicator will not be met;

- Following procurement of a new implementation partner for CMIS, the Board noted the increased costs and slightly longer timelines for phase one of the project as a result, but that it is intended this be addressed in phase two so that overall budget is not affected. The Board noted the risks of changing project partner but agreed what was proposed was appropriate and approved the variance. It was noted the project is one of those included within the “Programme for Success.”
- A Project Manager has been appointed to lead progress on the Skills Investment Plan, taking forward the work of the current OPiT Skills and Expertise Working Group;
- The Board discussed the format of reporting progress against corporate indicators. The Chair and Chief Executive will consider how this can be developed to provide appropriate detail.

ACTION: Chief Executive

8. The Board congratulated Emma Kilpatrick, Head of HR Services, on winning HR Manager of the Year at the HR Networks annual awards. Members also congratulated HES apprentices, who had performed well at the World Skills Live event and Joseph Sellors, Monument Manager at Dumbarton Castle, who won the Regional Rising Star award at the Scottish Thistle Awards.

9. The Board considered the Financial Statement to 31 October 2019, noting the following points:

- The overall level of overcommitment had reduced since the last statement;
- The Scottish Government funding and salary costs budgets have been increased in month due to receipt of formal confirmation of additional pension funding;
- Recent weather-related site closures might have a bearing on reported income in the next report;
- Terms of Reference for the PA Consultancy work will be shared with the Board and a date set for Board engagement.

ACTION: Director of Finance

10. The Board discussed recent trends in visitor origin; reductions in European visitors offset by increased North American tourism. Members noted that Scotland and UK-wide industry bodies have also observed this trend, alongside growth in visitor numbers from the Far East, and forecast that it will continue. The Board noted the importance of encouraging domestic visitors, in line with the organisation’s wider aims and purpose.

11. The Board discussed the additional annex on the Buildings at Risk register; further details will be circulated to Members in due course.

ACTION: Director of Heritage

Draft Annual Operating Plan and Resourcing 2020/21

Denise Mattison, Head of Corporate Analysis and Performance, joined the meeting

12. The Head of Corporate Analysis and Performance invited the Board to discuss and provide strategic direction on the draft Annual Operating Plan 2020/21, which sets out actions, indicators and resources for Year 2 of the Corporate Plan. The Board will be asked to ratify an updated version of the plan at their meeting in February 2020, ahead of publication in April.

13. Due to the timing of the General Election, there is some uncertainty around the timetable for the announcement of the Scottish Budget. This may impact on the timeframe for finalising the AOP and Budget for 2020/21.

14. The Board welcomed the draft, providing the following feedback:

- Consideration to be given to ensuring that the indicators where possible set out specific and measurable outcomes, and focus on delivery of activity
- The Board noted language used around addressing inequality and poverty and suggested this might be revisited.
- Members requested details of the change in activities and resources being proposed in order to fulfil this plan.

ACTION: Chief Executive and Director of Finance

15. The Board received assurance that the necessary baselines for measuring impact had been gathered, including research undertaken to produce a new wellbeing baseline.

16. The Board thanked the Head of Corporate Analysis and Performance for the draft plan. The feedback provided will be reflected in the version that will be circulated in February.

The Head of Corporate Analysis and Performance left the meeting

Interpretation: Status Report and Key Delivery Areas

Lorna Ewan, Head of Visitor Experience, Content and Learning, and Kit Reid, Senior Interpretation Manager, joined the meeting

17. The Director of Commercial and Tourism introduced the paper, emphasising that delivery of the interpretation programme is fundamental to the delivery of the Visitor Strategy. The paper gives an overview of how HES teams currently approach interpretation, how digital media is used, views on best practice, and the organisation's ambitions for the future.

18. The Head of Visitor Experience, Content and Learning, and the Senior Interpretation Manager gave a presentation to the Board, highlighting the

emphasis on eliciting an emotional response and connection to the subject matter, emphasising the importance of traditional graphic panels as well as more modern mediums, and aiming to give Members an insight into the balance of resources applied to business as usual work and potential or larger projects.

