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Mr Wyllie
Request-25235-ed3eddbbe@whatdotheyknow.com

Your ref: Request-25235-ed3eddbbe@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: Fol/10/00022

3 February 2010

Dear Mr Wyllie

Thank you for your email requests dated 30 December 2009 and 12 January 2010 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, for information contained in any minutes of meetings or correspondence since 1st January 2008 between Ministers or officials and any of the three bodies concerned in the rationalisation and streamlining of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), Historic Scotland and the National Archives of Scotland (NAS).

We have completed our search for the information you request, and I have provided the relevant information we hold on meetings and correspondence in the form of complete and accurate extracts from our records as part of this letter and in the attached annexes. While we have endeavoured to provide information whenever possible, exemptions under section 30(b)(i)&(ii) of the Act apply to some of the information in the series of e-mail exchanges during this period between officials and representatives of the 3 bodies – see **annex 12**. These exemptions apply because disclosure of the information would be likely to inhibit substantially the free and frank provision of advice and the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation.

As the exemption is conditional we have applied the 'public interest test'. This means we have, in all the circumstances of this case, considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in discussions about the future of public bodies but we believe that this will largely be met by the information which we are providing. In our view there is a greater public interest in ensuring that Ministers and officials have some private space within which they can have free and frank discussions about issues such as this, without fear that all details of those discussions will be prematurely released.

MEETINGS

Linda Fabiani, as Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, and her officials met with representatives of RCAHMS to discuss these matters during the period concerned on 21 August 2008 and 11 December 2008. The 21 August meeting was with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Chief Executive of RCAHMS to discuss alternative options for delivery of relevant benefits envisaged by the Scottish Government's Simplification programme. Ms Fabiani sent a minute to the Scottish Government Chief Architect after the meeting which was copied to the Chief Executives of Historic Scotland and NAS. Information from this meeting is included as **annex 1**. The meeting on 11 December was with the Chair and Chief Executive of RCAHMS to discuss the view taken by the Scottish Cabinet on 2 December 2008, regarding the future of RCAHMS in relation to the other 2 bodies. No minutes were kept of this meeting, but details of this are included in the Minister's subsequent letter, information from which is included at **annex 4**.

Ms Fabiani had discussions with the Chief Executive of NAS during this period on 19 August 2008 and 6 September 2008. The 19 August meeting was a telephone conversation and the 16 September discussion was part of a meeting to discuss a wider range of topics. No minute was made of either conversation.

Ms Fabiani met with representatives of Historic Scotland on a regular basis (usually monthly) as part of her portfolio responsibilities to discuss the work of the Agency. During some of these meetings there were discussions about proposals being considered for the future of RCAHMS, including the rationalisation and streamlining of the 3 bodies, but the meetings were one to one, and no written records of the meetings were taken.

I can confirm that a number of meetings also took place between the Minister's officials and officials of the three organisations during the period you are interested in. These meetings were held to enable officials to obtain a more detailed understanding of the technical and practical issues around the rationalisation and streamlining of the activities of the 3 bodies. This was to enable officials to brief Ministers in greater detail about the options being considered. The only meeting of this nature where formal minutes were taken was a meeting on 7 May 2008 between representatives of RCAHMS & Historic Scotland and officials of the Scottish Government to discuss possibilities for integrating the information technology systems of the 2 bodies (see **annex 2** for the information contained in this document). An informal minute of a meeting between officials and the Chief Executive of RCAHMS on 14 October sets out the key points of the discussion (see **annex 3** for the relevant information).

Mr Michael Russell, as Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution, and his officials met with representatives of RCAHMS during the period concerned on a visit to the organisation on 19 May 2009. Mr Russell summarised his discussions on the area of your request in a subsequent letter to RCAHMS dated 1 July 2009: see below and **annex 6**).

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms Fabiani wrote to RCAHMS on 19 January 2009 setting out how she wanted to take forward the consideration of the options for the future of RCAHMS: see **annex 4** for the relevant information contained in this letter. The three organisations submitted a detailed joint response in February, which consisted of a shared support services document and a working document: see **annex 5**.

Mr Russell wrote to RCAHMS, Historic Scotland and NAS on 1 July 2009 to summarise the position he expressed at his visit of 19 May 2009: see **annex 6**. In his letter he asked the 3 organisations to submit detailed proposals. The 3 organisations made a joint response on 20 August: see **annex 7**.

