



**LOCAL AUTHORITY HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES:
AN ASSESSMENT**

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PREFACE

This project was commissioned by the chair of ALGAO: UK (initiated by Stewart Bryant and continued by Ken Smith). It was a direct response to issues raised as a result of planned Local Government Reform and Heritage Protection Reform in England, including associated secondary legislation and guidance. It was also as a general response to the perceived need for an agreed UK wide and local list of the roles and responsibilities of Local Authorities in respect of the Historic Environment which might be used to guide the level of commitment required by those authorities to enable these roles and responsibilities to be carried out.

The information and responses on which this report draws were gathered over the period November 2008 to December 2009. Thanks are due to the ALGAO: UK Executive and to the many members of ALGAO and others who responded generously with their time and information to contribute to the project. Thanks are particularly given to

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Stewart Bryant	ALGAO UK Chair (from April 2009)
Dave Barrett	ALGAO England Chair (from April 2009)
Norman Redhead	Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit
Carol Swanson	ALGAO Scotland Chair (up to 2010) and West of Scotland Archaeological Service
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SUMMARY

The objective of this ALGAO project was to provide as comprehensive a list as possible of the current national and local roles and responsibilities of UK Local Authorities in respect of the Historic Environment as provided by their in-house specialist historic environment/archaeology staff or by an external advisor.

It has been achieved through a combination of ALGAO member expertise, a rapid literature review and a limited assessment of local authority historic environment/archaeology service benchmarking and SLA reviews. This confirmed the significant role that has been played by ALGAO in explaining and developing local authority historic environment/archaeology services, often in partnership with the various UK National Heritage Agencies. It also demonstrated considerable support for the system which has been established from a wide range of organisations which have an interest in the preservation, conservation, management and development of the historic environment. Much of this support was expressed through consultations as part of the Heritage Protection Reform process.

The final list was shaped by Steering Group review, testing against a number of local authority historic environment/archaeology services, and consideration on two occasions by the members of ALGAO: UK Executive Committee which is representative of all forms of local authority organisation in the UK.

The list has been presented as a 'toolkit' for use by ALGAO UK members, providing a standard list which offers a consistency of approach for local authorities when carrying out a comprehensive review of the operation of their service and of the options available when considering its development.

This list of items/tasks produced has been divided into four sub-sets embracing Background Information, Capacity and Pressure, Heritage Assets and Casework Responsibility. Each of these is split into a number of primary categories followed by a more detailed breakdown of the items/tasks. These are presented in a spread sheet with a number of columns for question responses and, another for supporting comment. The responses to these questions aim to establish the weighting applicable to each item/task within the particular local authority historic environment/archaeology service under review.

The list aims to be as comprehensive as possible of current local authority historic environment/archaeology roles and responsibilities but represents a fixed point in time and will require review following experience from use, changes to policy and any additional duties which come to be placed upon local authority staff.

While the primary aim is to assist ALGAO UK members the outcomes will have a wider value for ALGAO in its associations with other organisations, particularly the various National Heritage agencies, when seeking to further the development of local authority historic environment/archaeology services. It is also intended that the list will be shared with these agencies and the IHBC in order to initiate discussion directed to expanding the list to cover all aspects of the historic environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report sets out the results of an assessment carried out in accordance with a project brief produced by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) UK (Project Archive). It was commissioned with the objective of establishing for the first time as comprehensive a list as possible of the current national and local roles and responsibilities of the UK Local Authorities in respect of the Historic Environment. The list of tasks produced by the assessment may be provided to a local authority by 'in-house' Historic Environment/Archaeology Services or by an external provider such as another local authority, an archaeological trust as in much of Wales or an independent consultant as was the case in Berkshire before 2004.

The list has been created in the belief that it will provide a useful guide to the level of commitment required by those Authorities to deliver appropriately against those roles and responsibilities. As a framework it will help to speed the process whenever local authority historic environment/archaeology services are being reviewed whether for the purpose of externally driven local government re-organisation, internal authority review and possible re-organisation, or for the purpose of establishing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between authorities. In establishing an agreed list of the range of heritage assets which all HERs/SMRs might hold, and of casework activity to which a local authority might aspire to carry out, ALGAO also demonstrates action to counter criticism by working towards consistency in service delivery between local authorities across the UK. The consistent application of the framework may also produce outcomes that can have a value to ALGAO in its associations with other organisations when working to influence Government Policy for the Historic Environment. In this respect the ongoing process of Heritage Protection Reform and the appearance of PPS5 (CLG 2010), with the supporting guidance (CLG, DCMS, EH 2010), gave a particular emphasis to the assessment.

1.2 Scope of the Study

The definition of the historic environment is wide ranging (see Glossary and Terminology, Appendix 1). In the context of this study it relates specifically to the tasks carried out by ALGAO UK members which in the main relate to archaeology. However it contains some historic building and conservation roles and responsibilities which are included since they are carried out to some degree by all ALGAO members. Many others are omitted, particularly those related to casework, since these are recognised as primarily constituting the role of specialist historic building conservation officers and are considered to be the responsibility of IHBC members. It is recognised that this division of the historic environment roles and responsibilities is an artificial one since some ALGAO members carry out at least some of this historic building and conservation work as part of an integrated historic environment service. More such integrated teams may also be created in the future by local authorities undergoing re-organisation. The intention is that once this draft report has been accepted by the members of ALGAO it will be shared with the different National Heritage agencies (English Heritage, Historic Scotland, and Cadw) and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) in order to initiate a discussion about the production of a truly comprehensive list of local authority historic environment roles and responsibilities.

