

UPDATE ON SCOTLAND'S ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGY

The Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) is very grateful for all 73 responses to the recent consultation on Scotland's Archaeology Strategy and to all the individuals who contributed to the 25 workshops held across Scotland. ODS Consulting were contracted to analyse the written results of the consultation and their report, which is made available alongside this paper, in addition to the individual responses themselves, has helped the Committee to consider changes to the Strategy layout and content. The Committee presents here its consideration of the responses, an update on progress, and plans for publication of the Strategy.

General Considerations

One of the key messages to come from the responses was a lack of understanding over who the SSAC were and what their remit was. This information is detailed online at <http://www.scottishheritagehub.com/content/scottish-strategic-archaeology-committee> but is additionally reproduced at the end of this update as an Appendix for everyone's information. While the Archaeology Strategy Team is employed by Historic Scotland the Strategy itself was created through the SSAC and has the direct input of all members of the Committee. In this way the Strategy is very much the creation on behalf of the archaeology sector as represented through the expertise on the Committee, and is not a Government or political policy document. It is also the Committee's consideration that this Strategy will work to help deliver the aspirations in both *[Our Place in Time, the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland](#)* and *[Going Further: the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries](#)*. The SSAC is, however, very grateful to the Strategy Team for their work in pulling together the document in its draft form and for their research into the potential impact on equalities and businesses for the consultation; they also undertook to inform and listen to audiences across the country and the notes from those workshops are also being used to help further refine the Strategy.

It is clear from the excellent rate of response that there is an engaged and interested audience, indeed 88% of those who responded to the question on involvement indicated they would like to continue to be involved and the Committee received no less than 28 alternative versions of the Vision. This is very positive and the SSAC is grateful to all those who took the time to participate either by submitting a response or attending a workshop, or contacting the SSAC or Strategy Team directly.

What is also clear is that while the Committee will now make changes to the Strategy, it will not be possible to please everyone, and not all responses can be fully addressed in the revised version. The SSAC has taken the view, which appears to have been positively received by the majority of respondents, that the Strategic Priorities are broadly correct for the current context. However, it is the SSAC's view that while a timetable can be set out for actions falling under these Priorities and a general timeframe provided for achieving the Vision (10 years was considered appropriate), current and anticipated changes in circumstance and resources will likely affect the delivery of Priorities within the archaeology sector. The SSAC therefore consider the Strategy to be a 'living' document, one that is monitored and reviewed at regular intervals, and new actions and Priorities created or revised as required. In this way, the Strategy will remain a relevant touchstone and provide a framework for, and is just the start of, a process of positive change.

Another general thread running through many responses was that of resources, and specifically additional funding to deliver the Strategy. The SSAC has no specific budget, members attend on a voluntary basis, and it is the Committee's view that it is very unlikely that extra funding from the public purse will be forthcoming in the current financial climate. However, the Strategy is aimed at inspiring everyone, making archaeology matter and making archaeology more efficient and it is the Committee's expectation that those with resources to invest in archaeology will take account of the Strategy in their prioritisation and decision-making and that those without sufficient resources would employ the Strategy to advocate for what is required to deliver the archaeology we want to see. While not a Government policy document, the Committee will certainly ask Government and other key national and local organisations, public and private, to accept it as a key voice within the archaeology sector and recognise and promote the messages it contains.

Finally, several respondents highlighted areas where the Strategy text could be adapted to provide for a more positive and upbeat message and recognise the excellent work already being undertaken in many areas of archaeology in Scotland. The SSAC has agreed to remove the actions (previously listed under "we will") from the Strategy document itself, and create a separate implementation plan document based on them. This will also provide a little more space to enable the merger of some Priorities and the incorporation of some of the excellent ideas in the responses.

Consideration of Specific Question Responses

Q1. Does the vision take account of your aspirations for archaeology in Scotland? What is your vision for Scottish archaeology?

There was an excellent response to the possible Vision for the sector with no less than 28 alternatives provided through the consultation. The Committee agreed it was vitally important to put people at the heart of why archaeology is undertaken, and it accepts that the current Vision does require to incorporate the concept of stewardship for future generations, not only of the resource that archaeology is used to study, but the practice and relevance of archaeology as a means of understanding the past. Remembering the definition of archaeology set out in the Strategy, the Committee will rephrase the Vision to incorporate reference to the concept of stewardship, and will consider the term "identities" with care since it was also singled out as potentially confusing or problematic.

Q2. Are the strategic priorities appropriate? What different approaches would you suggest and why?

The Committee recognised that, in general, where the Priorities were not considered appropriate, this in many instances was due to the structure of the Priorities rather than their actual intent. In response the Strategic Priorities will be restructured to reduce their number, but their content is still seen as important in the current context and much of the restructuring will occur through merging Priorities 1 and 4, and perhaps 5 and 6. Previous Priority 7 will be re-named Delivering Archaeology, edited to ensure that it encompasses all aspects of archaeology and not just excavation and moved to the front of the document.

