



Consultation response

Historic Houses Response to A Culture Strategy for Scotland

Date: September 2018

Description: This was a consultation on a proposed culture strategy for Scotland

About us

Historic Houses represents the UK's largest collection of independently owned historic houses, castles and gardens. Our family includes over 1,650 important listed places across the country. In Scotland, our Historic Houses places include Inveraray Castle, Traquair House and Dumfries House.

The historic houses and gardens Historic Houses represents are often deeply embedded in rural communities: as local heritage landmarks; as major tourist attractions; as small businesses in their own right, as well as hubs for other local businesses; as employers and clients; as providers of community space and leisure activities; and of course, as land managers and stewards of rural heritage and landscapes.

Consultation Questions

Question 1: What is your view of the Vision as set out above?

Historic Houses supports the Vision.

Question 2: If you have any further comments on the Vision, please provide them below. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

Historic Houses welcomes the Vision for culture in Scotland. We are particularly pleased that the role of heritage and the historic environment are specifically mentioned as a key part of the Vision. Many of our members in Scotland run enterprising businesses and tourism attractions at their properties and they are at the heart of the social and economic life of their local communities. As such, Historic Houses is also pleased to see the clear acknowledgment in this opening statement of the transformative nature that culture can play 'for individuals, communities, businesses and society'.

Question 3: What is your view of the ambition, 'Transforming through culture' as set out above?

Historic Houses supports the ambition

Question 5: Please provide comments on the aims and actions under this ambition. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

Historic Houses supports the aims and actions of 'Transforming through culture', and we are looking forward to more detail about the proposed new cultural leadership post. Historic Houses has been a key founding member of the UK Government's Heritage Council, and we look forward to engaging and supporting this new post in a similar way. It is vitally important that culture concerns, such as heritage, are considered across all government departments, and we are very pleased the Scottish Government has taken this initiative.

Historic Houses would suggest that the establishment of this role in Scottish Government could be linked to the action to develop alliances that support social change through culture, by perhaps providing the leadership that will facilitate working partnerships between culture and other sectors, and the government and local communities. There are already some useful working groups in heritage that bring together both private, public, and third sector organisations, which Historic Houses is involved with.

We are similarly supportive of the proposal to develop a national partnership that would bring together the culture sector with academic partners. Historic Houses understand the importance of coordinating research with real-world application, and using it to share the positive message of the benefits of heritage and culture. We are currently involved with both the Yorkshire Country Houses partnership, and have recently launched a PhD with Oxford University. We look forward to taking part in similar projects with Scottish Universities.

Question 6: What is your view of the ambition 'Empowering through culture'?

Historic Houses support the ambition.

Question 8: Please provide comments on the aims and actions under this ambition. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

Historic Houses is supportive of the aims and actions in this section. We are especially pleased to see that Scottish Government is looking to develop new partnerships between cultural and creative organisations and businesses, and deprived communities. Many Historic Houses places in Scotland are already lynchpins in their local communities, providing career opportunities and bringing in secondary spend, as well as working with community groups and schools to help them to explore their heritage. We look forward to working with Scottish Government and other partners on this in the future.

Question 9: What is your view of the ambition 'Sustaining Culture'?

Historic Houses supports the ambition.

Question 11: Please provide comments on the aims and actions under this ambition. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

Historic Houses is supportive of all the aims and actions under this ambition. We are particularly interested in working with Scottish Government and other partners to ensure that Scotland has a world-leading legislative framework to sustain culture for present and future generations. As identified in the consultation document, the funding for culture and heritage initiatives has become more and more competitive in recent years. In some cases, changes to devolved powers, such as removing the VAT on reusing existing buildings, could make a huge difference

to the success of heritage projects and /or businesses, which in turn generate opportunities for the local community, and revenue for the national economy. Conversely, the recent and significant increases in business rates have had a negative impact on our members, their backlog of repairs and their investment in the property and the business. As we identified in our paper, Supporting Scotland's Heritage, some aspects of the Land Reform programme and other possible areas such as the review of the Scottish Law on Succession could impact on our members' viability and could therefore impact on the sustainability of heritage culture in Scotland. Historic Houses would be keen to meet with Scottish Government and other partners in the heritage sector to discuss further how other devolved legislation could be harnessed to better suit the diverse needs of Scottish culture.

Question 12: Please provide details of any examples of good work and best practice, from Scotland or internationally, that you think could be included in the final strategy? We are interested in a range of different approaches.

Dumfries House is one of Historic Houses places in Scotland, and is an excellent case study for the final strategy.