The Chief Executive of NAS submitted a paper on NAS's views of joint working with RCAHMS on 14 February 2008: see **annex 8**. The Chair of RCAHMS wrote to the First Minister on 10 October 2008 concerning the future of RCAHMS and Ms Fabiani replied on 22 October 2008: see **annex 9**. The Chief Planner of the Scottish Government wrote to the Chair of RCAHMS on 20 November 2008: see **annex 10** for relevant information from the letter. The Chair of RCAHMS wrote to Mr Russell on 11 February 2009 introducing him to the work of RCAHMS, stating his view on the relationship between the natural, historic and built environments and inviting him to visit the organisation. Mr Russell replied on 13 March 2009: see **annex 11**.

There has also been a series of e-mail exchanges during this period between officials and representatives of the 3 bodies. Extracts of the relevant information from these messages are included as **annex 12**, with the exclusion of some information which we consider is exempt from release under section 30(b)(i)&(ii) – see above.

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review, by writing to:

The Permanent Secretary
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Your request should explain why you wish a review to be carried out and should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter. We will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely



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ANNEX 1

Minute from Linda Fabiani, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, to the Scottish Government Chief Architect

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM: RCAHMS

1. Thank you for your support at today's meeting with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Chief Executive of RCAHMS.
2. The Commission representatives were left in no doubt that the status quo is not an option, however much they want that to be the case. Against that background, the Commission's clear preference is to transfer to NAS which they thought offered exciting opportunities and they were resolutely opposed to the splitting of their functions.
3. The Commission agreed to come back to us with their view on what a new organisation which merged the Commission and the Archive would look like and what benefits it would offer. The option of a merged organisation should be explored with NAS. We also agreed to look at the issue of survey and recording further. I would be grateful if you could put the arrangements in hand for this as a matter of urgency as my intention is, early next month, to seek the agreement of the First Minister and Cabinet Secretaries on the way forward.
4. I should also wish to put on record that I gave the Commission representatives my assurances that they would be equal partners in progressing whatever proposition Cabinet agrees.

ANNEX 2

7 May 2008 meeting between representatives of RCAHMS and Historic Scotland and Scottish Government officials to discuss possibilities for integrating IT systems of RCAHMS & Historic Scotland more closely.

Extract from minutes of meeting:

1. The meeting was held to discuss the possibilities for closer integration of the two IT systems as part of the Scottish Government's programme of delivery of simpler, more effective government.
2. RCAHMS and Historic Scotland started their IT systems with a linked Oracle database system, supplied by the Scottish Office in the 1980s, and which both still have. A later comparison study showed there was a narrow overlap between the interests of the two organisations in relation to place and the link between the two remains. RCAHMS programme of digitisation of architecture records was originally linked with the HS system on the data base side so that the two systems can see each other. The joint PASTMAP project grew out of the success of RCAHMS's Canmap. There are regular joint IT liaison meetings to manage areas of joint working. RCAHMS also works with Historic Scotland on GIS developments when HS do not have the necessary technical staff.
3. Pastmap is hosted and maintained by RCAHMS at a service cost to HS which includes significant charitable software reductions, particularly of ESRI software. Charitable status gives RCAHMS a Higher Education discount as an associate member of the CHEST (Combined Higher Education Software Team) agreement. HS is not a member of CHEST and is therefore not eligible for the discount. HS has internal licensing for GIS. RCAHMS has site licences for GIS as a package which allows all staff to use the system: about 50 of RCAHMS staff are currently active GIS users. The cost of these licences would be much higher if they were not available to RCAHMS through CHEST. CHEST also allows RCAHMS to bring other users, such as local authorities, into Pastmap. Charitable status makes this easier. RCAHMS is now hosting one of the local authority Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs). Both RCAHMS and HS want to join the eplanning system.
4. If RCAHMS joined the Scottish Government SCOTS system, it would still need the different specialist software it currently uses. Either these would be verified and packaged for use on SCOTS PCs or they would operate as stand-alone systems. Verification and packaging is required for any software that is to be installed onto a PC. Server based software does not go through the same procedure. HS has stand-alone computers for tasks such as environmental monitoring in the buildings in its care and for site surveys. Another example of a system not hosted on SCOTS is the Edinburgh Castle ticketing system. HS has 50 standalone computers in addition to SCOTS. The educational outreach staff have access to SCOTS for Internet and collaborative software (eg MS Outlook) but also have standalone laptops for Powerpoint presentations on Video projectors and Smartboards. Historic Scotland has responsibility for the security of all of the HS specific IT systems that are hosted on SCOTS. ISIS has responsibility for the security of collaborative software, SG corporate systems, anti virus and the perimeter security of SCOTS. Internet access on SCOTS is monitored and there is a blacklist of websites. RCAHMS currently has control over all of its IT systems security and joining SCOTS would change this: further investigation of the implications for this would be required. There would also be implications for the SWISH agreement.

