

HISTORIC SCOTLAND BOARD

Paper Title: Best Value – Annual Update

Purpose

1. To provide the Board with our 2007 Best Value Self Assessment, to invite the Board to note progress since the inaugural 2006 Self Assessment and to seek views on the way forward.

Priority

2. Routine.

Key information the Board will need to support its decisions/action

3. Continuous improvement across the range of Agency activity is one of the five Framework Document aims set by ministers and is one of the key objectives of our Corporate Plan. In support of delivery we have a continuous improvement programme (on which we report twice yearly to the Board in June and December) setting out a range of projects and other initiatives. A copy of the continuous improvement programme is attached for the new Non-Executive Directors.

4. Our commitment to continuous improvement is consistent with and complements the duty of best value placed on the Chief Executive in his role as Accountable Officer under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. Specifically, the duty of Best Value is:

- To make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and in making those arrangements and securing that balance; and
- To have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

5. To assist in the continuous improvement process, we have consciously chosen to use the Best Value Self Assessment as our diagnostic tool to identify areas for improvement in preference to other models that are available.

The Best Value Self Assessment demonstrates where we currently sit against the range of best value themes:

- Commitment and Leadership
- Responsiveness and Consultation (Stakeholders)
- Sound Governance
- Sound Management of Resources and Contractual arrangements
- Use of Review and Options Appraisal
- Sustainable Development
- Equal Opportunities Arrangements

- Joint Working
- Accountability

6. The most significant areas for improvement to emerge from the Self Assessment, including areas for best value review, are reflected in the continuous improvement programme. Audit Scotland commented favourably on our first self assessment, which has now been updated. The Board will see from the front page summary our progress against each of the nine themes. On a four point scale we get top marks from Audit Scotland for **two** themes and were in the category just below for the remainder. The most recent assessment points to us now scoring top marks for **five** of the nine themes.

Progress

7. Progress has been steady across the range of our activities. New initiatives and particular highlights include:

- Information governance framework;
- Consultation on four draft Scottish Historic Environment Policies (SHEPs);
- Internal Relations action plan;
- Stakeholder research and attitudes to the historic environment;
- Appointment of three additional non-executive Directors;
- Sustainability; and
- Equalities policy.

Decisions/Actions required of Historic Scotland Board

8. The Board is invited to agree the following action:

- ◆ We continue with progress with a particular focus on those themes not yet well developed; and
- ◆ We undertake a gap analysis against the Audit Scotland criteria to determine what actions and resources would be required to move from under development to well developed thus becoming a best value organisation.

JOHN BARBER

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13 April 2007