19. The Board discussed the paper and presentation, highlighting the following:

- Members observed that the resources devoted to maintaining and refreshing “business as usual “across all sites appeared low
- Ensuring issues of interpretation are considered within major investment projects, including resources and quality will be critical
- Members encouraged community involvement and collaboration in shaping interpretation, noting that this is already undertaken where resources permit;
- Members welcomed the mix of tools used and the aims of high quality of interpretation, noting the effectiveness and appropriateness of low-cost media in specific contexts as part of the overall picture;
- It is important to evaluate activities, such as events, to inform future activities and prioritisation of resources
- There was a spectrum of views on whether the current offer is always quite as good as HES would like to think and it is important to take in other views including both academic and community views
- In this context it is important that HES’ interpretation offer is measured and benchmarked.
- As the HES interpretation offer is developed and reviewed for future delivery, members encouraged an ambitious and thoughtful approach.

ACTION: Director of Commercial and Tourism

The Head of Visitor Experience, Content and Learning, and the Senior Interpretation Manager left the meeting

Engine Shed

20. Given the pressure of time the Board agreed that the Engine Shed item should be deferred to a future meeting.

ACTION: Director of Conservation
/Board Secretariat

Visitor Strategy

Susan Loch, Head of Visitor Operations and Customer Service, and Hayley Shields, Quality Services Manager, joined the meeting

21. The Director of Commercial and Tourism introduced the paper, which provides an update on delivery of the Visitor Strategy since it was approved by the Board in 2018. He advised that the National Strategy: Tourism Scotland 2020 will be launched in March 2020, with strategic objectives which align well with the HES Visitor Strategy.

22. Briefing the Board on the delivery status of each of the strategy's deliverables, the Director of Commercial and Tourism expressed confidence in the Visitor, Experience and Partnership focused objectives, emphasised the challenges involved in achieving the income goals in line with industry-wide pressures, and underlined the risks to delivery of the sustainability objective.
23. The Head of Visitor Operations and Customer Service and Quality Services Manager briefed the Board on the Quality Barometer tool, which has been in development for two years, which will gather feedback from a variety of sources including review websites, Visit Scotland assessments and customer letters to produce data which will be used to monitor performance and provide a basis for internal and external benchmarking. The Quality Barometer is due to be launched in April 2020. The Board commended this project, noting the excellent value for money and provision of training to ensure that staff across the organisation will be able to make use of the data produced to inform decision-making.
24. The Board discussed the information provided in the update, highlighting the following:
- It is important, in running our visitor-facing operations, to credibly demonstrate HES' role as the lead body in the field
 - The Board emphasised their commitment to the delivery of the Edinburgh Castle Master Plan, and received assurance that work to develop the quality of visitor experience would continue in the interim; and
 - Members noted progress of the volunteering programme, welcoming news that HES is due to be awarded the *Investors in Volunteering* accreditation.
25. The Board thanked those involved for the encouraging report.

The Head of Visitor Operations and Customer Service and Quality Services Manager left the meeting

Archive Steering Group: Final Report

26. Andrew Holmes introduced the Archive Steering Group Final Report to the Board, which summarises the work and outcomes on the dissolution of the Group. The Steering Group, chaired by Andrew, was established in late 2018 as an advisory board to provide guidance and oversight to deliver the long-term aspirations for the HES Archive. He drew the Board's attention to a number of matters, including:
- The lease of Archive House should be viewed as a key achievement in securing the future of the now HES Archive;
 - The Corporate Programme Governance Board ("Programme for Success ") will assume responsibility for overseeing the archive relocation and associated lease of John Sinclair House.
 - Concern was expressed around the implementation of the recommendations put forward by Astute Fire in their review of fire risk to the Archive. A number of items on this list remain outstanding although there was assurance from staff that these issues will all be addressed in early 2020.

27. The Chair commended the excellent progress in terms of securing future accommodation for the Archive. She asked the Chief Executive to ensure that the list of remedial fire safety measures is completed as soon as possible, and to provide a progress update to the Board during the first week of January.

ACTION: Director of Corporate Services

There followed a closed session of the Board and Chief Executive

28. Minute of 13th November HESe Meeting

Coinneach Maclean highlighted key aspects of the last HESe board meeting, which had included draft three-year plans for retail and NCAP activities. It was also noted that a programme of work had been agreed to establish opportunities associated with ancillary properties across the estate.

29. Minute of 30th September Staff Governance Committee Meeting:

Ken Thomson summarised the key points from the last meeting of the Committee on 30 September. With particular reference to the section on Health and safety, it was agreed that the annual health and safety report would be considered by the HES Board as is current practice. The Committee might consider this, but there was no requirement for separate reports.