5. The possibilities of developing further links with the other National Collections also need consideration. There are fibre optic links between NLS buildings which may be extended to include Granton. RCAHMS wants to become a Trusted Digital Repository, like some of the other National Collections, but this is not a relevant ambition for HS. RCAHMS works with the Archaeological Data Service in England and is keen that digital archaeological archives remain in Scotland rather than being stored in York. The digital storage needs of RCAHMS are constantly increasing and are now being further increased by the needs of SCRAN and TARA. HS does not have a need for digital archive databases.

6. The overlap of IT interests between RCAHMS and HS is restricted. The cost consequences of change are complex and would need to be discussed with ISIS and possibly independent IT consultants. RCAHMS's main business is in the provision of information, but could separate the IT service system for email, file access, etc. However, RCAHMS gets a discount on costs for its email and network and would probably have to pay more. It couldn't just ditch parts of the system if it became one organisation with HS or NAS. RCAHMS does much of its IT work in-house for fast response and only uses external consultants where needed. SCRAN and TARA are currently on stand-alone systems, but it is proposed to integrate them in the long run. SWISH is integrated with everything else as RCAHMS has the same database requirements as RCAHMS. The Welsh would not be able to fund their share of SWISH if costs increased significantly following the loss of charitable status by RCAHMS. SWISH has intangible benefits: it is a service but also a partnership. SWISH could be expanded to bring in all the local authority SMRs: one is already on board. There is a possibility of bringing NTS in as well. RCAHMS provides Wales with the equivalent of PASTMAP, called Historic Wales.

7. RCAHMS's Novell network also benefits from the charitable status. The Oracle licensing is still done through the Scottish Government. Oracle has been offered to RCAHMS free in the past because of the charitable status, but in the longer run support costs would go up. HS has a separate licensing agreement for Oracle. RCAHMS experience with procurement through SG (e.g.: fuel costs) is that it is more expensive than when it can procure on its own as a charitable body. There are also some IT developments included in some of the HLF grants to RCAHMS for projects. RCAHMS run these in-house.

8. RCAHMS has a choice at present on procurement method and generally gets the best deal it can by choosing to purchase through the SG framework agreements or by separate purchase as a charitable body. It could save on hardware costs by purchasing through ISIS. There are some services which RCAHMS provides free to the user which HS as an Agency would have to charge full cost recovery for.

ANNEX 3

14 October 2008 meeting between Chief Executive of RCAHMS and Scottish Government officials

The key points noted from the meeting which are relevant to the request are as follows:-

- The uncertainties over the future of RCAHMS have made partnership working with other organisations more difficult. These include parts of the Scottish Government, Historic Scotland and the other National Collections, including NAS. There has also been a significant increase in sick leave amongst staff of RCAHMS in recent months which may be a symptom of the long term uncertainties over the future.
- Given the uncertainties for the future, RCAHMS is finding it difficult to plan for the 2009-10 year. This is made more difficult by the lack of clear heritage or culture policies emerging since the election.

ANNEX 4

19 January 2009: letter from Linda Fabiani to Chief Executive of RCAHMS

I am writing to you to set out how I want to take forward the consideration of the options for the future of the Royal Commission following my recent discussion with Cabinet on the future of RCAHMS.

I want first of all to confirm, as Ian Gilzean has already set out in correspondence to you in December, that although Cabinet has deferred making a decision on the future status of RCAHMS, it has not yet excluded any of the existing proposed options. However, Cabinet wishes to be able to consider the widest range of options for the future of RCAHMS, in order that the optimum potential to achieve delivery benefits can be identified. Cabinet will examine the options proposed in the context of the other 'further work' proposals of the Simplification Programme and the timescales for Cabinet's decisions will therefore depend on the wider programme of work by the Simplification Team.

Cabinet is therefore seeking further clarification of the potential for RCAHMS, Historic Scotland and the National Archives of Scotland to work collaboratively on the issues of shared services, storage and shared working, to establish whether there is scope to provide the same or similar efficiency and effectiveness benefits to those which the Simplification Programme is seeking to achieve. The aim is to establish by the end of January whether a shared service approach is a viable alternative to organisational restructuring in terms of the potential efficiencies that can be gained.

With this requirement in mind, I would ask you to explore with John Graham and George MacKenzie what are the possibilities for a shared service approach and to provide jointly developed and agreed proposals which will address the requirements of Cabinet set out above and allow Ministers to compare this approach with the options already under consideration by Cabinet. Given the timescale adopted, I am asking you to provide Ian Gilzean with your initial proposals before the end of January. I accept that there may be different views held by each of you and that you may not be able to reach a collective view of every aspect of how this option would be taken forward. Such proposals should not be excluded from your submission, but a commentary should be provided with them which explains the different views held.

