

Our ref: P/ARCHAEO/HS

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Dear Sir

The Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings (Amendment) (Scotland) draft Bill [CON 1153]

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings (Amendment) (Scotland) draft Bill.

The Archaeology Service of Aberdeenshire Council also provides a Service for the neighbouring Councils Moray and Angus. We maintain three Sites & Monuments Records, which contains information on over 30,000 sites in all three areas. We provide information and advice on many aspects of the Historic Environment including Planning, Forestry, Utilities and Agri-environment schemes.

The Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings (Amendment) (Scotland) draft Bill

The Archaeology Service of Aberdeenshire Council welcomes Scottish Government's recognition of the significant role that the historic environment has to play in developing a sustainable economic future for Scotland and its desire, through the draft Bill, to *'improve the ability ... to manage this unique historic asset for the benefit of future generation'*.

While we note that it is the intention of the Bill to address some weakness that have been identified during the stakeholder engagement process we feel that it still does not cover some major issues, which would greatly strengthen the protection and enhancement of Scotland's historic environment. Great reference is made in sections of the Bill regarding the historic environment and the place that both central and local government play in its management.

1.3 by introducing a series of provisions **that will enhance the ability of central and local government to manage Scotland's unique and irreplaceable historic environment.** The amending Bill will support, in particular, the Government's Greener Strategic Objective and will provide the regulatory authorities **with a much-improved toolkit to help manage, protect and enhance Scotland's historic environment for future generations.**

1.21 Moreover, the amendments contribute to the Government's overall priority of sustainable economic growth by **improving the ability of the regulatory authorities to conserve and manage sustainably the historic environment.**

1.23 The overarching aims of the Bill **are to improve the management and protection of our historic environment by addressing the gaps and weaknesses of the current historic environment legislative framework that were identified during the year-long stakeholder engagement process.**

1.25 will enhance the ability of the regulatory and planning authorities **to manage sustainably our irreplaceable historic environment and will help ensure that we pass a legacy of which future generations of Scots can be proud.**

It is with much regret that we again see a great opportunity missed to help achieve the above statements. The Ancient Monuments legislation covers under 10% of Scotland's monuments, the remainder being covered by the Archaeology Services of local Governments or Trusts. Some of these monuments will no doubt at some time in the future become Scheduled Ancient Monuments, but until then they come under the realms of Local Government Archaeology Officers. The role that these people play is not acknowledged in the Bill, nor has the opportunity been taken in this Bill to give consideration to making Sites and Monuments Record/Historic Environment Record Services a statutory duty of local government. While the Scottish Government may be anxious to avoid imposing a new burden on local government this is no longer relevant, as all Scottish Councils now have in place arrangements for access to a Sites and Monuments Record/Historic Environment Record Service of their own. Many areas of our work would be helped greatly and some future stability would be ensured if this provision was made in the Bill.

Yours faithfully

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