Built between 1754 and 1759 for William Crichton Dalrymple, the 5th Earl of Dumfries (1699-1768), by the Adam brothers, John, Robert and James, it survives complete with its original and exceptionally well documented furniture collection supplied by Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779) and the three most eminent Scottish cabinetmakers Alexander Peter, William Mathie and Francis Brodie. Saved from auction by the intervention of His Royal Highness, The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay in 2007, visitors can explore this stunning 2,000 acre estate 365 days a year, with free entry and parking.

The Prince's Foundation was created by the merging of the Prince's Foundation for Building Community, the Prince's Regeneration Trust, The Great Steward of Scotland's Dumfries House Trust and the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in 2018. At its heart, the Prince's Foundation is about supporting people to create community. Whether through building sustainable housing or regenerating neighbourhoods, developing family attractions or teaching traditional arts and skills, the Prince's Foundation is leading the way forward.

Over the last ten years the House has been restored, complete with contents, to its former glory and attention has now turned to the wider Estate and surrounding community. In line with the vision and ethos of the Prince's Foundation, the estate is now a hub for educational and training programmes, including textiles, engineering, hospitality training, traditional building skills, drawing and horticulture. It also places an emphasis on outreach, building off of the success of the estate as a driver of heritage led regeneration of the wider community and indeed further afield.

EDUCATION

Through its education arm, the Prince's Foundation offers innovative and inspiring skills-based courses in a broad range of subjects, from traditional arts and heritage craft skills to architecture and design, science, engineering, horticulture and hospitality. The level of programmes ranges from Master's degrees and PhD's with partners such as the University of Oxford, through to engaging over 10,000 primary and secondary school children a year at Dumfries House. All of our education programmes at Dumfries House benefit from purpose-built centres, including centre's for STEM, horticulture and food education, farm education, textiles, outdoor and nature-based education, hospitality, and craft skills. We offer a variety of programmes

throughout the year that are available to schools, youth groups, local authorities, charitable organisations, private individuals and many other establishments. In addition to programmes delivered directly by the Prince's Foundation, we work with a number of partner institutions, including the Prince's Trust, the Royal Drawing School and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland – enabling them to deliver their activities on the estate.

Underpinning all of the educational endeavours and programmes we have established and currently offer is the notion that they add value, either by filling a perceived gap or enhancing programmes and curriculums already well established and being delivered by schools, colleges and other education providers. At the heart of the Prince's Foundation education steam are two key principles: the importance of multidisciplinary learning and of learning that is grounded in practice. For the Prince's Foundation, Dumfries House represents a place where “seeing is believing” – an opportunity to take the work that the Prince's Foundation does across the UK and internationally and demonstrate it in practice on the estate.

OUTREACH - NEW CUMNOCK

In 2014, Dumfries House were approached by a local community group from New Cumnock – a village neighbouring the Dumfries House Estate - looking to support them in their efforts to save the historic Town Hall in the village. Like other villages in the area, it had seen employment opportunities dry up and population decline year after year. With a growing number of abandoned buildings, the local authority were closing amenities such as the gym and library - with the town hall and community centre to follow.

From public consultations with the local community, it was clear they were passionate and motivated to save the town hall. In 2015, The Great Steward of Scotland's Dumfries House Trust took the decision to take the project on board and carry out a full restoration of the town hall. We engaged with the Local Authority to discuss the options for the building, agreeing that The Prince's Foundation would take ownership of the building and that the money the local authority had ear marked for the demolition of this building would be used to create a square opposite the town hall on the site where the community centre was being demolished. A master plan for the town hall and square was developed by the Prince's Foundation and the restored building has now been opened up as a community asset, hosting a wide range of community groups and activities.

Following the success of the Town Hall project, Dumfries House was approached by the community regarding an open air swimming pool across the street from the town hall – the only freshwater heated swimming pool in Scotland – which had fallen into disrepair. After a series of community consultations, Dumfries House took over the restoration and running of the pool, and the newly reopened pool has become not only a focal point for the community but also a significant tourist attraction in a community in serious need of it.

Through a considered approach to working alongside the community, it has empowered them to make decisions and influence the work that was undertaken and now they not only feel great pride but also responsibility and ownership of the new facilities in their village. These town hall and pool initiatives alone have created over 20 new jobs in the village, all now being done by local people, proud to work and live there. The Prince's Foundation continues to be driven by the desire not only to preserve the outstandingly significant heritage of the Dumfries House Estate but also on creating opportunities for employment and training in an area of high unemployment and relative deprivation. The Dumfries House project represents a growing tribute to the Prince's Foundation's belief in heritage-led regeneration.

Question 13: What can you or your organisation do to support the vision, aims, ambitions and actions of the strategy?

Historic Houses looks forward to contributing to the strategy by working with Scottish government and other partners in the culture and heritage sectors to develop outstanding culture policies, engaging with researchers, and promoting Scottish Government initiatives among Historic Houses places in Scotland.

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