It is, of course, important that Cabinet is able to look at the financial aspects of your proposals so that they can be compared with the other options under consideration. I therefore require you to provide me with the most robust financial information in support of your ideas which it is possible to develop within the timeframe we are working to. As part of your examination of the financial aspects of your proposals, you may also wish to revisit the figures already submitted for the options involving amalgamation.

As part of your submission, I would also like you to consider what kind of governance and structural changes you would jointly propose for the three organisations, in order to most effectively bring forward and deliver the shared services proposed.

I am copying this letter to John Graham and George MacKenzie to ensure that they are fully aware of Cabinet's current thinking about the future of the Royal Commission and to ensure that the three of you take forward this work jointly and as soon as possible.

ANNEX 5

Response from the 3 organisations to Annex 3:

DOCUMENT 1:

SHARED SUPPORT SERVICES IN RCAHMS, NAS AND HS

Introduction

1. This note discusses the scope for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), Historic Scotland (HS) and the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) to make savings through sharing support services. It reflects discussion among the three chief executives.
2. The three organisations have different governance structures and status within government. RCAHMS is an NDBP and has charitable status and is sponsored into the Scottish Government (SG) by the Architecture and Place team in the Built Environment Directorate. NAS and HS are Executive Agencies whose chief executives report directly to SG Ministers.
3. The three organisations are of different sizes. RCAHMS employs around 100, NAS employs around 160, and Historic Scotland employs around 1000.
4. The three organisations already share support services extensively with other organisations, although not with each other.
5. The note looks in turn at each of the main support services common to all three organisations, quotes the costs incurred by RCAHMS, discusses the scope for sharing and offers a conclusion on the scope for savings through sharing.

Information technology

6. All three organisations use information technology to deliver services to customers, and the scope for greater sharing in that use of IT is discussed in the separate note about the scope for sharing functions. This note concentrates on IT as an internal support service.

7. RCAHMS spends around £50K on this annually.
8. RCAHMS currently provides this service in-house, as does NAS. Historic Scotland purchases the service from the core of the Scottish Government (SG) and its staff are on the SCOTS network. The most obvious scope for savings in this area might come from the RCAHMS and NAS joining the SCOTS network. Both have considered this in the past, but reached the view that the subscription cost outweighs the likely benefits. Similarly, the initial investment required to bring together the infrastructure of NAS and RCAHMS outside SCOTS would outweigh any savings. RCAHMS is exploring the potential benefits of networking with the NLS (National Library of Scotland), NGS (National Galleries of Scotland) and NMS (National Museums of Scotland) with a view to sharing fibre cabling and providing the infrastructure that would support other shared support services.
9. There does not appear to be any scope for savings in this area through sharing among the three organisations.

Human resources

10. RCAHMS spends around £40K annually on HR, including pension and payroll administration and recruitment advertising .
11. RCAHMS, as an NDPB, currently provides the service in-house and its staff are outside the SGMain bargaining unit. It uses the SG framework contract for recruitment advertising. RCAHMS provides Human Resources services to A+DS (Architecture and Design Scotland). HS as an agency has delegated responsibility for human resources within the SG family, and its staff are also outside SGMain. NAS as an agency obtains the service from the core of the SG and its staff are part of SGMain. It also shares training and development services with GROS, which are worth around £20k per year. Each organisation therefore has different pay and grading arrangements and different terms and conditions.
12. There are unlikely to be significant savings from one organisation taking on responsibility for human resources for staff in another organisation which has different pay and grading arrangements and different terms and conditions. There is more potential for RCAHMS to work with the NLS, NGS and NMS on shared services for Human Resources.
13. There appears to be no scope for savings in this area through sharing among the three organisations.

Finance

14. RCAHMS spends around 70k on this annually
15. RCAHMS, as an NDPB, currently provides the service in-house and also provides finance services to A+DS. It has its own accounting system but uses the SG SEAS system to pay invoices. NAS uses the SEAS system and the SG's e-procurement system, and draws on the support of the SG Finance Directorate. HS has delegated responsibility for finance and has its own accounting system and procurement system. Each organisation therefore has different existing arrangements and systems.

