



Mapping the Infrastructure of the Historic and Contemporary Built Environment

Final Report

By

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This survey sought to map and describe the infrastructure associated with organisations operating in the historic built environment sector and to identify organisations with an interest in the contemporary built environment. The term 'Infrastructure' refers to organisations which carry out a particular range of capacity building and development functions for other organisations in their field. The survey was targeted at non-governmental organisations, primarily in the voluntary sector and also professional associations.

The information gained will serve to improve knowledge of organisations operating within the historic and contemporary built environment sector for the purposes of creating partnerships; disseminating information and advice; and developing initiatives to raise profile, gain influence and generate a collective voice for the sector.

383 organisations were invited to participate in the survey – these were identified as potentially having an interest or role in the historic and contemporary built environment. The analysis has been based on 123 valid responses which have provided a sufficient sample to give valuable insights into the sector's infrastructure. Interpretation of the survey results focuses around sector interests and the geographical distribution of respondents.

Historic Environment and Contemporary Environment

The analysis of activity indicated that respondents were slightly more likely to see themselves as having an involvement in the 'historic built environment' than in the 'historic and contemporary built environment'. 51 respondents indicated an involvement with the 'historic environment' and 41 respondents indicated an involvement with both the 'historic and contemporary environment'. Table 1 provides a profile of these two sets of respondents.

A very small minority identified their involvement as being exclusively focused on the 'contemporary built environment'. This indicates that initiatives directed at building capacity within the sector might most effectively serve organisations with a broad involvement spanning both the 'historic and contemporary built environment'.

TABLE 1 HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFILES		
	HE Only (51)	HE & CE (41)
Expenditure	£0-£24,999	£25,000- £99,999
100% Expenditure	49.0%	43.9%
With Specific Staff	54.9%	63.4%
Volunteers	72.5%	65.9%
Currently Contributing to Policy	37.3%	34.1%
Current Partnerships	66.7%	80.5%
Top Activity/Function	Info Dispersal	Info Dispersal
Top Area of Activity	Conservation (Local)	Education and Research (National) & Heritage (Local)

These profiles are considered further below.

Resources

The level of resources available to the organisations is a useful proxy for its strength, although it is frequently the case that small organisations can “punch above their weight” and the financial measure of an organisation’s worth can often hide a greater value.

In terms of expenditure, of the respondents indicating an involvement with the ‘historic environment only’, expenditure levels tended to be lower (expenditure <£25,000) than those indicating an involvement with both the ‘historic and contemporary environments’ (these indicated expenditure in the region of £25,000 - £99,999). However, the overall pattern is one of a sector where a majority of the organisations have a low annual turnover. A further consideration is the application of financial resources; in both sets of respondents, less than 50% of respondents applied 100% of their expenditure directly to the historic and contemporary environment – with the remainder applying their expenditure to a wider range of purposes. This has implications for the development of the sector. Approximately half of the organisations are dedicated to the sector and their development would benefit the sector. However, those organisations with wider purposes may not assign the same priority to the development of their interest or activity in the historic and contemporary built environment and development may not be as readily achieved if competing priorities exist.

With regard to staffing, over half of the two sets of respondents have specific staff to deal with sector issues. Any initiative to develop the sector's capacity may be more effective if targeted towards organisations where a greater proportion of staff are engaged on issues directing relating to the historic and contemporary built environment.

The findings indicate that volunteers provide a significant resource to the sector, with 67.5% of respondents stating that volunteers work with the organisation. In total, 13, 373 volunteers were reported to work with 83 respondents; with 20 being the most frequently reported number of volunteers involved with an organisation. While acknowledging that volunteers are more likely to work on a seasonal, temporary or part-time basis than paid staff, this suggests a significant reliance within respondents on voluntary effort. The level of volunteering reflects a high degree of public interest in their historic environment and a willingness to engage with activities of non governmental organisations.

Aims and Activities

The survey focused on the scope of 'infrastructure activities' which cover capacity building and development functions. The three most frequently reported activities were as follows:

1. Information Gathering and Research
2. Information Dispersal
3. Promotion of the Historic Environment

These were common to respondents with an 'historic environment only' involvement, and an 'historic and contemporary environment' involvement. For the latter group, the percentage reporting these activities was lower, although the ranking was the same. All of the above activities were undertaken by a majority of the respondent organisations.

The following activities were undertaken by a majority of 'historic and contemporary environment' organisations:

1. Promotion of the historic environment
2. Responding to government consultations

The following activities were undertaken by 'historic environment only' organisations:

1. Encourage public participation
2. Promotion of Built Environment Issues

Organisations were asked a more broadly framed question concerning their contribution to policy. Approximately one-quarter of all respondents indicated that they were currently doing this, with the 'historic environment only' organisations slightly more involved in this activity than the 'historic and

contemporary environment' organisations. Of the remainder, 24% of the 'historic environment only' organisations expressed a desire to contribute to policy and this was considerably higher with the 'historic and contemporary environment' organisations at 32%. If the aspirants achieved their aim then the 'historic environment only' organisations would have 61% contribution to policy rate, compared to 66% of 'historic and contemporary environment' organisations.

Geographic Distribution

Geographic distribution provided a strong basis for analysing the survey results. Table 2 brings together the principle findings on a number of topics to create a profile for organisations operating at different geographic levels.

