

Workshop Report

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy

Consultation workshop held 18 May 2015, at the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation



1 Introduction

- 1.1 The workshop provided opportunity for practitioners to discuss the draft *Archaeology Strategy for Scotland* which was subject to stakeholder consultation. The draft Strategy had been prepared by the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee; this committee draws representation from across the discipline of archaeology and was set up in 2013 fulfilling a recommendation made in the *Review of Archaeology*. The development of this Strategy, which addresses the practice of archaeology, originated prior to the overarching Strategy for the historic environment sector *Our Place in Time* (OPiT), and now sits beneath this as well as the Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries *Going Further*. The consultation seeks feedback on the structure and content of the document.
- 1.2 Dr Rebecca Jones gave further background behind the proposed strategy priorities, three of which align directly with the overarching strategy OPiT (understanding, care and protecting, celebrating). The four additional priorities (engagement, improving skills, innovating, and improving archaeological projects) unpack some of the issues that are particularly pertinent to the discipline of archaeology. The priority on skills responds in part to the survey 'profiling the profession' undertaken in 2011/12. The priority on innovation responds to the major leaps forward in recent years in how science is applied and how information is accessed and used. The museums sector has a major stewardship role to play – this Strategy helps deliver both OPiT and the strategy *Going Further*. The priority on archaeological projects seeks to address the processes involved – recognising that often projects are not completed and/or information not disseminated or used as effectively as it might be.
- 1.3 Questions covered: whether this Strategy is seen as part of a suite of sectoral strategies, sitting beneath OPiT (for example a strategy on landscape to bridge the gap between OPiT and strategic policy on landscape, or on conservation areas to form a bridge between OPiT and the *Architecture Strategy*). There was a question on who would be responsible for driving the implementation of the Strategy – whether this would come from the Scottish Historic Environment Forum or Strategy (OPiT) working groups. In response it was suggested that strategic policy development should respond to the needs of the sector – for example a strategy on industrial heritage is forthcoming. It was also recognised in response to questions that this

draft Strategy is a hybrid in that it is both strategic and operational – however the intention was to give some steer in terms of actions over the next ten years.

- 1.4 Participants were invited to discuss and give reaction to the draft Strategy in break out discussions. The key themes arising from these group discussions are given below.

2 Vision

- 2.1 Discussion covered whether it is necessary to have a discipline-based vision when this Strategy sits under the strategy *Our Place in Time*, which has its own vision and if so how general or specific it should be. Participants sought more emphasis in the vision on protection (or ‘safeguarding’ or ‘stewardship’) – an aspect that is currently missing but should be foremost. The vision needs to get across a sense of legacy; that we are passing on valued places to future generations. It also needs to get people to care and convey that archaeology matters. As drafted, the meaning of ‘identities’ was questioned (this could be framed as an outcome). The phrasing ‘to enrich and improve the quality of peoples’ lives’ was discussed; it was recognised that this helps makes the case for the discipline in terms of impact for people. Participants also wanted to see a vision that was outward looking (a suggestion that the current wording is too introspective).

3 Strategic Priorities

- 3.1 Participants discussed whether the strategic priorities were appropriate. This came up regularly in discussions. Differing views were put forward; some recognised the value of retaining seven priorities which help give a focus on issues especially pertinent to the discipline of archaeology. More specific priorities can help in securing funding and it was noted that seven priorities helps with the read across to the strategy *Going Further*. Others felt that seven is too many and that all issues could be covered under three priorities, in this order: understanding; stewardship and engagement (there are crossovers between priorities 1 and 4, and priorities 5-7 are fundamental to the achievement of priorities 1-4). The funding aspects of priority 7 could be addressed under priority 3 (caring and protecting), and the priority on innovation could be linked with that on understanding. Priority 7 (improving archaeological projects) might be more positively described as ‘improving delivery of activity on the ground’. This priority in particular received attention with participants commenting that on the one hand it should be recognised as a distinct priority as it is a problem area, while on the other this aspect should be embedded across all priorities as a ‘part of being professional’.

4 Review of funding structures

- 4.1 The proposed review of funding structures was not discussed in any detail, other than the idea to look more closely at European and international funding and ensure that archaeology has access to opportunities. The REF scoring of universities was seen as problematic.

5 Priority 1: Encouraging greater engagement

- 5.1 Understanding the needs of the audience is important and whether the intention is to increase engagement with more people, or more deeply, or both. The pivotal role of local authority archaeologists/curators was recognised in this section. The use of Joint Working Agreements as a mechanism for embedding policy objectives across local government priorities was identified here as well. It was commented that if engagement is effective then good stewardship will flow from this. Specific suggestions covered: that the title be amended to 'Delivering greater engagement'. The aim should read 'to support people's engagement with...' (rather than 'transform'); to reflect that good work is already happening. In terms of the actions, the wording 'find ways to inspire' is quite vague.

6 Priority 2: Enhancing understanding

- 6.1 In general it was felt that this section must be broadened to cover community based archaeology, reaching and integrating for example the activities of amateur archaeologists and highlighting the presentation of local collections. As drafted the emphasis is on work of the paid professional. The ClfA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) standards are already broadly relevant; their use should be promoted. The document could also recognise more clearly the role of commercial units in implementing professional standards. It was suggested that rather than establish a new group on Professional practice and ethics the Scottish Group of the ClfA could be re-purposed, because there is only so much capacity to participate on such groups. On the issue of professional practice and ethics the document could be clearer on the proposed activity 'to review teaching and assessment of ethics'. The intention to look at the role of licences was welcomed – this will need careful consideration.
- 6.2 Specific editorial suggestions included: removing the word 'understanding' from the aim; a query over the meaning of the word 'interpretation' in the aim (does this refer to professional synthesis or interpretation at sites?); at objective b suggest 'act according to professional ethics'; and at objective c the need to engage people in the process of archaeology as well as the results.