16. The potential of RCAHMS using the HS accounting system was explored a few years ago and the accounting requirements to Government are very different. RCAHMS also has to provide SORP compliant accounts for charitable purposes. RCAHMS is exploring the potential of working with the NLS, NGS and NMS on financial shared services. RCAHMS and NAS have already informally agreed procedures for mutual assistance to ensure business continuity in the event of loss of access to the SEAS system in either organisation. It may be possible for NAS to undertake some routine payment transactions via SEAS on behalf of RCAHMS, as it already does for the ScotlandsPeople partnership, but this would produce little in the way of savings.
17. There appears to be little scope for savings in this area through sharing among the three organisations.

Facilities management

18. RCAHMS spends around £160k on this annually, including staff costs, building maintenance contracts, cleaning and preventative maintenance and works
19. RCAHMS currently provides a service in-house, but also purchases property and facilities management services from GVA Grimley (as one of the OGC's preferred suppliers of PFM services) for an annual fee of £1.6k per annum plus commission on any works they manage. NAS share the service with the General Register Office for Scotland, because they share their main building. HS purchases the service for its main building from a private supplier. Again, therefore, the existing arrangements differ in the three organisations.
20. There appears to be little scope for savings in this area. RCAHMS currently operates its own security, but this is not 24hour cover. Benefits would accrue from a joint approach to security though this is a necessary shared additional cost rather than a saving.

Vehicles

21. RCAHMS spends around £20k on vehicle maintenance annually.
22. RCAHMS makes extensive use of vehicles for its survey work. It maintains a pool of its own vehicles. NAS operates one van on a regular basis and uses the SG central contract for other vehicle hire. HS makes extensive use of vehicles and maintains its own pool, which it supplements using the SG central contract for vehicle hire.
23. The most obvious scope for possible savings within the three organisations would be for RCAHMS and HS to establish a common pool of vehicles based in Edinburgh. This might reduce by one or two the number of vehicles required, and might produce small savings in management costs, but managing a pool across two sites would not be straightforward and the benefits of having vehicles clearly identified with each organisation would be lost.
24. There may be some scope for saving in this area, but any savings seem likely to be very small.

Utilities

25. RCAHMS spends around £80k on energy and £20k on telecommunications annually.

26. RCAHMS and HS purchase both energy and telecommunications under the central SG contracts. NAS uses SG contracts on energy, and has a joint working arrangement with GROS on telecommunications.
27. There does not appear to be any scope for savings through joint action in this area.

Other procurement

28. The main other areas for procurement spend in the Royal Commission are ICT (already shared up to 50% with RCAHMS and other ICT partners), specialist survey equipment, and specialist archive and conservation equipment (already bulk bought with NAS and NLS suppliers wherever possible). All other procurement, including consultancies, uses SG contracts, unless RCAHMS can make a case to purchase more cheaply.
29. The main areas of other procurement spend in NAS are IT running costs, and stationery and office supplies. In HS the big areas of other procurement spend are on works at monuments, goods for sale in shops and print work for marketing.
30. Since there is no overlap in these other areas there does not appear to be any scope for savings through joint action

Other support services

31. The chief executives have looked at other services such as media and PR, training and health and safety, but the spend in RCAHMS in these areas is so small that the opportunities for savings are insignificant.

Overall assessment

32. RCAHMS is working constructively to establish opportunities for shared support services wherever possible. Where it is possible to use SG systems directly, eg for procurement, RCAHMS does so. Opportunities with different organisations have been explored and shared services are already in operation in ICT and in Finance and HR. Further potential is being considered with NLS, NMS and NGS, all of which have similar relationships with the SG and are charitable organisations with similar objectives.
33. Because of the different status of the 3 organisations, the different systems they use and the existing shared service arrangements they have with the SG and other bodies there is hardly any scope for savings from further joint action among the 3 of them.

January 2009

DOCUMENT 2:

Shared working between RCAHMS, NAS and HS

12. This paper discusses the scope for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), Historic Scotland (HS) and the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) to achieve public benefit and make savings through working in collaboration.
13. The three organisations already collaborate with one another and each has working partnerships with many other organisations. The differing functions of the three organisations means that collaboration between them is mainly bi-lateral, either between RCAHMS and HS, or between RCAHMS and NAS. There is little scope for collaboration involving all three. The different governance structures and status within government of the three organisations does not affect joint working. RCAHMS charitable status brings financial and reputational benefits.
14. Working partnerships exist at a variety of levels, from informal agreement between participating colleagues to more formal arrangements including Concordats, Service level Agreements, and Letters of Intent. They may include financial transactions between the parties and fund raising from external sources.
15. The paper looks in turn at each of the key areas in which collaborative work between the three organisations already takes place, or where there is potential for further development. Where greater collaboration is recommended, it distinguishes between what is possible within existing frameworks and budgets, and more radical approaches that could be achieved with additional injections of funding. It does not cover the many collaborative initiatives that each of the organisations has with other bodies inside and outside government.

