1. I am writing in response to your request for written evidence on the general principles of the above bill. North Lanarkshire Council supports the policy objectives of the Bill which aim to improve the management and future preservation of Scotland’s historic environment. We welcome the provisions of the Bill and believe the proposed amendments to current heritage protective legislation will provide a good framework to ensure the long term sustainability of North Lanarkshire’s heritage.

2. A number of Roman, secular and industrial monuments are located within the boundaries of North Lanarkshire, including the archaeological remains of Summerlee Iron Works. Due to the site’s significance as the most complete 19th century pig iron works in Scotland, it was designated a Scheduled Monument in 1995. In relation to our responsibility for managing the site, we support the modifications of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 contained within the Bill.

3. We are of the opinion that the proposed changes to the Bill will offer a greater degree of protection to the nation’s monuments, specifically in relation to the control of works, modifications of defences, increasing fines, enforcement notices and power of entry. These measures will ensure greater accountability for those responsible for managing and maintaining monuments, and strengthen the capacity of the Scottish Government to deal with actions which threaten our historic environment.

4. Furthermore, the intention of provision to widen the range of activities eligible for funding would be welcome. In broadening this to include activities which promote greater understanding and enjoyment of our historic environment, it will be a valuable resource for local authorities and stakeholders. For example, a Conservation Management Plan of Summerlee Ironworks undertaken by Austin Smith: Lord in 2009 highlighted the importance of providing further interpretation and a programme of learning activities in order to make the site’s significance more accessible and fully understood by the local community and a much wider audience.

5. The Planning Services also supports the new provisions within the Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill.

6. In summation, North Lanarkshire Council supports the Bill and believes that the changes proposed will enable the preservation and sustainable development of Scotland’s heritage for future generations.

Lizanne McMurrich
Head of Community Information and Learning
18 August 2010