Q3. The Strategy proposes a review of funding structures for Scottish archaeology. Do you agree that this is needed and is there anything in particular that you would like to see such a review address?

The Committee recognises the concerns of some respondents to the consideration of a full review into how archaeology in Scotland is funded, but is very clear that if such a review is to

be undertaken, the scope should not be restricted in any way. All appropriate options should be considered and their risks and opportunities analysed and weighed, with the archaeology sector necessarily involved at all stages.

Q4. Does this Strategy look as though it will make it easier for you to engage with archaeology? How would you like to be involved in archaeology over the next ten years? What barriers exist now and what would help greater inclusion and should be included in this Strategy?

Many of the respondents already considered themselves directly engaged in the process of archaeology and the Committee accepts that while it would very much like the Strategy to be all things to all people and reach a mass audience it recognises the more practical view that the Strategy will be more likely to play a role providing a framework and inspiration for the sector itself, in the first instance speaking mainly to those already interested in archaeology and Scotland's past. However, the Committee will also examine the Strategy in the light of comments on inclusiveness; it is the Committee's wish that all those interested in Scotland's past feel that the Strategy is for them, about them and helps them.

Finally, a key barrier appears under various forms to be articulated as "communication" – from disseminating stories timeously, through networks and/or knowledge exchange hubs, and collaboration and sharing between organisations, to clarity in the Strategy itself. The Committee welcomes this response and information on the other suggested barriers, and expects the relevant parts of the Strategy to help address and resolve these issues.

The Strategic Priorities

The consultation explores the seven strategic priorities in turn, asking the same three questions about each:

- Does this aim reflect your ambition for Scottish archaeology?
- Do you agree with the priorities assigned to the Objectives?
- Do these suggested actions provide a reasonable basis to begin to take the Strategy forward?

The SSAC members have committed to revising the individual Strategic Priorities in light of the responses made through the consultation and workshops, and what is provided here is a broad overview of the Committee's reconsideration of these Priorities.

Q5. Priority One - Encouraging Greater Engagement

The Committee welcomes the two main thrusts of responses to this Priority, namely that it could be expanded slightly and that it recognises the excellent work already happening in this area. With the removal of the actions there will be room to expand on this Priority, and from responses to Priority Four the Committee will look to merge these two without losing the importance of each.

Q6. Priority Two - Enhancing Understanding

While welcoming the affirmation that this Priority is crucial to archaeology, the Committee recognises that this Priority could be seen to reflect only professional or paid expertise rather than the wider community involved in enhancing understanding. Responses here also reflect wider concerns that local or regional knowledge and expertise is crucial to understanding Scotland's past on a national scale, and the Committee welcomes the support for regional research frameworks.

Q7. Priority Three - Caring and Protecting

This Priority is clearly important given the expression given to stewardship in the responses to the Vision draft, and the various suggestions for developing this Priority and its actions are welcomed by the Committee.

Q8. Priority Four - Celebrating

The Committee notes the lower support for this Priority and the various suggestions that it could be merged with another. It is the Committee's intention to merge this with Enhancing Understanding and to recognise that sharing and celebrating takes many forms, from the purely scientific to the storytelling and the expressive arts.

Q9. Priority Five - Improving Skills

This Priority created questions with regard to its audience, with respondents rightly highlighting the need to cater for the full range of skills (e.g. beyond field and laboratory work), both in terms of the archaeology profession generally and community groups and others that might wish to acquire those skills. The Committee is firmly of the view that the ability to acquire skills should be open to anyone, and that there are a wide range of skills outside the traditional fieldwork and laboratory environments that require development and passing on. However, the Committee also noted the need to retain already acquired knowledge and skills, particularly so in the face of a skills and personnel gap created through the reduction of skills in the sector over recent years. As economic growth returns and the development sector becomes more active, and with the continued steady increase in engagement with community groups, the need for those skills will be particularly pertinent.

The SSAC welcomes the positive responses to increasing apprenticeship opportunities and recognises the development of skills passports and other CPD opportunities across the sector. We also welcome the interest from universities and museums in being part of the delivery of vocational development. Responses highlighted the particular relevance of the place of Scotland on the international stage in this Priority and Priority Seven, and the revised Strategy will further emphasise the international quality of Scotland's archaeology.

Q10. Priority Six - Innovating

Following various suggestions from respondents the Committee will consider the merger of this Priority with Improving Skills. The Committee welcomes the emphasis on ensuring this important Priority includes innovative thinking, through research approaches, engagement, collaboration and dissemination, particularly where this leads to improvements in sustainable policy and practice.

The ScARF Directory of Archaeological Scientists is for "*All scientists interested in working on Scottish archaeological material*" and the Committee will ensure that this is made clear on the ScARF website and the resource is promoted as widely as possible. The SSAC would welcome everyone who participated in the consultation to help with that aim.

Q11. Priority Seven - Improving Archaeological Projects

Considering the positive responses to this Priority, the Committee is considering renaming it 'Delivering Archaeology' and moving it further to the front of the Strategy. In doing so it will also try to ensure that it includes all aspects of archaeological endeavour and doesn't lean too heavily on the excavation aspects of our research.