1.3 Approach Adopted

The assessment was initiated in 2008 and taken forward by regular consultation between the author of this report and a steering group of ALGAO UK members. The quite prolonged process of development can be summarised into a series of stages:

- Steering Group established to develop an ALGAO list of roles and responsibilities.
- Development at steering group meetings of the project brief.
- Collation by the steering group of an initial long list. This was divided into three sections comprising heritage asset responsibilities, casework responsibilities and capacity and pressures influencing a local authority's ability to support its historic environment service.
- A literature search to locate information to support and enhance the assessment list; re-ordering into three sub-set tables with questions designed to establish the weighting for each identified item or task.
- Consideration of the sub-set tables by members of the ALGAO: UK Executive Committee and subsequent revision in the light of comment received. This included some consolidation of tasks identified in the sub-sets, the addition of a fourth sub-set table to establish background information about the local authority and the inclusion in all four sub-set tables of an additional column to provide for qualifying comments about the responses.
- Testing of the revised tables against the service provision for a number of Local Authority Historic Environment Services and by ALGAO: UK Executive Committee members in respect of their services.
- Final revision and inclusion of the sub-set tables in this report as a 'toolkit' for ALGAO members.

It is not the intention to make this report widely available in printed form. Digital access is available through the ALGAO UK website (www.algao.org.uk) to enable ALGAO members to access it for use in carrying out service reviews. The sub-set tables represent a fixed point in time and may be amended and added to in response to testing by members, changes to policy and additional duties placed upon Historic Environment/Archaeology Services.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Scale of the review

In the years since the 'Walsh' Committee first recommended that County Planning Authorities maintain a record of field monuments and that they should consider the appointment of archaeological officers to provide professional archaeological assistance (Walsh 1969) all County and the majority of Metropolitan, Borough, District, Unitary and City Councils have taken such action or alternatively established arrangements to obtain appropriate advice for dealing with archaeology, particularly when under threat from development. A close link to the planning process means that staff to deal with archaeology often came to be located within planning/environment services, although many are also based within museum, leisure or property services which often provides the basis for a wider remit to their activities.

There has not been a previous attempt to put together a comprehensive list of the roles and responsibilities relating to an Historic Environment/Archaeological service

(HE/A), that is one considered to be relevant for all UK local authorities such as this assessment aims to achieve. However, there have been numerous documents prepared and published containing information about the nature and scope of the service which can be used to construct the list. It was not considered necessary as a part of the assessment to research, document and provide details of all of these papers and the organisations responsible for producing them, the available resources also precluded such a detailed exercise. A pragmatic approach was adopted which involved rapid identification of key reports and documents that already brought together information which supported the range of service activity and provided specific item/task details for the list. Some of these are referenced; others can be assessed through website links given in the text and Appendix 1.

2.2 Legislation and Planning Policy

The statutory basis for archaeological sites is limited primarily to the protection of scheduled monuments as set out in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (HMSO 1979). Provision for the protection, conservation and investigation of the great majority of archaeological sites has come about through planning legislation and the recognition of archaeology as a material consideration in the planning process. The importance of the historic environment/archaeology services provided by local government was significantly enhanced following the publication by government of planning policy guidance note PPG16 (DOE 1990), and subsequently PPG15 (DOE/DNH 1994), which local authorities had to take account of when producing Structure Plans and Local Plans, now Local Development Frameworks (LDF). In Wales national planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) which enables the effective preparation of Local Development Plans (LDP) by local planning authorities (Welsh Assembly Government 2010), and is supported by a series of topic based Technical Advice Notes (TANs). In Scotland national planning policy on the historic environment is set out in the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (Scottish Government 2010), and is supported by PAN 42 (Scottish Government 1994) and PAN 71 (Scottish Government 2004). The two English guidance notes have recently been superseded by PPS5 (CLG 2010) which has further reinforced provision for the historic environment/archaeology. Numerous other Acts and guidance documents contain provisions relating to the historic environment/archaeology which can only be effectively implemented through the existence of specialist staff at local authority level. A useful summary of the relevant legislation and planning background for England is provided by the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Handbook (revised 2009, valid from March 2010; see www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/section.asp?catid=22938docid=29200)