TABLE 2 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION PROFILES				
	Local (52)	Regional (7)	National (55)	International (16)
Expenditure	£0-£24,999	£0-£24,999	£500,000+	£100,000- £249,000
100% Expenditure	46.2%	57.1%	67.3%	37.5%
With Specific Staff	48.1%	71.4%	67.3%	37.5%
Volunteers	78.8%	57.1%	63.6%	50.0%
Currently Contributing to Policy	17.3%	14.3%	41.8%	25.0%
Current Partnerships	73.1%	57.1%	70.9%	68.8%
Top Activity/Function	Encouraging Public Participation	Info Dispersal	Info Dispersal	Responding to Government Consultations
Top Area of Activity	Conservation (Local)	Education and Research (Regional)	Education and Research (National)	Education and Research (National)

Table 2 shows the differences and similarities in key characteristics. Local organisations make up a large proportion of respondent organisations but are less likely to be currently engaged in policy or to aspire to contribute the policy in the sector in comparison to regional, national and international respondents. Local organisations are also significantly less likely to be contributing to policy even though they are engaged in partnerships. Another important element is the difference between the limited resources of local organisations in comparison to organisations operating at a national level.

Geography – areas of operation

Over 30% of respondent organisations operate in a distinct locality within a single local authority boundary. When combined with the organisations which operate within a wider area, but within a single local authority, it reveals that 42% of all organisations operate within a single local authority area. 40% of these organisations had annual expenditure of less than £25,000. The modest regional tier that does exist has some 42% of the organisations with annual expenditure of less than £25,000.

There are a very small number and proportion of organisations that operated across more than one-authority on a regional basis. The lack of a regional tier is perhaps not surprising given the introduction of unitary authorities in Scotland from the mid-1990's and the relatively few areas outside policing and archives where joint services have been established.

Involvement in Policy

Wider geographic variations were experienced in the current and future contribution to policy. Currently the national organisations are most likely to be contributing to policy with over 40% currently doing so. Local and regional organisations contributing to policy was no greater than 18%. Regional organisations had the highest level of aspirant contributors (58%), while 36% of local organisations had no aspirations to contribute to policy.

The barriers influencing the involvement in policy were reported as follows:

- Internal Resource Constraints e.g. time, staff, other resources
- Internal Constraints – broad remit, not seen as core activity
- External barriers – limited access, not requested to participate

Key Findings

Governance

- 72.4% of respondents were charities and approximately half of these charities were also companies limited by guarantee.

Resources

- The external funding environment appears to be very fragmented with a large number of sources reported.

- Respondents with external funding are slightly more likely to have staff dealing specifically with aspects of the Historic and Contemporary Built Environment, and slightly more likely to be contributing to policy. Respondents with no external funding are more likely to aspire to contribute to policy.
- Almost half of the respondents have an annual expenditure of less than £100,000.
- 26.8% of respondents have no staff and 17.1% have just one member of staff.
- 31.2% of all staff in respondent organisations deal specifically with aspects of the Historic and Contemporary Built Environment. This indicates that many staff in respondent organisations have other responsibilities.
- Only 56.1% of respondent organisations have staff to deal specifically with issues in the sector.
- 67.5% of respondents reported having one or more volunteers. This represents a high level of volunteering within the sector. 20 volunteers was the most frequently reported number of volunteers in a respondent organisation.
- A total of 13,373 individuals were reported as volunteering for the 123 respondent organisations.
- A total of 4,176 staff were reported to be engaged by the 123 respondent organisations with 1,301 dealing specifically with issues in the sector.

Policy Contribution

- 27.6% of respondents indicated that they are currently contributing to policy affecting the Historic and Contemporary Built Environment. A further 32.5% indicated that they aspire to do so. Representative organisations are significantly more likely to be contributing to policy or aspire to do so.
- The most commonly reported infrastructure-related activity amongst respondent organisations that contribute to policy in the sector is information dispersal. 94.1% of such organisations undertake this activity on a regular or quite regular basis.
- For organisations which currently contribute to policy, lobbying is reported amongst the most common activities while this is not the case for the full set of respondents.

Connectivity and Partnerships

- Only 25.2% of respondents were aware of Volunteer Development Scotland.
- 71.5% of respondents reported engaging in partnership with one or more organisations in the last three years indicating that there is a reasonably high level of partnership working.
- In total, respondents identified 184 partners. Most partners are local groups or groups outside the sector indicating that many of the partnerships do not overlap.

Infrastructure-Related Activities

- The most common infrastructure-related activities were reported as follows: information dispersal, information gathering and research, promotion of the historic environment,

promotion of built environment issues, responding to government consultations, encouraging public participation and facilitating networking

- The least common infrastructure-related activities were reported as follows: management/regulation of sector quality, training for people external to the organisation, funding projects or individuals, preparing joint responses with other organisations to government consultations, hosting conferences

Further Research

This survey has provided an insight into the current position of the infrastructure of the Historic and Built Environment sector. As the first such survey it provides much new information which has been analysed in this report. A comprehensive data appendix provides scope for further analysis, and a contact database would allow a full or partial follow-up to this study.

The database of surveyed organisations and the survey results will provide the opportunity to target capacity building initiatives in the Historic and Contemporary Built Environment, particularly organisations which aspire to contribute to the sector's policy.

The opportunity to increase the coverage of the survey by commissioning a resurvey in 12 – 18 months could yield a higher response rate if there is sufficient advance warning, avoidance of year end conflicts and sufficient time to prepare responses. Within such a survey those organisations who have responded this time could be matched to track the changes in their resources, activities and areas of operation.

The questionnaire could be simplified in future concentrating on those activities and functions undertaken by the majority of organisations, supplemented by those areas of special interest, or where there have been development initiatives by BEFS and other partners.

These are measurable impact measures that could be adopted. For instance 46% of respondents recognised BEFS as a networking organisation, while 67% recognised the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations as a networking organisation.

In addition to further survey work the mapping exercise provides a range of information for the project partners to determine their development priorities for the sector and to act on them.