

## **RCAHMS – Historic Scotland Merger**

### **FAQ master document**

#### **Merger Process**

##### **Does the merger depend on the business case being approved?**

The Cabinet Secretary has identified merger as her preferred option. The business case needs to spell out how that would work as a basis for seeking Cabinet approval to proceed with legislation.

##### **How will the two organisations work together to deliver the merger?**

Diana Murray, Chief Executive of RCAHMS and Ian Walford, Interim Chief Executive of Historic Scotland, will share the position of Senior Responsible Officer for developing the business case and managing the change process. Michael Proctor, the programme manager and team will report jointly to both Chief Executives. This will ensure that there is shared ownership of the process and provide the opportunity for increased collaboration in the interim. There will also be regular meetings of the two Senior Management Teams.

##### **What lessons have been learned from similar mergers in the past?**

Audit Scotland has recently published a review of public sector mergers and a good practice guide, which will inform management of the merger. We also have access to lessons learnt from the English Heritage merger and are in regular contact with colleagues in Wales around the proposed merger of RCAHMS with one or more Welsh heritage bodies.

##### **Is cost-cutting the main reason for the proposed merger?**

No. The primary aim of the merger is to continue the investigation, protection and celebration of Scotland's treasured historic environment by safeguarding the services, skills, expertise and resources offered by both Historic Scotland and RCAHMS.

##### **How can we avoid too much distraction by the merger process and ensure the day job gets done?**

Both organisations will continue to function as separate bodies until the merger takes place. However they also need to work together on planning and making a success of the merger. Inevitably that means that extra work will be generated for staff at all levels. The programme team will be working across both organisations to try to limit the impact of that as well as looking for early opportunities to benefit from working together more closely.

##### **Why is legislation necessary and how will it work?**

RCAHMS' functions are defined in the Royal Warrant. In order to ensure that those functions are protected it is proposed that they are set out in law and so become statutory functions of the new body. The exact content of legislation will be dependent on the business case and will be subject to formal consultation.

##### **What is the timetable for change?**

The Cabinet Secretary has asked for a business case around the end of 2012, which could then form the basis of a formal consultation on legislation in early 2013. Assuming this is achieved, then the earliest the Bill could be presented to Parliament would be the

2013-14 Parliamentary year. The earliest that the merger could then take place would be Autumn 2014.

**How will you take account of the views of stakeholders?**

We are commissioning external consultants to provide an independent analysis of stakeholder views. This will be a qualitative piece of work and will aim to get a firm understanding of the range of views and how they can be taken account of.

**The new body**

**What type of public body will the merged organisation be?**

No decision has been reached on what type of public body the new organisation will be. One of the areas the Cabinet Secretary has asked for further consideration of is the balance between curatorial independence and public accountability. This will be considered as part of developing the business case and balanced against the implications and cost of any change.

**How will the increased number of staff in the merged body be accommodated?**

In the short term both Longmore House and John Sinclair House will be used to accommodate staff. Longer term decisions on office accommodation will be linked to separate decisions required on accommodation for RCAHMS' collection and public reading room.

**Working together**

**What plans are there to map the functions of the two organisations?**

Informal discussions are already underway at many levels. A more structured mapping of functions, policies and strategies is about to commence. Alongside this, the two SMTs will take a top down look at functions and priorities and we will be encouraging and facilitating more structured discussions at an operational level. All of this will be drawn together by the programme team.

**Will areas of work begin to combine in the run up to the merger?**

There are a lot of areas where some degree of integration might sensibly take place ahead of a merger. Already Senior Managers in both organisations are taking care to ensure that any decisions they take now won't adversely affect the new organisation. As the shape and functions of the new organisation begin to evolve, there will be more opportunity to think about how to bring different elements together.

**Keeping informed**

**How are people going to be kept informed about the merger?**

Both RCAHMS and Historic Scotland have set up dedicated space on their websites for information on the merger process. We will be issuing periodic updates and you can sign up to join a mailing list to receive notification of these.