The attention paid to all aspects of the historic environment by local and national government has risen since c1999 when the drive for reform of heritage protection provisions in England gained momentum. A major review of the historic environment was undertaken by English Heritage for DCMS and DETR during 2000 and the results published as *The Power of Place – the future of the Historic Environment* (EH 2000). The government responded to this review with *The Historic Environment: A Force for the Future* (DCMS 2001). Both of these documents provided a valuable framework that summarised what had gradually been emerging through best practice and current policies in structure, unitary and local plans over the previous decade. These policies and their subsequent implementation had been influencing local planning decisions by both local councils and the Planning Inspectorate when ruling

on planning applications (Croft and Wills 2002). In the following years government published various consultation reports explaining the system which had grown up piecemeal over the previous 120 years and examining ways in which it could be simplified and made more up-to-date with the planning process. This culminated in the Heritage White Paper in 2007 (DCMS 2007) followed by the draft Heritage Bill in 2008 (DCMS 2008(a)). This process helped to clarify government thinking about what constituted heritage and the way in which it should be protected and managed. Further the consultation process drew out support, recognition and observations about detailed aspects of the proposals from a very wide range of professional organisations (representing archaeology and other professions), planning and environmental interests, national academic bodies and the many hundreds of voluntary societies across the UK with an interest in the historic environment (for a time line of Heritage Protection Reform documentation with links see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>). Although the draft bill has yet to be included in the government's legislative programme there is still a commitment for it to proceed. In the meantime EH and DCMS have continued to work to take forward changes under Heritage Protection Reform by looking at resources (EH 2009(a)) and through planning policy guidance in the form of PPS5 (CLG 2010) with supporting interpretation to this guidance (CLG/DCMS/EH 2010). The Welsh Assembly Government has worked with the DCMS on the proposals to establish a unified heritage protection system. The new Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) sets out Scottish Ministers' policies, providing direction for Historic Scotland and a policy framework that informs the work of a wide range of public sector organisations (Historic Scotland 2009).

2.3 The Initial List

In 1993 in a statement about the future of County archaeological services in England, in response to a review by Sir John Banham into the structure of local government, the then Association of County Archaeological Officers (ACAO; now ALGAO England) produced the first detailed list of the components making up the work of local authority archaeological staff; however, this document had a limited circulation (ACAO 1993). A benchmark for the range of historic environment services local authorities are expected to deliver based upon PPG15 and PPG16 was provided by *Guidance to local authorities on the Conservation of the Historic Environment* (DNH 1995) which was issued to reorganised local authorities in August 1995 and again in November 1997.

Many UK local authorities have had occasion, for a variety of reasons, to review their historic environment/archaeology services (see Section 3). However, especially pertinent to this assessment was a review which attempted to define the principal duties and responsibilities of all Local Authority Historic Environment teams in Cornwall and Scilly in preparation for the reorganisation of Cornwall into a unitary authority and in anticipation of implementing the Heritage White Paper (internal report not published, 2008). This assessed the total number of officers delivering the service; looked at "indicators" for the service in terms of Heritage Assets responsibility, Casework responsibility and Ability to pay; and attempted to define what the principal duties and responsibilities were for historic environment staff in Cornwall. Members of ALGAO saw that this exercise provided a useful starting point for initiating a project aimed at producing results which would be applicable to all UK local authorities.

ALGAO has since its formation published reports and responded to numerous consultations relating to its activities, the latter particularly in recent years as part of the Heritage Protection Reform process. As the association which represents those local authorities and national parks throughout the UK that have historic environment services it has taken a major role in helping to develop records, protect, conserve, raise awareness and promote understanding of the historic environment. Many of the documents have been for, or produced with the support of, the National Heritage agencies for England, Scotland and Wales. Collectively ALGAO documents and consultation responses underpin the initial list of roles and responsibilities produced by the project steering group, the members of which had contributed to many of the reports (details and links are available on www.algao.org.uk).

2.4 Developing the List Content

Surveys: There has been a succession of surveys conducted since the early 1990s which help to inform the content of this assessment. These document the scope and evolving pattern of staffing and casework for archaeology within local government, particularly in England. They include surveys by RESCUE (1992), Pagoda Associates for EH (Tym 1999), ACAO (Glazebrook 1994), ALGAO (1998), EH/IFA/CBA (Aitchison and Dennison 1999), ALGAO (1999), ALGAO (2002), EH/ALGAO (2003). Since 2003 ALGAO has carried out regular staffing and casework surveys to monitor change and developments to services. Although not published these surveys inform ALGAO discussions with other organisations, in particular the reviews of the state of the historic environment which the National Heritage agencies now undertake. In England Heritage Counts has been produced as a national report, and also as nine regional reports, since 2002 (see particularly EH 2007 for a review of progress over the first five years of monitoring), in Wales *The Welsh Historic Environment: Position Statement* has collated information since 2006, and in Scotland an historic environment audit is an ongoing project (for progress see www.heritageaudit.org.uk).

Heritage assets and HERs/SMRs: For the purpose of this assessment these make up the full range of information about historic assets of all scales, from site to landscape and building to city, which is or could be held within an HER/SMR. The maintenance of these as a source of archaeological information was reinforced by government advice, most notably in PPG16 (DOE 1990) and PPG15 (DOE/DNH 1994). It was given further emphasis when Government signalled its intention in 2007 (DCMS) to help secure effective stewardship of the historic environment by placing local authorities in England under a statutory duty to maintain or have access to a Historic Environment Record (HER). This was followed by the issuing of draft guidance for Local Authorities in England (DCMS 2008(b)) containing information relating to their uses, location, content and access. The new PPS5 (CLG 2010) and supporting guidance (CLG/DCMS/EH 2010) replaces the earlier PPG guidance and contains the recommendation that a local authority should either hold or have access to an HER.

