

**HSB 15/06**

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND BOARD MEETING 25-27 JUNE : ORKNEY**

**ANNEX A**

**Extract from Minutes of October HS Board**

1. The Board considered at some length paper HSB R 4/05. This set out the background to the case and the very complex issues involved. This note should be read alongside that paper. There was no expectation of reaching a full and final decision at the meeting. The aims were to air the various issues and to try to identify further work to be carried out or commissioned before getting to a point where informed options could be considered and decisions reached on the way forward. It was important to have a carefully audited trail of any decisions reached. We needed therefore to evaluate and explore all the options.

2. The Mavisbank Trust's proposals involved full restoration of the main house and its pavilions to operate as holiday lets, offices and interpretation. The costs were estimated at £10.49 million of which the Agency and the HLF would be expected to contribute around £7.4 million. There needed to be high level discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund to establish whether they would be likely to commit, possibly some £4.9 million, to full restoration. The issue was that we could not be certain that the figures were correct and there were no alternative schemes (or studies) to allow proposals in relation to the amount of public subsidy. The Chief Inspector's stated preference at the meeting was that we ought to consolidate the structure as a ruin, which would secure the property without ruling out a later adaptive re-use scheme. He also suggested that rather than grant-aid the Trust's scheme, Historic Scotland might consider either consolidation at its own hand or offering grant aid to the Trust to undertake consolidation as phase 1 of any forthcoming scheme.

3. The following issues surrounding the case were also discussed:

- We needed to go ahead with a general market study with the Trust's scheme evaluated in that context;
- Renewal of the scaffolding was essential against the background of serious health and safety concerns. This came with the risk that additional and essential conservation work would emerge as the scaffolding (erected some 18 years previously by the Agency's predecessors) was removed and replaced. The Agency appeared to have some liability because the scaffolding was ours;
- We needed to get ownership and access issues resolved;
- In line with exploring all options, we needed clarification on whether and how we could bring about demolition. The Board recognised this was not a palatable option;
- A staged approach might be possible. Stage 1 might be consolidation as a ruin, perhaps over a three year period. Costs might be in the region of £3 million and we needed to be clear about the impact this might have on the grants or PIC programme budgets.

4. It was agreed that the Board would return to this case in December and take stock in the light of further work and investigations carried out between now and then.