7 Priority 3: Caring and protecting

- 7.1 Again, the pivotal role of local authority archaeologists/curators was highlighted – this needs stronger emphasis at objective a. There was a call for statutory provision of archaeological advice within local authorities; specialist advice at local level playing a fundamental role in ensuring informed decision-making within the planning system. Objective b could recognise a hierarchy of needs in managing the historic environment by making reference to designated assets. This section could cover building archaeology – there is still relatively little archaeological recording of listed buildings. The section could also explore more the transition from ‘accessible knowledge’ to ‘increasing understanding’ (covered at objective c). This process plays an important role in developing group cohesion and community identity. The social and economic benefits of stewardship could be highlighted.
- 7.2 Specific points included: in general the term ‘stewardship’ is preferred to ‘protection’; a query regarding the intention to apply incentives (at objective b) - the importance to the discipline of developer funded archaeology was highlighted. At objective c it was suggested that the wording be amended to ‘subject to change’, amid recognition that assets may well be subject to change in order to increase understanding. Under the actions: third bullet point - the meaning is lost; sixth bullet point – make specific mention of ‘funding’.

8 Priority 4: Celebrating

- 8.1 It was generally recognised that there is strong correlation between this priority and that on engagement; all objectives here are about engagement although it is understood that there is a subtle difference in terms of what is intended for the two priorities. It may be that learning could be drawn out as a subsection within the engagement priority. Suggested edits were as follows: that at objective b the word ‘optimise’ replace ‘maximise’. The actions were well received – particularly the idea to create developer-funded bursaries to ensure follow-through of fieldwork. A target under this priority might be that primary schools make a visit to a local archaeological site. Archaeology can be plugged in right across the Curriculum for Excellence; the model created by PAS (formerly Planning Aid Scotland) was referred to as one which incorporates learning about local place from primary through to secondary education and beyond.

9 Priority 5: Improving skills

- 9.1 Discussion on this priority centred on the need for intelligent purchasers of archaeological services, and also the critical role that local authority archaeologists

play in mediating between the client and technical experts (for instance where geo-archaeological services are required). It was highlighted that often the best or most innovative projects involve an understanding client. Currently procurement of (especially very technical) archaeological services represents a significant weakness. Support must be directed to local authority archaeologists. Regarding the skills map, it was agreed that the National Occupation Standards are difficult to use and that there may be a role for ClfA here in creating a training document. In discussion of objective c, it was pointed out that new entrants must be encouraged into the industry; opportunities are not very clear for graduates. It was also highlighted that the Strategy needs to be explicit about the tensions between professional archaeology and the discipline of archaeology. This was also recognised under priority 2; many practicing archaeologists do not wish practice as ‘professionals’ but have extensive practical experience. It was noted that the ClfA as the professional institute can accommodate this range of practice within its structure. Specific edits were as follows: The aim could instead read: ‘To ensure that people have the opportunity to acquire and use the skills that they need and/or desire’; this opens the priority up to cover wider skills such as project management and public engagement.

10 Priority 6: Innovating

- 10.1 The aim for this priority could alternatively state ‘to promote, support, deliver’ (as well as encourage). As observed above, an understanding client is often key. The prescriptive managerial approach of the subsequent priority might also be balanced with a more exploratory approach here; this section might convey an ethos of scientific endeavour – allowing some leeway for practitioners to ‘follow their hunches’.

11 Priority 7: Improving archaeological projects

- 11.1 Whether this area should be treated as a separate priority has already been covered under the section ‘strategic priorities’. If included it could be framed more positively as ‘improving delivery of activity on the ground’ or ‘future archaeological delivery’. This section could be more outward looking, with an international focus. The outreach elements of project delivery could be considered since these are often seen as a bolt on. The key question has to be where the discipline wants project delivery to be in ten years time.

12 Delivery

- 12.1 Participants discussed what role they will play in delivering the Strategy. The Strategy will gain more traction if people use it to gain profile for the practice of archaeology, to help embed outcomes in wider frameworks such as Single Outcome

Agreements, and to secure additional funding for archaeology. The role of local authority archaeologists is pivotal to enabling effective delivery at local level. It was also recognised that local authority archaeologists and those working in commercial units do most outreach/engagement work in their own time. As a focal point the document should be used to help all advocate the benefits of archaeology with decision-makers at all levels.

13 One single thing to improve archaeology

13.1 Participants identified a few key areas for improvement:

- Support for the pivotal (and multi-faceted) role that local authority archaeologists undertake
- Improved understanding of how archaeologists work and what they offer
- Finding additional ways to attract funding into the discipline
- To get better at demonstrating outcomes (especially where these are achieved in a collaborative way) and embed these into Joint Working Agreements, Single Outcome Agreements and the Curriculum for Excellence
- To reach more people at the right time in the right way in the right place

14 Participants and acknowledgements

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Archaeology Scotland
Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers in Scotland
CFA Archaeology
FAME
GUARD Archaeology
Headland Archaeology
Historic Scotland
Northlight Heritage
National Trust for Scotland
Panel for Historic Engineering Works Awareness
Royal Society of Arts - MCICH
Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (two members present)
Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
Wessex Archaeology