Acknowledgement of the role of HERs/SMRs and their development has been matched by widespread recognition of the need to understand the nature and significance of historic assets before making decisions about how to conserve them, manage appropriate change and respond to an increasingly interested general public. Consequently the various National Heritage agencies working with ALGAO members have invested considerably in the development of HERs/SMRs. In 1999 an

assessment established the overall state of development of these records for England (Baker, 1999) providing a basis for further development. Guidance for good practice was produced in 2000 (Ferne and Gilman 2000) with a major revision in 2009, expanded to include recent developments, to cover Wales and Scotland as well as England, and using numerous case studies (Gilman and Newman, 2009). Benchmarks for HERs/SMRs in England were circulated in 2002 (ALGAO/EH 2002). Other recently published case studies demonstrate the wide range of content and coverage; interoperability; developments in information management; levels of partnership working; and extent of access and outreach which is now being achieved (EH 2009). The table of heritage assets (sub-set 3), aims to encompass the full range of assets which might be held in a HER/SMR.

Casework: The scale and range of casework that historic environment/archaeology specialists might undertake has grown considerably since they were first appointed to local authority posts. Input to Development Plans and to the development control process has expanded in line with changes to legislation and planning policy guidance (as outlined above). More generally greater recognition and acceptance of the need to take account of the historic environment has seen consultation, guidance and support from Government Departments, the National Heritage agencies and other organisations which has led to involvement in a wide range of other areas of interest. These embrace urban survey and conservation; wider landscape characterisation, management and input to agri-environment schemes; coastal defence, intertidal and maritime archaeology; buildings and structures not covered by national designation; Heritage Lottery projects; portable antiquities; education promotion and advocacy.

Surveys by ALGAO, the National Heritage agencies and others (see above) provide much background information relating to this activity while numerous other reports consider particular aspects of this casework. Locating many of these for the literature review was assisted by a previous survey which had been commissioned by English Heritage to establish the information that was available about resources for the management of the historic environment in English local authorities. This contained a useful list of sources and summary details of over 50 publications (Baker and Chitty 2002 Appendix 3, 55-79). These provided the basis for a report which looked at the value of the historic environment, the requirements for local authorities, and issues about financial resources, expertise and information, and management. It specifically identified that conservation services, whether concerned with archaeology, buildings or both, and whether based at the level of district or unitary authorities were concerned with the following tasks:

- Advising on the historic environment aspects of development control.
- Proactive casework undertaken at the initiative of the local planning authority (e.g. operating grant schemes, work on buildings at risk, urgent works notices).
- Advice on policy formation (e.g. Structure; Local or Unitary Development Plans).
- Environmental enhancement and regeneration (e.g. Historic Environment Regeneration Schemes, landscape and countryside programmes, new urban design).
- Maintenance of information systems (record keeping, Sites and Monuments Records).

- Appraisal and survey (e.g. conservation area appraisals, Urban Archaeological Databases).
- Providing technical advice.
- Public education and presentation.

The results of this study by Baker and Chitty were considered to be particularly important, not only for their policy implications for local authority practice, but because of the relatively limited amount of research relating to heritage practice in England that had been published up to that time. It was seen to provide a foundation for future work on the state of the historic environment and on conservation services in general (Clarke 2001). The above list from this report, which draws upon some of the ALGAO documents referred to above, contributes to the organisation of the item/task groupings included in the sub-set divisions of this project.

Another significant contribution to developing the detail required for the sub-sets was provided by a report produced to help to inform an Historic Advisory Council for Scotland's working group which had been charged with reporting on the role of local authorities in Scotland in conserving the historic environment (Eydmann and Swanson, 2005). The authors both worked in a local authority context and represented respectively the organisations IHBC and the Association of Regional and Island Archaeologists (ARIA, now ALGAO Scotland) who published the report jointly. They wished to ensure that any discussion of local authority activities should be based on a proper understanding of the scope of relevant responsibilities, initiatives and actions in which councils engage. This report represented the first attempt to map out, in table format, the full range of conservation work undertaken by local authorities in Scotland. It was accepted that the allocation of responsibilities varied from council to council but that they were along broadly similar lines; few, if any, councils undertook all of the activities shown but many covered most. The table identifies the actions and activities undertaken presented in five primary divisions which comprise information, policy, management, implementation and promotion. There is a column which lists the details relating to each. These are supported by other columns which indicate if there is a statutory requirement, the typical Lead Department and the typical responsible officer. This report did not attempt to give any form of weighting to the actions and activities identified.

Eydmann and Swanson noted that the range and depth of local authority involvement recorded through this mapping exercise was greeted with surprise. It was considered that the document could also form the basis for a survey or identification of exemplary work on the ground across the country. Further, that while written from a Scottish perspective it should have applicability elsewhere. This Scottish report provided another of the starting points for this ALGAO assessment. It also informed a complementary study being undertaken by an EH working group which was assessing the EH and local authority resources required to implement the Heritage Protection Reform (EH/ALGAO/IHBC 2009). A preliminary Historic Environment Activity list was made available to ALGAO in advance of this group completing its work and this provided a useful list for cross-reference in this assessment. (The report has now been published and is available at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/implementing-heritage-protection-reforms/>).

