

Talking about Heritage consultation team
Historic Environment Scotland
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talkingaboutheritage@hes.scot

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Dear Madam/Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation. CIfA supports the aim to get more people engaged with the subject of heritage and encourage better understanding of what heritage is, how it is relevant to society, economy, and the environment, and how they can get involved with conserving, protecting, and exploring it.

We have chosen not to respond to the consultation questions, as we do not believe that they are particularly relevant to our organisation. However, we would like to respond in principle to the questions, as well as explore how we think this guidance may be used.

We think that this guidance will be helpful to individuals who are motivated to understand heritage and who are actively looking to HES for information. The short explanations – written in accessible language – of key heritage concepts are clear and the signposting is comprehensive. We expect that this guidance would be best positioned as an introductory resource and presented in a format that is easily accessible and navigable, whether online or in printed format.

It is likely, in our opinion, that this guidance will still only be used by those who are already inspired to engage with heritage. As such, the wider mission to widen access to heritage will only realistically be achieved over a long period and as a result of consistent and proactive outreach with communities and by further mainstreaming heritage into other processes for managing places. As such, this guidance is only a first step in ensuring that heritage can be a full contributor to the processes which shape Scotland's future.

We would welcome confirmation that HES had considered a strategy for how to push this document to communities and individuals who may not realise that what they are dealing with has heritage significance. For example, proactive working with other non-heritage organisations who work with public groups. It would be useful to see a clear audience segmentation – particularly focussing on the not-already-engaged audiences. This will help to understand how people will find this guidance and how effective it will be for their needs.

As a complimentary activity, HES must continue to invest in public engagement, through its own activities and by funding external sector organisations, and it must continue to work with Government and organisations in the independent sector to deliver on these objectives. It must also do more to promote heritage as a contributor to other processes for public and community

involvement – be that through planning, the place principle, or other activities which contribute towards national performance framework objectives.

It is unlikely that ClfA as an organisation would use this guidance ourselves, however, it may be used by accredited professionals in a variety of ways, for example, by archaeological organisations that work with the public within the planning system, and voluntary and community archaeologists and organisations. We may therefore recommend this guidance as a resource for distribution amongst our members' public audiences. We note particularly the audience of local authority historic environment services with whom consultation for how to make this guidance useful to the public groups with which they interact might be particularly helpful.

We think that the document deals with archaeology, in general, very well (eg page 6). However, at places, there could be a clearer reference to some of the legal protections that certain sites have, as well as further explanation of where and how archaeological investigation – which could be damaging – may be pursued. It may also be helpful to clarify the statement that 'many archaeological digs welcome community involvement' and include more information that relates to the separate processes for development-led archaeology and community archaeology respectively. We would expand the reference to 'many archaeological digs [welcoming] community involvement' to explain the types of involvement in planning-led projects and expand on the various possibilities for undertaking community archaeological projects. This should include reference to the benefits of working with an accredited professional to help facilitate work, and working to professional standards to ensure good outcomes.

It would also be helpful to explain the principle that archaeology is often a destructive process, but one which is undertaken in order to learn more about the resource, enhancing our understanding of the past and often increasing the significance of heritage as a result.

It would also be useful to include information in the 'engaging with the planning system' section for those who may be submitting a planning application themselves. This could be helpful to ensure that people understand the potential for impacts on place but also how to contribute to the enhancement of the historic environment and mainstreaming this understanding. It may be useful to include reference to consulting an accredited heritage professional in these cases.

We are pleased that HES is promoting heritage as part of local place plans, and we are very keen to continue to explore the potential of these plans as we learn more about how they will work. We therefore hope that HES will commit to revising and expanding guidance on Local place plans in due course.

Yours sincerely,



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