Online Public Services

1. All three organisations use information systems to manage their data and to deliver information to customers.

All three organisations currently operate a range of specialist systems for their customers.

2. The HS and RCAHMS systems have been developed in parallel, using shared consultancy, expertise and purchasing power since 1990 with consequent public benefits and financial savings. As RCAHMS benefits from charitable status, relevant savings are passed on to its collaborating partners. Regular consultation examines the ongoing efficiency of this arrangement as well as future joint developments.
3. Pastmap, the online service for users of data on the historic environment, was an early expression of this collaboration, a one-stop-shop for customers interested in the historic environment. It attracts public and professional users and is part of the SRDP service. This project is provided jointly by RCAHMS under a Service Level Agreement with HS. It currently includes online historic environment data from some local authorities in addition to RCAHMS data (archive, survey and research) and HS data (designations). The potential to extend this to include all local authorities and other data providers, while upgrading the service to meet current technological requirements and improve the service it for users has been explored

but funds are not available this year. It has the potential to link to e-planning.

4. There is, however, also scope for HS to work with RCAHMS on a system to deliver better quality and more accessible historic environment data to local authorities and potential developers. At present the quality of the data held by local councils is patchy. Such a system could also improve the quality and flexibility of data for the more general user and the potential visitor to HS sites.
5. RCAHMS and RCAHMS are partners in SWISH, a shared working arrangement that develops information services for heritage. 50% of RCAHMS costs of hardware, software, consultancy and development are supported through this initiative. The development work is directly relevant to that used by RCAHMS to support and develop Pastmap and Scotlandsplaces which therefore also benefit from SWISH.
6. NAS is a partner in the ScotlandsPeople initiative with the General Register Office and the Lord Lyon. The website brings together many of the official records for family history allowing customers to search and view digital images of several million records. It has around 700,000 registered subscribers worldwide and brings in substantial income for the partners.
7. RCAHMS and NAS are working together on Scotlandsplaces, a project to provide one-stop-shop access for customers interested in people and places. This will be launched in October 2009 as part of the Year of the Homecoming, and will be extended to include data from other providers thereafter. It may, for example, be feasible to join Scotlandsplaces and Pastmap together in future. It will encourage pride and understanding of an inclusive national identity.
8. The technology used in these examples would enable the customer to see the information they want seamlessly, although it is derived from different organisations. Each organisation would remain responsible for ensuring that its own information is accurate and updated. There would therefore direct benefits to users in terms of access and reliability, and economies of scale for the organisations.
9. There has been no assessment of what the cost of these developments would be, were they to be carried out separately and by external suppliers, but it is highly likely that they would be considerably more expensive.

5. Collections

1. As National Collections, RCAHMS and NAS currently have collecting policies that ensure that collecting areas are distinct. Any potential area of overlap is discussed on a case-by-case basis, as are any perceived gaps. Limited acquisition funds have occasionally led to collaborative purchases eg the acquisition of three photograph albums illustrating the construction of the Forth Bridge. HS does not hold collections of images or documents for archive purposes, although it does hold other collections, notably of carved stones.
2. NAS selects public records of permanent value from Scottish Government, its agencies, the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Courts, under the Public Records

(Scotland) Act 1937 and consequent statutory instruments. It also acquires other historical records of national or international importance relating to Scotland. RCAHMS research and survey work produces archive, and it collects archive from elsewhere relating to the built and historic environment. HS does not collect archive for long-term preservation, nor does it make archive available for public research. It disperses government records to NAS and archive relevant to archaeological and architectural sites to RCAHMS.

3. The archives from all archaeological work commissioned by HS, and by local authority archaeologists, are required to be deposited in RCAHMS. Finds are disposed to museums. At RCAHMS the archives are catalogued to historic environment information standards (for which HS currently provides financial assistance). RCAHMS provides the informed service for the interpretation of these archives to the public and professionals who may require them for further study, survey and excavation work. Unlike England, there is therefore one major central research source in Scotland for customers interested in archaeological records. This also applies to architects records, records of industrial sites and aerial photography.
4. Looking ahead, long term storage and preservation of archive material is a joint concern for RCAHMS and NAS and the other national collections. Standards of archival care and storage are virtually identical for the two organisations. Work has commenced on joint strategies for long term storage of digital data, storage of specialist items such as photographs and negatives, plans and drawings and on compact storage. Considerable scoping work was undertaken on this matter in 2006-7. There is potential for joint working in this area, which is discussed further below.
5. Paper conservation is an area of mutual interest to RCAHMS and NAS. NAS already assists RCAHMS with expertise and advice, and there is some joint purchasing of materials and equipment. There have been joint training sessions among the conservators network in Edinburgh and there is also joint support for disaster preparedness planning. A joint service seems perfectly feasible, and could bring operational efficiencies and improve standards, though the financial savings would be modest, if any. NAS has modern facilities in its Sighthill building and a highly expert staff, most of whom are professionally accredited. RCAHMS currently has a conservation studio, but it is only staffed using project related funds when available.