Wider Support: The establishment of local authority archaeological records (HERs/SMRs) and their support staff came to ensure provisions for archaeological sites under the planning system comparable to those afforded to other areas of special interest. In the beginning this was not universally welcomed but with regular application to historic environment/archaeology issues this situation has changed and many organisations have documented their recognition, support and wish to see improvement to the system. They have done so particularly within the context of Heritage Protection Reform in England.

Planning Officers were initially reluctant to widen the development control process to include archaeological provisions in the way that has now become routine procedure. Strong support for bringing heritage into the planning system was expressed by the Planning Officers Society (POS) in response to the Heritage White Paper. In a memorandum issued in 2006 it pointed out that it would be necessary for the White Paper to indicate the positive role played by the historic environment and listed the priorities for its management which should be included (POS Memorandum 23-6-06: www.planningofficers.org.uk).

The IFA has lead in the production of standards and guidance to explain and improve working approaches (see www.archaeologists.net). The level of current acceptance for the system by developers is demonstrated by a recent good practice guide published by CIRIA (Barber *et al* 2008). This provides advice to clients, designers and investors, and all members of the professional teams, including archaeologists, involved with development and construction dealing with sites of known or potential archaeological interest. It sets out in detail current archaeological practise and process for development projects and the relevant legislation, regulation and guidance. It also explains with case studies and an extensive glossary (Barber *et al* 2008, (xii) – (xix)) much of the relevant terminology which provides greater detail for those items/tasks in sub-set list 4 relating to consultants and contracting archaeology. Many major landowners and developers now either employ archaeologists directly, notably the National Trust and the MOD, or use archaeological consultants to advise them in respect of their responsibilities to archaeological sites and the wider historic environment. This also applies to organisations dealing with major infra-structure schemes and utilities.

Although academic archaeologists based within Universities and other Institutions were slow to appreciate the longer term research potential presented by the development of HERs/SMRs and the expansion of field work which was being generated through the planning process recent years have seen a much greater level of engagement. This has included the provision of information about the local authority role as part of course work, involvement with the development control process by University based Archaeological Contracting Units, engagement in the producing of regional research frameworks like that produced by ALGAO members in the Eastern Counties region (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and a growing appreciation of the large amount of archaeological ‘grey literature’ generated by development and held in HERs/SMRs (Bradley, 2006; Holbrook and Moreton, 2008).

National and local archaeological societies working to rescue excavate archaeological sites in the 1960s played an important role in lobbying for the establishment of local authority archaeologists, but subsequent relations in respect of the new professional

arrangements that were put into place were sometimes difficult. The extent to which this situation has changed was demonstrated by the many responses in support of Heritage Protection Reform. These acquired a national representation through Heritage Link, an organisation specifically established with encouragement from Government to represent the views of the voluntary heritage organisations (for details and links see <http://www.heritagelink.org.uk>).

3. COMPLEMENTARY SEARCHES

3.1 Context

As a compliment to the literature search it was felt that a brief examination of other forms of report covering historic environment staff and the services which they provide would be useful in helping to establish the range of items and tasks to be included in the roles and responsibilities project lists. Included were Benchmarking and Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

3.2 Benchmarking

There has been relatively limited work carried out which benchmarks local authority historic environment services against each other. Some of the issues were identified by ALGAO (2001) in the context of the short lived Best Value initiative which was generated by the Local Government Act 1999 (HMSO). In their rapid survey of local authority resources Baker and Chitty (2002,10) summarised the outcomes from the Best Value process. They identified four local authorities which had carried out substantive reviews of their Historic Environment/Archaeology Services, namely, Tees Archaeology (Daniels 2000); the Conservation and Design Services at Cotswold District Council (2001); Essex County Council Specialist Planning and Conservation Services (ECC 2001); Test Valley Planning Services (Best Value Inspection Service 2001). Assessment of these served to expose the difficulties of assessing performance and resource needs in planning and other service areas for the historic environment, however, they do give considerable detail about the activities carried out by these four services which is of value to this assessment.

Generally, while the term “benchmarking” is quite often used in the context of service reviews there is limited information available about the level of local authority historic environment/archaeology staff involvement in such exercises. Accordingly in 2009 the Secretary of ALGAO circulated a short questionnaire about benchmarking to all members of ALGAO (total 111).

In the context of this survey benchmarking is seen to refer to a formal exercise which makes comparison with a number of other local authority services. The following specific questions were asked:

1. Has your authority asked you to take part in or carry out a benchmarking exercise specific to the historic environment service in the past 3 years?
2. If yes did it result in changes to the structure or organisation of your service?
3. Can you send ALGAO a copy of any benchmarking report(s) that were produced by or for your authority?
4. If there are any other points that you would like to make about the content/value of the benchmarking work that your authority carried out please comment.

A total of 65 (59%) members responded (Summary of Benchmarking Responses in Project Archive), but of these only 4 responded positively to question 1. Further, the supporting comments from these made it clear that the purpose of a benchmarking exercise can be widely interpreted; this means that there was considerable variation in the content of the four exercises carried out. They embraced a best value service review of the Western Isles Archaeology Service; a service overview and funding comparison with other local authorities in the East of England region by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Service; a staff restructuring review carried out by Plymouth City Council; and benchmarking undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts in relation to the provision of regional Historic Environment Records.

