

Best value review of TCRE Group – Conclusions as agreed by SMT and Board

1.0 Group Designation

The Group title should be changed to *'Technical Conservation Group'*.

2.0 Objective

The Technical Conservation Group should have the following overall objective ;

To inform and sustain the conservation, repair and maintenance of the built environment through ;

- *Undertaking technical and scientific research.*
- *Supporting the perpetuation and understanding of traditional building skills.*
- *Understanding and promoting the use and availability of traditional building materials.*
- *Provision of specialist technical and scientific advice.*
- *Provision of applied specialist conservation services.*
- *Delivery of technical education and outreach activity.*

3.0 Roles and Policies

3.1 Technical and scientific research

The role of the Group should be to identify and deliver technical and scientific research against a wider Agency research strategy.

Effective delivery of this research requires a mix of collaboration, commissioned work, and in – house research. Means of delivery should be subject to periodic review.

The research should concentrate on materials, skills, technologies, conservation, repair and maintenance issues.

The programme should be agreed as part of an overall Agency research programme

3.2 Traditional building skills

The role of the Group should be to evaluate skills and knowledge gaps, and facilitate development of qualifications and educational resources to address these.

The Group should generally not be the primary mechanism for training delivery itself, excepting specialist areas to be covered under the HS Craft Fellowship programme and the HLF / SE Masonry conservation scheme.

The Group should work closely with key partners in pursuing its role.

The Group should continue to work with the Grants Team, HLF and CHTs to encourage the provision of good quality training as part of grant –aided projects where this is appropriate.

The Group should facilitate a national overview and encouraging networking opportunities for those with sector interests.

3.3 Traditional building materials

The role of the Group should be to understand, assist in identification of sources of, and encourage the use of, traditional building materials without interference in the marketplace.

3.4 Technical Education and Outreach activity

The role of the Group should be to encourage best practice in the conservation, repair and maintenance of the built environment.

Key audiences should be those involved in technical aspects of caring for the built environment, particularly building professionals and local authorities, as well as other Agency staff.

Broader outreach to traditional building owners should continue, and the Group should continue to address young people in collaboration with other parts of the Agency, but these audiences should be a lesser priority.

The Group is should develop a strategy for the use of new electronic delivery mechanisms.

In its charging policies the Group should give the wider benefits of education precedence over income generation.

3.5 Specialist technical and scientific advice

The role of the Group should be to provide specialist technical advice.

The most important audience for advice is other staff in the Agency.

Access to such advice should be made easier.

The Group should continue to respond to requests for assistance from external partners such as NTS, CHT's and Local Authorities, but this should be a lesser priority.

3.6 Applied specialist conservation services

The role of the Group should be to provide applied conservation services in stone and painted surfaces.

The Group should continue to provide in – house applied conservation services in stone. Conservation of painted surfaces should be maintained but in more limited form. Work on properties in care or on grant cases should take priority. The Group should respond to reasonable requests from external partners for conservation work so long as this does not interfere in the marketplace.

The team carrying out applied conservation should contribute their specialist advice to the wider work of the Group.

4.0 Structure

The objective should be delivered through 4 main units, plus a support unit. The links between the various roles and policies are such that these units are best managed within the Agency in a separate Group, whose head is a member of the Senior Management Team. The heads of each of these units should report to the Director. The units should be as follows:-

- Science and Technical Research Unit
- Applied Conservation Unit
- Traditional Building Skills Unit
- Technical Outreach and Education Unit
- Administrative and Finance Unit

Historic Scotland

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