Access

1. Both RCAHMS and NAS hold significant collections of archive material relating to places and buildings over time, including maps, plans and photographs. There is potential for bringing together access to some of this material, both onsite and online. Work on the latter is already underway in the ScotlandsPlaces project, which is investigating the delivery of information from existing databases of the two organisations to the public. By meeting the professional and technical challenges involved in building a common system for resource discovery, and testing customer reactions to it, this project will be an important pathfinder for further online collaboration, and potentially enlarging the service by bringing in other data partners eg Registers of Scotland and the other national collections.
2. Looking ahead, providing a single centre for physical access, in effect a joint reading room for visitors, would be more complex and costly. This would certainly require significant investment, but this could be justified through an improved public service, and by longer term savings from merging reference services. A ScotlandsPlaces

Centre, parallel to the recently opened ScotlandsPeople Centre for family history would become an important attraction for visitors, as well as helping to simplify the public sector landscape. It would also help promote a sense of identity among Scots at home by putting them in touch with places important to them, their families and communities.

There would be additional benefits if some storage for archive material was also shared. RCAHMS have a pressing need for additional storage facilities, and NAS have a similar need in the medium term, so the logic for sharing is clear. This could cover both conventional paper records and the more exacting needs of photographic and digital materials. The use of compact and intensive storage techniques would increase the initial investment, but reduce longer term costs by requiring less space. Considerable preparatory work has already been done as part of the planning for the Granton project in 2006-7

3. It would be essential to have some storage space for plans and photographs adjacent to the access centre, to avoid the dangers of transporting fragile materials. It would also be desirable to develop a joint facility for digitising these materials, which would allow remote and concurrent consultation on the internet and in the new centre. As more material is digitised, pressure on storage adjacent to the access point reduces, allowing more efficient use of accommodation. NAS already has considerable expertise in digitising archive material, having produced over 12 million pages for family history and legal searching, while RCAHMS has developed expertise in digitising fragile drawings and photographic material including its immense aerial photographic archive.
4. The NLS also holds significant plan and photographic material, and it would be important to consider including their requirements in any shared access centre or storage facilities.

6. Survey and Research

1. **As bodies concerned with the historic environment, HS and RCAHMS have a long history of working together. Planned collaboration is discussed at regular meetings and is set out in detail in a Concordat. The purposes of their respective activities are different and complementary. RCAHMS aims to provide a comprehensive research-based record, while HS aims to assess the relative importance of individual sites for their care and protection.**
2. RCAHMS work delivers detailed and accurate survey data – photographs, plans and drawings, essential for mapping and planning purposes. It also provides independent, well-researched analytical data that is reliable and essential for decision-making. It provides a baseline for the historic environment over and above those sites that are designated. RCAHMS therefore works with many partners in addition to HS, who require such research.
3. HS main task is to care for, protect and enhance the historic environment. As such, the work of RCAHMS is usually harnessed to inform this process. HS thereafter undertakes assessments of sites using key criteria to establish their suitability for preservation and future management.

4. Currently RCAHMS and HS work together to establish mutually beneficial programmes of work. Examples include: The mapping of the Loch Katrine water system, (prior to listing); the accurate transcription and mapping of aerial photographs (prior to scheduling); mapping and database work relating to the nomination of the Antonine Wall as a world heritage site, the recording of listed buildings in a form accessible to the fire service; maritime data collection. The RCAHMS survey programme in 2009 will include work in Shetland in advance of the Historic Scotland Scheduling programme.
5. Examples also include major research projects such as the Historic Land Use Assessment project, which is valuable to planning and land development; the recording and analysis of some 22,000 deserted 18th and 19th century settlements throughout Scotland; the recording and analysis of the remains of 20th century defences from two world wars throughout Scotland, so that a selection can be made for preservation.
6. One of the public benefits of the involvement of RCAHMS in such work is that the results of the research are made available instantly to the public and have multifunctional use. They are also in a format that is suitable for long-term archive preservation.
7. Community engagement in survey and research is becoming vital to encourage the public to value and enjoy the built environment. Scotland's Rural Past is an example of a joint initiative, led by RCAHMS but with HS as a funding partner along with NTS, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the major sponsorship of HLF. This has provided innovation and changed public perceptions of the value of the built and natural environment.
8. Currently work is being scoped out to include research on the growth and development of towns and cities. This will call on a number of partners including HS as well as central and local government bodies to contribute to the design of the programme.