A number of the other responses did include comment to say that there had been involvement with some form of formal review undertaken more than 3 years ago. Others stated that while there had been no formal benchmarking against other local authority services many had carried out either a formal or informal process of review internally. These reviews had varied in their level of detail and complexity but all were related to justifying the range and cost of the service currently being provided. In addition a number of members mentioned that future review of some form was anticipated in the contexts of local government re-organisation, financial constraints or other service issues.

The detail provided by these responses supported the list of principal areas of activity identified by ALGAO, including:

- Maintenance and updating of the HERs/SMRs
- Provision of specialist development control advice
- Provision of advice more generally for conservation and management purposes
- Contribution to policy
- Improving knowledge and understanding of the historic environment
- Outreach, education and promotion
- Liaison and Advocacy

Relevant detail provided under these headings was incorporated into the initial roles and responsibilities long list. Generally the information from the benchmarking survey added support to the case made by ALGAO UK for having a nationally recognised and agreed list of roles and responsibilities to help to underpin heritage service reviews.

3.3 Service Level Agreements

The figures from the ALGAO Staffing and Casework Survey 2005 show that of the 44 responding members advising more than one authority (representing 334 authorities) 26 have one or more SLAs, a total of 116 SLAs (or alternative form of wording for the agreement). For background to the working of these by Essex County Council see Bedwin and Gilman (2009-10, 26-27).

A representative selection of these agreements was obtained from 7 ALGAO member authorities/organisations. These covered various arrangements and indicate considerable variation in the form and content of the agreements. They range from

comparatively straight forward lists of the services to be provided (Dyfed Archaeological Trust); a short and plain SLA (Derbyshire CC; West of Scotland Archaeology Service; Norfolk Landscape Archaeology), a lengthy and formal SLA (Essex County Council); a very specific agreement relating to data exchange (Peak District National Park Authority); and a comprehensive coverage of issues in a formal legal contract (Berkshire Archaeology).

The collated information from these 7 responses (see Principal Issues Appendix 3) demonstrate how the issues covered by SLA or comparable agreements between/with local authorities for the provision of Historic Environment Services vary depending on who is providing the service and the way that it is to be delivered. However, it identifies 21 separate issues which Local Authority Historic Environment/Archaeology staff may need to be aware of. This may usefully serve as the basis of a check list, when a local authority is negotiating an SLA in the future (the numbers in brackets indicates the level of occurrence):

1	Definition of Terms in the Agreement (1)
2	Parties to the Agreement (7)
3	Duration of the Agreement (4)
4	Objectives of the Agreement (5)
5	Definition of the Service (7)
6	Service Charges/Funding Arrangements (5)
7	Quality Standards (1)
8	Performance Monitoring (4)
9	Cooperation, Consultation and Annual Review/Report(s) (6)
10	Resolution of Disputes (1)
11	Review and/or Termination of Agreement (2)
12	Service Enhancements (re changing Statutory requirements and National Policy Guidance) (2)

13	Variation to the Terms of the Agreement (1)
14	Copyright concerns (1)
15	Data Exchange Arrangements (2)
16	Accommodation (1)
17	Administrative Support (1)
18	Terms of Employment for Staff (i.e. Archaeologist(s)) (1)
19	Staff expertise, qualifications and training (1)
20	Exclusions (2)
21	Details of Key Legislation, Policies and Guidance (3)

Identification of the parties to the agreement (No 2) and Definition of the Service (No 5) are the only issues that are common to all seven agreements; these are followed by Cooperation, Consultation and Annual Review/Report (No 9) in six agreements. The level of detail about the service to be provided and its emphasis varies, but collectively they provide a further check on the tasks/items included in the development of the ALGAO UK assessment list.

4. TESTING THE LIST

In accordance with a requirement in the project brief the sub-set lists were tested at different stages of their development against the actual service arrangements of selected local authorities as follows:

- Essex County Council answered the sub-set questions and provided comment on two occasions. It was chosen to reflect the experience of a local authority which covers a large area, operates a two tier system with numerous District Councils and one Unitary Authority and has responded to considerable development pressure by supporting a large historic environment team. The archaeology staff in this team works closely with complementary specialist team for historic buildings and conservation.
- Derbyshire County Council also answered the sub-set questions on two occasions. It was chosen as reflecting a local authority that operated within a two tier system with a more modest sized historic environment team. However, it was also one having close links with historic building and

conservation colleagues. In addition it has close links with the Peak District National Park for which it provides HER/SMR data under a SLA.

- Hertfordshire County Council answered the sub-set questions on one occasion, acting as an additional check on the responses from Essex CC and Derbyshire CC.
- Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit answered the sub-set questions on one occasion, prior to their final revision, providing a further check and response from an organisation servicing a Metropolitan Authority.
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council considered the list on one occasion. Comment was provided in the context of an urban Unitary Authority for which the historic environment/archaeology team carry out a lot of casework which is related to a locally maintained list of buildings, the majority of which are not listed.
- The ALGAO: UK Executive, the membership of which is representative of all the different types of local government in the UK, was presented with versions of the sub-set lists for comment on two occasions. The comments received from Welsh and Scottish members provided information which particularly helped to clarify service arrangements in their respective countries.

