

Historic Scotland Consultation: Investment Review Archaeology Funding Programme

Planning Committee
14 June 2007

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To recommend the Council's response to the Historic Scotland consultation document *Investment Review Archaeology Funding Programmes*.

2 Summary

- 2.1 This report makes recommendations on the Council's response to the consultation which invites views on the priorities and operation of Historic Scotland's investment programmes for the archaeological sector, covering archaeological operations, grants for conservation work on ancient monuments and agreements for the management of ancient monuments. Written responses to the consultation paper are invited by 30 June 2007.

3 Main report

Context

- 3.1 This consultation seeks the views of interested and experienced stakeholders as the first stage of a review aimed at refreshing the priorities and systems used by Historic Scotland to determine where we invest the public funds made available to us to support the management and investigation of Scotland's archaeology and ancient monuments.
- 3.2 Historic Scotland currently operates 3 external funding programmes under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 ("the 1979 Act"). This review looks at each programme in turn. There are also important questions about balance between the funding streams.

3.3 The Archaeological Funding Programmes have had a significant beneficial impact upon both the physical preservation and enhancement of Edinburgh's historic environment, and on the understanding and recording of our heritage, and the local and national economy.

The Archaeology Programme

3.4 The Archaeology Programme operates under section 45 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Its main purpose is to mitigate destruction of archaeological sites (including buildings) and landscapes through projects involving survey, excavation, advice, training and education and to make accounts of the work available for general and specialist audiences. Work is commissioned on a commercial basis or (wherever possible) by grants to bodies such as universities or heritage trusts.

3.5 There is a single annual bidding cycle, with bids submitted during September and decisions announced in January. Urgent projects can, however, be considered at any time of year. Investment per project can range from over £250,000 (phased over several years), to sums of a few hundred pounds. The strategic objectives of the programme are to:

- achieve a better understanding of our past;
- improve techniques for preserving and interpreting surviving evidence;
- ensure that important sites which cannot be preserved are recorded;
- develop the knowledge base for owners of sites and monuments and for all with an interest in land management;
- encourage community participation and build capacity, and
- publish information relating to all of the above.

Archaeology Programme Questions

Q1. Which aspects of the Archaeology programme work well, and which less well, under the current arrangements?

The broad nature of the Archaeology Programmes is one of its strengths. However, the present programme is heavily oversubscribed and suffers from limited funding and over the period 2001 & 2006 has not increased in line with inflation.

Q2. What are the key current and future challenges that the Archaeology programme should address?

Key current and future challenges that the programme should address are climate change, national research agendas, sustainability, historic landscapes, cultural resource management and community engagement. In order to address these issues, current levels of funding will have to be increased.

Q3. What changes would you like to see made to policies, priorities or procedures?

The programme should become more flexible in identifying priorities with the introduction of a regular 5 year programme of review based upon regional research agendas and changing demands such as climate change. The current system requires the annual re-application for funding which in terms of longer term projects can lead to problems. A process which can commit to multi-year funding would be welcome.

The Ancient Monuments Grants programme

3.6 The Ancient Monuments Grants programme, under section 24 of the 1979 Act, makes grants available to the owners of ancient monuments. Grants are intended to assist owners (or those authorised by them) to preserve, maintain and manage monuments in their possession and, where appropriate, to open and present them to the public. The guiding principle is to preserve sites as they have come down to our day, without radical structural interventions or rebuilding. Work is funded only if it halts, or significantly slows down, structural deterioration for at least 10 years – and ideally for a generation or more.

Ancient Monuments Grants Questions

Q4. Which aspects of the Ancient Monuments Grants system work well, and which less well, under the current arrangements?

The provision of Historic Scotland Architect's report is a welcome aspect of this system.

Q5. What changes would you like to see made to policies, priorities or procedures?

No comment.

Q6. Do potential applicants and their professional advisers find the Architects' Advisory Reports and other advice provided by Historic Scotland of value?

Yes.

The Management Agreement Programme

3.7 The programme operates under Section 17 of the 1979 Act. Management Agreements can cover a very wide variety of works of preservation, and also presentation and public access. Agreements are voluntary but legally binding. They can include payments for capital or current expenditure, but are not intended to provide any profit element.

Management Agreement Questions

- Q7.** What works well about Management Agreements, and what less well, under the current arrangements?

In principle, the implementation of this scheme is a welcome initiative. However, currently there has been little take up within Edinburgh.

- Q8.** What are the key current and future challenges in the area of monument management?

Given the potential scale of implementing such a programme, it is questionable if the sector has the current capacity both in terms of staff and resources.

- Q9.** What changes would you like to see made to policies, priorities or procedures?

In order to facilitate the growth of management agreements it is suggested that they be linked to the award of ancient monument grants. In this way capital grants could be linked to the long term management of the monuments. Similarly, smaller 'enabling grants' could be given to local communities to employ specialists to draw up such documents

Balance between programmes

- 3.8 Taking the three "archaeological programmes" together as 100%, Historic Scotland spends approximately 85% on archaeological rescue and research, 12.5% on grants for capital works to slow or arrest the physical decay of ancient monuments, and 2.5% on agreements to manage ancient monuments in ways which reduce their rate of decay.

Questions of Balance

- Q10.** Is the current distribution of funds among the three programmes equitable, and if not, how would you prefer to see funds distributed – and why?

It is considered that priority should be given to overarching national agendas.

- Q11.** Is total expenditure on these activities, as a share of Historic Scotland's overall budget, at an appropriate level? If not, which areas of our operations should be afforded a lower priority, so as to free up more funds for archaeology and monument management?

As the current budget is considered to be under-funded at present, any decrease in one would obviously have a negative effect. An overall increase in Scottish Executive funding is required.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications following for the Council from this report.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The Archaeological Funding Programmes have had a significant beneficial impact upon both the physical preservation and enhancement of Edinburgh's historic environment. It is considered that an overall increase in the funding programmes would result in additional benefits.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves this report as its response to the Historic Scotland consultation document Investment Review Archaeology Funding Programmes.



Andrew M Holmes
Director of City Development
5.6.7.

Appendices	None
Contact/tel	Jack Gillon (469 3634) John Lawson (558 1040)
Wards affected	Citywide
Background Papers	Investment Review: Archaeology Funding Programmes, Historic Scotland Consultation Paper, 2007.