

HISTORIC SCOTLAND BOARD, 26 FEBRUARY 2008

HISTORIC SCOTLAND AND THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Introduction

1. While the new Government laid much emphasis in its initial presentation on its five strategic objectives further work over the autumn led to the publication, as part of the outcome of the Spending Review, of a more elaborate National Performance Framework. The Government intends to use this Framework for the strategic management of all its business, and further discussion is planned with Agencies and NDPBs in the coming months about how this approach might change existing governance arrangements. Mr Swinney has underlined the intention to manage through outcomes. This note reviews the relevance of the National Performance Framework to Historic Scotland's activity. It discusses two questions which have a bearing on the forthcoming Corporate Plan:-

- where do we need to start gathering more data to assess performance? and
- does the performance framework point to changes in our strategic direction?

Purpose

2. At the apex of the Framework, set out in chapter 8 of the spending review outcome, is the Purpose, which is:-

“to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable growth.”

3. Conserving properties in care and generating increasing income from visitors pretty clearly contributes to **sustainable growth**. So do effectively managing change in the historic environment, grant-aiding conservation and adaptation and providing guidance on effective conservation work. So most if not all of our work appears to contribute to the purpose.

Purpose Targets

4. Below that there are 9 purpose targets. The only ones with any significant bearing on our activities are those for economic growth and sustainability. For growth the targets are:-

- “to raise the GDP growth rate to the UK level by 2011”** and
- “to match the growth rate of small independent EU countries by 2017”**

For sustainability the targets are:-

- “to reduce emissions over the period to 2011”**
- “to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050”**

Of possible relevance is the target on productivity, which is:-

“to rank in the top quartile for productivity amongst our key trading partners in the OECD by 2017.”

5. Again generating more income at sites obviously contributes in a modest way to **growth**, as does facilitating and supporting investment in the historic environment. Our contribution to reducing **emissions** comes most obviously from what we achieve on our own estate, and from our vehicle usage. In principle it also comes from prolonging the useful life of buildings which might be demolished and replaced, and from providing guidance on effective interventions in the existing building stock, but we are some way from being able to provide evidence of what we achieve in either area. Our technical advice should be helping **productivity**, although again that is not easy to document.

National Outcomes

6. At the next level sit the 5 Strategic Objectives:- Wealthier, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger and Greener and a set of National Outcomes (all sitting under the set of Objectives rather than arranged under one or the other). The most relevant of the Outcomes for HS seem to be:-

6.1 **“we value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations”**

6.2 **“we live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need”**

6.3 **“we take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity”**

6.4 **“we live in a Scotland which is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe”**

6.5 **“our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs”** and

6.6 **“we realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.”**

There are also outcomes for education, for reducing inequalities and for reducing environmental impact to which we make a very small contribution.

7. If we consider how we would assess our contribution to these various outcomes, for 6.1 we would need evidence of numbers of visitors and visitor satisfaction, condition, and of significant losses. We have good evidence for our staffed sites, but not for the free sites, or consistently for historic sites run by others. There may be an issue for the Historic properties Group here. We are beginning in the audit to assemble data on condition and losses, and remedying some of the gaps looks like a priority in the further development of the audit.

8. For 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 the task of assessment looks really difficult, and I do not readily see what measures we could develop on our own. In each case wider surveys arranged by others look like the way forward.

9. In relation to 6.5 we probably have sufficient data about what we do at our staffed sites, but we probably need to think about gathering more systematic feedback about the performance of the Inspectorate, going beyond the general stakeholder surveys.

10. For 6.6 our income figures are probably enough.

National Indicators and Targets

11. Finally there are the 45 national indicators and targets. One of these is:-

“improve the state of Scotland’s Historic Buildings, monuments and environment.”

In order to track progress on this for central reporting purposes we need one prime indicator (because complex measures such as baskets are not allowed), but we are also going to need, in order to deal with PQs and other inquiries, the wider range of condition information we are starting to assemble through the audit. We may have to do more here; for example we have no monitoring of the condition of gardens and designed landscapes on the register.

12. None of the other targets or indicators relates specifically to our activity, although a few have a bearing on it:-

“ improve public sector efficiency through the generation of 2% cash releasing savings per annum”

“ improve people’s perceptions of the quality of public services delivered”

“increase the rate of new housebuilding”

increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live”

“reduce overall ecological footprint”

“increase the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week”

“50% of electricity generated in Scotland to come from renewable sources by 2020 (interim target of 31% by 2011)”

I doubt if we need more measures in any of these areas.

Implications for Strategy

13. Reverting to the second question in para 1 above, does the new hierarchy of purpose, outcomes and measures point to significant shifts in our current activity in HS?

14. The **Purpose** is the most important piece of the Framework. It seems clear that the Framework encourage us to give priority to the commercial activity of PIC, but not at the expense of the cultural significance of the sites. It also seems clear that it encourages us to give priority to prompt and efficient handling of consent applications, particularly for proposals which offer significant economic benefit. It is unclear whether Ministers want more weight to be given to economic benefit in decisions: we will need to test that when the SHEP

on listed building consent (lbc) is put forward for approval. The Framework probably means that in considering grant applications we should be giving more weight to proposals with economic benefits.

15. The **Purpose Targets** again point us in the direction of economic growth. They pick out reducing emissions as the most important sustainability target, and we need to step up our work to understand and reduce our own emissions, and our work designed to inform wider measures to reduce emissions from the existing building stock. The link between our technical guidance and productivity is worth noting but probably not strong enough to justify in itself stepping up our effort in this area.

16. When we get to the **National Outcomes** all the main parts of our activity are relevant to one or more of those in the list in paragraph 6, and it is not obvious that they give us any particular steer about priorities. They do make it clear that the Government takes seriously aspects of sustainability other than reducing emissions, and we will want to reflect several of them in the draft SHEP on lbc. The one outcome which we are not at the moment consciously targeting is 6.3 on national identity, and we need to consider whether there are new things we should be doing, or stronger links we should be drawing with existing activity.

17 Finally on the **National Indicator/Target** we are discussing separately what single indicator to use. Depending on the indicator we choose we may have to consider some shift in priorities to help move it in the right direction.

John Graham
Historic Scotland
February 2008