At the end of this process of consultation a final check and revision of the assessment outcomes was made by the project Steering Group prior to it being presented as a final draft for consideration by the whole membership of ALGAO UK at its AGM in 2010 (accessed via the ALGAO website www.algao.org.uk).

5. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES SUB-SETS

The outcome of the assessment is presented as four sub-set lists which embrace Background Information; Local Authority Capacity and Pressure; Heritage Asset; and Casework Responsibility. Not all of the tasks and items identified are currently taken into account under the existing heritage service arrangements of many local authorities, but the expectation is that they will be recognised and considered as part of any future review or reorganisation. For an explanation of many of the individual items/tasks included in the sub-set lists see Appendix 1 (Glossary and Terminology).

When using the sub-set lists it should be remembered that it is the weighting in respect of each item/task which is being established, not the actual statistics relating to the item/task.

The comments column with each of the sub-sets is to enable additional observations about the scoring. These may be particularly informative for non-Historic Environment/Archaeological specialists who may be reading the completed responses as part of the review process.

Subset 1: Background Information

The primary objective of the survey is to identify and assess the various categories and items identified in Sub-sets 2, 3 and 4 below. Before doing so it is considered of value, especially for non-heritage specialists likely to assess the results, to establish certain general information about the Local Authority and its' Historic Environment/Archaeology Service. Additional useful background information may

also be provided by an individual local authority contribution to the annual ALGAO Staffing and Casework Survey.

Subset 2: Local Authority Capacity and Pressure. This list aims to identify those circumstances that may influence a Local Authority's ability to support its Historic Environment/Archaeology Service.

Subset 3: Heritage Assets. The list contains historic environment assets identified as being relevant to the operation of any or all Local Authority Historic Environment/Archaeology Services in the UK. Almost all of these local authorities hold, or have access to through shared arrangements, to an Historic Environment Record/Sites and Monuments Record (HER/SMR). The content of each of these will vary according to the size of the authority area and other factors, but all can be expected to contain information relating to most of the individual forms of designation that are listed and hold or have access to many of the other data sets.

It should be noted that for this assessment the asset value, abilities and numbers of staff in historic environment teams are not included.

Subset 4: Casework Responsibility. This list aims to demonstrate the range of activity that is directed to protecting, managing, conserving and promoting the Historic Environment. This can be related to the potential threat to it from development of all forms, which can be identified as casework tasks for a Local Authority Historic Environment/Archaeology Service or its HE service provider.

At the early stage of the assessment the number of individual activity items/tasks identified was a great deal longer. In order to speed the process of responding to the list many of the items have been condensed into a single over-arching heading, however, some of the range of activities covered are summarised for reference as supplementary notes following the introduction to the sub-set. A local authority carrying out an assessment of its service may wish to analyse these items/tasks in greater individual detail.

Project Outcomes: The primary aim of the ALGAO Roles and Responsibilities project has been to provide a list which can be of assistance to individual ALGAO UK members when carrying out a review of the Historic Environment/Archaeology Service for which they are responsible. However, ALGAO UK also considers that by applying consistency of approach the outcomes can have a value in its associations with other organisations, particularly English Heritage, Historic Scotland and CADW, when seeking to influence Government Policy for the Historic Environment. For this reason when using the sub-set lists a request is made for ALGAO members to:

- For consistency answer all of the questions even if this means that for the 'relevance' question the NO box is ticked.
- No alterations or additions are made to the main category headings, although additional lines can be added to the item/tasks column, if required.
- At the end of the review to provide a copy of the completed sub-set lists, and any other information about the review considered relevant, to the Administrative Assistant of ALGAO for collation with other survey outcomes in order to inform the UK wide activities of the organisation.

6. TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT/ARCHAEOLOGY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Subset 1: Background data

The ALGAO Local Authority Roles and Responsibilities project is not specifically designed to gather background information (quantitative and qualitative) about your Historic Environment/Archaeology Service. However, for your review it is likely that you will need to refer to such information. Some relevant data is already collated annually for the ALGAO Staffing and Casework Survey. In addition it may be useful to establish the following before completing Subsets 2, 3 and 4. The comments column is to expand/explain the response in greater detail, where this is considered necessary, not least to highlight any issues for non-HE specialists who may read the project outcomes for review purposes. Responses should be based upon the last full year for which information is available.

Subset 2: Capacity

The ALGAO Local Authority Roles and Responsibilities project is not specifically designed to gather background information (quantitative and qualitative) about your Historic Environment/Archaeology Service. However, for your review it is likely that you will need to refer to such information. Some relevant data is already collated annually for the ALGAO Staffing and Casework Survey. In addition it may be useful to establish the following before completing Subsets 2, 3 and 4. The comments column is to expand/explain the response in greater detail, where this is considered necessary, not least to highlight any issues for non-HE specialists who may read the project outcomes for review purposes. Responses should be based upon the last full year for which information is available.

