



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

## Historic Environment Scotland: Our Place in Time, Climate Change Working Group

### Climate Change Impacts on the Historic Environment: A New Guide for the Sector

#### Icon response

28 March 2019

The Institute of Conservation, Icon, welcomes the Our Place in Time stakeholder review on the Climate Change Impacts on the Historic Environment. We particularly support the inclusion of collections within the identified elements of the historic environment. Our recommendations pertain to our expertise in moveable heritage.

Icon is a registered charity and the professional body for the conservation of our cultural heritage. Icon raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation. We represent nearly 3,000 individuals and organisations comprising professional conservators, heritage scientists and many others who share a commitment to improving understanding of and access to our cultural heritage. Icon defines 'cultural heritage' as objects or collections, as well as internal and external features of a building, but not the building itself. This can vary from family photographs to rare books to fine tapestries and the interiors of historic houses.

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#### 1. Annex 1 Climate Change Variables

No comments.

#### 2. Annex 2 Historic Environment Elements

Icon welcomes the inclusion of collections within the definition of the historic environment. Collections are often sidelined in climate change discourse, despite the risk that a changing climate poses on moveable heritage and the opportunities to employ collections in helping communities to adapt to climate change. Icon has recently advocated for a broader definition of the historic environment that includes collections and moveable heritage in the Climate Change Adaptation Plans for Scotland, Wales and England.

However, we are concerned that placing 'Collections' as the last category in the document makes them appear as an afterthought. Collections do not naturally follow the marine environment and we believe they would be better placed after 'Buildings.' This would foster greater recognition of the intrinsic connection between buildings and their collections. Many heritage buildings derive an element of their significance from their contents, whether they are museums, galleries, historic houses, cathedrals or churches. Similarly, sites, landscapes and gardens may owe some of their significance to outdoor sculptures.

#### 3. Impact tables

##### Specific suggestions related to 'Collections' category:

*"Collections are 'moveable' objects of historic value and provide a key source of evidence for understanding and appreciating the everyday life of our ancestors and key events in Scotland's past."*

Change "everyday life" to "lives." Collections bear witness to every sort of life.

*“More frequent and prolonged saturation of building fabric.”*

Change “saturation” to “water ingress into buildings and structures.” Saturation suggests a degree of wetting, so it may be appropriate to replace with “water ingress” or “wetting” throughout the document.

*“Greater prevalence of mould, mildew, insect pests and fungal attack.”*

Add “additional insect pest life cycles per year.”

*“Swelling of organic objects and corrosion of metals.”*

Change to “swelling, distortion or discolouration.”

*“Flooding of under-floor or basements; saturation of objects.”*

Change “saturation” to “wetting.”

*“Regular object inspection; improved passive cooling and ventilation.”*

Add “regularly risk-assess and review exhibition and storage environments. Draw up/update emergency plans to mitigate risks or consider moving the objects/collections to more suitable conditions.”

*“Avoid basement storage; raise objects off the floor; improved natural drainage of driveways and pavements; modify and maintain accessibility routes, footpaths, etc.”*

Add “attic storage” to “basement storage” (to all the cells) and add “avoid objects directly touching external walls.”

*“Accelerated failure of paint systems and conservation treatment.”*

Add “adhesive joints.”

*“Regular object inspection; improved passive cooling and ventilation; install traditional blinds and/or canopies; reinstate traditional passive systems.”*

Add “Continuously monitor the exhibition, use, or storage environment and modify or change it if necessary.”

Add “install additional primary housing and protection (boxes, covers, etc).”

*“Regularly monitor the exhibition, use or storage environment.”*

Change to “Regularly monitor the exhibition, use or storage environment and modify or change as required.”

*“Install fire protection systems and fire-resistance where possible; ensure doors and windows are shut when the premises are unattended; maintain a hazard free environment, minimise fuel sources and separate from potential heat sources; remove/control potential hazards. Emergency evacuation/salvage procedures in place.”*

Add “fire alarm.”

*“LUX and UV light damage to sensitive objects.”*

Remove “Lux and UV” to read “Light damage (visible, infra-red and ultra-violet). Lux is a unit of measurement of light, not a type.

*“Regular object inspection; leave small gap between objects / shelving and outer walls; relocate objects near windows; improved weathering details to building fabric; more frequent building maintenance.”*

Add “Consider changing/modifying the exhibition, use or storage environment”. Add “Ensure an Emergency Plan is in place and regularly updated.”

*“Increase frequency of inspection, maintenance, repair to building fabric.”*

Add “Ensure an emergency plan is in place and regularly updated”

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Links to further information:

Icon website <https://icon.org.uk/>