

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
Bil yr Amgylchedd Hanesyddol (Cymru)/Historic Environment (Wales) Bill
Ymateb gan: Fforwm Gwyddoniaeth mewn Treftadaeth Genedlaethol
Response from: The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF)

The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) represents the major UK institutions making significant contributions to heritage science. It aims to support the strategic development of heritage science in terms of research, capacity building, application, collaboration and infrastructure.

1 Introduction

1.1 The NHSF welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee's call for written evidence with respect to the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill.

1.2 In submitting this evidence, the NHSF has focused on the role of heritage science in underpinning the goals of the Bill in the response areas of:

- *giving more effective protection to listed buildings and scheduled monuments;*
- *enhancing existing mechanisms for the sustainable management of the historic environment;*

2 Establishment of an Advisory Panel for the Welsh historic environment

2.1 NHSF supports the establishment of an advisory panel for the Welsh historic environment that will provide expert advice on the formulation, development, resourcing and delivery of historic environment policy and strategy. NHSF proposes that this advisory panel should include heritage science expertise.

3 Requirement for local planning authorities to create and maintain historic environment records

3.1 NHSF supports the provisions in the Bill for the creation of Historic Environment Records that meet a recognised standard for the purposes of informing archaeological and other heritage management advice.

3.2 NHSF has the following comments on the associated draft guidance “Managing Historic Environment Records in Wales – Statutory Guidance”.

Within the document the following sections have particular reference to heritage science:

1.1 What is a Historic Environment Record?

1.2 What is the Historic Environment Record used for?

Both sections make it clear that the Historic Environment Record (HER) is designed to protect heritage by supporting conservation management and informing management decisions. These goals rely on evidence based delivery for their success. Identifying, measuring and documenting change leads to data that can be used to develop predictive management strategies that make best use of resources. Heritage science delivers insight into decay mechanisms, rates of change and its outcomes, which are all essential to develop quantified predictive management and risk assessment. NHSF advocates that there should be consideration for how government will ensure that expertise necessary to deliver this data will be available. In the absence of underpinning materials science to support development of management policy, damage to the Welsh economy may occur from loss of heritage as a tourism resource. Responses to climate change will also be limited by lack of hard data. Further, it may be worth considering how staff will be trained (Section 6.2) to interface with heritage science to better understand and develop effective management strategies within HER.

Notes:

The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) was set up to address the recommendations of the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee Inquiry on Science and Heritage and to implement the objectives of the National Heritage Science Strategy (NHSS).

NHSF’s members are 19 leading organisations active in the field of heritage science. Through its membership NHSF brings together communities of practice, including both heritage scientists carrying out research and practitioners in the arts, humanities and sciences who apply research results to their own work.

The NHSF provides a platform to speak with one voice to inform Government, policy-makers and funders of the role of heritage science in delivering social impact, to provide equality of opportunity for public engagement with heritage science, and to disseminate improved understanding of cultural heritage underpinned by heritage science research.

Current members:

- Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museums Wales
- Birmingham Museums Trust
- British Library
- British Museum
- Cardiff University
- English Heritage
- Historic England
- Historic Royal Palaces
- Historic Scotland
- Icon, the Institute of Conservation
- National Trust
- National Galleries Scotland
- Natural History Museum
- Oxford University
- Royal Armouries
- Tate
- The National Archives
- University College London
- University of Cambridge Museums & Botanic Garden