Subset 3: Assets

Research has established the following list of Heritage Assets which a Local Authority Historic Environment/Archaeology Service may hold and/or have access to in order to provide a service. In the context of your review the questions seek qualitative information which aims to establish the current position in respect of each item for your service. Q1. Do you carry out this task?

If the answer to this question is no then it is not necessary to answer the following questions, however, you may wish to explain your response in the comments box e.g. would like to do but resources unavailable.

Q2. How important do you estimate this particular task to be for your service?

- 1 = High importance
- 2 = Medium importance
- 3 = Low importance
- 4 = Not important.

Q3. How frequently do you estimate that this task receives attention by your service?

- 1 = Very often
- 2 = Not so often
- 3 = Occasionally
- 4 = Never.

Q4. How much time do you estimate that this task takes up for your service?

- 1 = Considerable time
- 2 = Significant time
- 3 = Little time
- 4 = None.

The end column is for comments on the scoring and to highlight areas to be developed to enhance your service, as appropriate for the benefit of non-HE specialists.

Responses should be based upon the last full year for which information is available.

Subset 4

Research has established the following list of casework responsibilities which the staff of a Local Authority Historic Environment/Archaeology Service either do or could carry out. In the context of your review the questions seek qualitative information to establish the significance of each item identified for your service as it currently operates. Responses require consideration of each item in respect of the attention given to the particular task by your service. While many tasks can be responded to in relation to work on an annual basis it is recognised that some of the tasks only occur on a longer cycle of activity, an indication that this is the case can be given in the Comments box. It is also recognised that a distinction might be made between the number of times that a service receives a request to do a task and the number of times that it actually does it. If this is the case your response can be qualified in the comments box e.g. would do but insufficient staff time/limited experience. The end column is for comments about the scoring and to highlight areas which might be developed to enhance your service, as appropriate for non-HE specialists reading the outcomes for review purposes.

Q1. Do you carry out this task?

If the answer is no it is not necessary to answer the following questions, however, you may wish to explain your response in the Comments box e.g. would do but no resources.

Q2. How important do you estimate this particular task to be for your service?

- 1 = High importance
- 2 = Medium importance
- 3 = Low importance
- 4 = Not important.

Q3. How frequently do you estimate that this task receives attention by your service?

- 1 = Very often
- 2 = Not so often
- 3 = Occasionally
- 4 = Never.

Q4. How much time do you estimate that this task takes up for your service?

- 1 = Considerable time
- 2 = Significant time

- 3 = Little time
4 = None.

Responses should be based upon the last full year for which information is available. The following supplementary information is for some items in the list which embrace a range of activity. These are starred and numbered in the list.

Supplementary Notes for Subset 4 Casework Responsibility Items

***1. Service Agreements entered into by LA for provision of HE/A Services:** This includes various arrangements including:

- SLA for a LA to provide HE/A service to one or more other LAs i.e. District or Unitary.
- Joint Service Agreement between two or more LAs for providing HE/A service.
- SLA for LA to provide HE/A service to a National Park.
- SLA for LA to receive HE/A service from an Archaeological Trust (Wales) or independent contracting organisation.

***2. Responding to all planning applications for the LA area for which HE/A service provided:** This includes a wide range of intervention including pre-application consultations, appraisals to assess impact and all development proposals with archaeological implications as recorded separately by many LAs for the ALGAO survey purposes:

- Number of recommendations for below-ground pre-determination assessment.
- Number of recommendations for planning conditions.
- Number of cases where archaeology was a reason for refusal.
- Number of curatorial instructions (project briefs) issued.

***3. Monitoring appropriate stages of Contractors Work:** This includes field inspection, post-excavation programme and deposition of finds to a museum.

***4. Agri-environment Scheme Consultations:** This includes all forms of current scheme:

- Entry and Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Schemes
- Countryside Stewardship Schemes
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) Scheme Consultations
- Tir Gofal Scheme Consultations [need to check with Fiona/Louise re this as I believe Tir Gofal is now closed and the replacement scheme – which has a very limited h.e. aspect – doesn't come on stream for some time]
- Other Agri-environment schemes e.g. in-house or other schemes

***5. Appeal Case participation:** This includes written representation, hearings, public enquiries and other court action.

***6. Input to Heritage at Risk Registers:** This includes national and local registers.

***7. HER enquiries and visits:** This includes enquiries by phone, letter, email and office visits.

***8. Provision of HER on-line access:** This includes visits and hits recorded to the LA HER website or via Heritage Gateway.

***9. Provision of finds identification service:** This includes in-house Portable Antiquities Schemes and services provided by LAs themselves (usually a museum based service).

***10. Outreach projects to the public:** This includes all those categories recorded for ALGAO statistics surveys i.e. lectures, conferences/seminars, leaflets/posters, guided walks, exhibitions, community fieldwork, education packages.

***11. Education initiatives:** This includes LEA links, contributions to school curriculum and school visits.

***12. Community Outreach Field Projects:** This includes field survey, geophysics survey, monument survey, test pits(s), research excavation.

***13. HE Service Reports to Corporate Management:** This includes performance reports (re performance indicators), annual reports, assessment procedures and efficiency reviews.

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