7. Education and outreach

1. All three organisations have programmes of education and outreach in common with all bodies that engage with the public. These are based on the different collections and resources that each holds, and are therefore complementary.
2. Currently the Heritage Education Forum a group comprising the education staff from the three organisations and the other national collections, meets regularly and has already delivered two initiatives – A Union for a' that - a collaborative project for schools to mark the 300th anniversary of the Union of the Parliaments; and a joint presence at the 2008 Scottish Learning Festival Cultural Village.
3. Scran, a charitable body that is now part of RCAHMS, provides images and information to schools through GLOW. It aims to provide a simple route for heritage and cultural bodies to provide copyright free content for schools routinely.
4. RCAHMS is a partner in the NAS led initiative Scotlandsimages, which aims to collect

quality images from the heritage and cultural sector for commercial sale worldwide. HS is not part of this initiative, but operates its own photo library and online service relating to its properties in care.

5. All three organisations are engaged in publication of various kinds. There are examples of joint authorship between RCAHMS and HS for specialist titles.
6. Looking ahead, Scran will contribute significant resources for the delivery of curriculum for excellence, including valuable information for teachers on Scotland's history. Future work includes developing a strategy with participating bodies such as HS and NAS.

Overall Assessment

NAS, RCAHMS and HS have considerable experience of working together to achieve successful results. The collaborative work allows each organisation to achieve more than it could individually, and pools expertise and resources when needed.

The three organisations have different remits and priorities which target distinct and complementary areas of work, and allow each to be undertaken efficiently and effectively. There is already extensive collaboration between RCAHMS and both of the other bodies in serving the public. In those areas where RCAHMS and one of the other bodies are both active, the activities of the two are clearly complementary. These arrangements have developed over a long period and we see no areas of existing work where significant improvements in effectiveness could be secured through greater joint working within existing budgets. We do see areas of development where collaboration would provide an improved service, but they would all require significant upfront funding.

ANNEX 6

1st July 2009: letter from Michael Russell to Chief Executive of RCAHMS

PUBLIC SECTOR SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAMME

I am writing to thank you for making me so welcome on my visit to RCAHMS. I would like to convey my thanks to you and your staff for a very informative and enjoyable afternoon.

I would also like to take this opportunity to set out in writing what we discussed during the visit and how I now wish to take things forward.

As you are aware The First Minister's programme of simplification announced in January 2008 contained a commitment to:-

“Rationalise historical archival, recording and presentation functions examining functions and scope for streamlining across The Royal Commission on the Ancient Historical Monuments of Scotland, Historic Scotland and National Archives of Scotland and an increased connection with Scotland's People”

At Cabinet in December 2008 a number of options were considered including those involving structural change and merger to deliver a rationalised heritage and archive sector. However, Cabinet agreed that a shared service approach between the organisations would be explored further to see whether there was scope to provide the same or similar efficiencies and effectiveness of those of which the simplification programme is seeking to achieve.

As discussed, I can confirm that I do not intend to bring forward any proposals for structural change or merger within in the lifetime of this parliament. I am however minded to push forward the proposals to achieve efficiencies through the shared service approach you set out in your joint submission of February 2009 with Historic Scotland and National Archives of Scotland.

Having reviewed your proposals for a shared service approach, and the predominant thrust of the proposals is a focus on business improvements requiring upfront investments without exploring whether savings elsewhere in the three organisations could be utilised to fund these business improvements. I would therefore ask you, together with John Graham and George Mackenzie, to revisit these proposals to establish whether there is scope to achieve efficiency savings across the three organisations in support of the simplification agenda. I will leave it open to the three organisations to decide between you how and where the savings are made and how they can be achieved.

I would also like you to consider along with John Graham and George Mackenzie ways in which the three organisations can work together in a more efficient way increasing collaboration between the three organisations.

I accept that there may be different views held by each of you and that you may not be able to reach a collective view of every aspect of how efficiencies and further collaboration could be made, but I am seeking to make significant progress on these issues.

Given the timescale adopted, I am asking you to provide Ian Gilzean with your initial proposals with anticipated savings by Tuesday 16 June 2009. Once this is received I will meet with John Graham, George Mackenzie and yourself to discuss your proposals and to jointly agree on a way forward. I am writing in similar terms to John Graham and George Mackenzie to ensure that they are fully aware of my proposals on this matter.