This Priority and other areas (such as Q4) elicited the concern that the Treasure Trove system in Scotland should be reviewed; the Committee notes this view and the current context, both in Scotland and in England and Wales where several responses made comparisons, and where a successful regional system is not yet secure.

Q12. Delivering Scotland's Archaeology Strategy

This question includes four sub questions:

- Do you agree with the proposals for leading on the delivery of the strategy?
- Would you be willing to use this strategy and if so how will you use it?
- How would you like to see this strategy taken forward?
- Would you like to be involved? In which case, how and where?

This question in particular raised the issue of who the members of the SSAC were and what its remit was, and this is explained in the Appendix to this report. The Committee doesn't consider itself to have any vested authority but is a group of individuals willing to help deliver Scotland's Archaeology Strategy, *if that Strategy receives the general support of the sector*. It is the Strategy that is important, not the composition of the Committee, and the Committee encourages individuals and organisations to take a proportionate and active role in delivering on the aspirations in the Strategy.

However, the reorganisation of the Strategy into two documents will allow the proposed actions, re-assessed through the consultation, to be considered in more detail, with the potential to add timetables and proposed leaders for specific actions. It will also make clear that the Committee doesn't assume that already stretched individuals and organisations will commit further voluntary contributions, but that we will use systems, networks and frameworks already in place across the sector whenever possible to help deliver the Strategy's ambitions. This Delivery Plan document would also include guidance on how individuals can help take the Strategy forward and will welcome regional approaches to delivery. It is likely that this document will be more regularly updated as actions are completed and others surface than the Strategy itself.

The Committee is particularly gratified that a majority of respondents were willing to use and engage with the Strategy, in a wide variety of ways. The SSAC hopes that all respondents feel that their response was fully considered, even if not all suggestions make it into the final current version, remembering that the Strategy will evolve over time, and future iterations and actions will likely address concerns. In light of this the initial versions of the Strategy and the Delivery Plan will likely be online, with hardcopies produced only if felt necessary and cost-effective.

Q13. If you could nominate one critical issue that needs to be addressed or an idea that you feel would significantly improve archaeology and the public's understanding and engagement with it, what would it be and why?

This question, not surprisingly, elicited a mixed response, but the Committee were interested to note that many of the issues highlighted were already covered in one way or other within the Strategy, albeit requiring some further clarity or enhancement.

Q14. Do you think that the proposals in this Strategy will increase or reduce costs for businesses, the third sector (e.g. charities) or public sector organisations?

The Committee notes that over half of those responding felt that the Strategy would increase costs. The SSAC will look to undertake further research into the potential costs and efficiencies that these organisations may be able to make in pursuing the Vision for archaeology. This will feed into the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Strategy.

Q15. Will any of the proposals impact differently on any equality groups? Are there any key issues or opportunities we should consider to make sure that the strategy works for different equality groups?

The Committee welcomes the suggestions of likely impacts and potential opportunities that could arise from the Strategy with respect to the promotion of equality and accessibility. However, it also notes the need to provide additional support to groups or individuals who may require it. The Archaeology Strategy Team is actively researching the requirements and impact that the Strategy will have on equality, and will work opportunities into the Strategy and the Delivery Plan.

Q16. Any other comments

The SSAC hopes that many of the comments raised under this question have either been addressed in this update, or will be addressed in the revision of the Strategy. The Committee wants to maintain a balance between exposition of context and maintaining the excitement of archaeology and the opportunities in the Priorities of the Strategy, and recognises that this is a difficult act to pull off. The Committee now has an important database of ideas and comments that can be considered through the implementation of the Strategy, ensuring that some of the more detailed and practical ideas and observations will by no means be lost. However, one area that the Committee cannot commit to is another round of consultation, with all members agreed that the most appropriate launch date is at the upcoming European Association of Archaeologists 21st Annual Meeting in Glasgow on 2nd September 2015. This will not be a ‘final’ statement given the organic way the Committee would like to see the Strategy taken up and it offers the bonus of bringing a European spotlight onto the development of the Strategy. In any case, is it not time for action rather than more discussion?

**The Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee
18 August 2015**

APPENDIX

The Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) was formed in 2013. One of the first roles of the Committee is to provide advice and guidance to the Archaeology Strategy Team (AST) at Historic Scotland (*Historic Environment Scotland* from 2015) on the development and implementation of the Archaeology Strategy for Scotland.

A review of the Historic Scotland Archaeology function in 2012 included the recommendation that:

“Historic Scotland should establish an Archaeology Forum for Scotland to provide advice in the development and implementation of the strategy and on funding priorities. A key task for the forum could be to ensure that the strategy is kept live by keeping up-to-date with latest research in Scotland and elsewhere. The forum could be committee in format and size.”

To meet this requirement, HS has recruited a group of committee members from a wide spectrum of expertise across Scottish and British archaeology.

Scotland’s Archaeology Strategy is taking its lead from *Our Place in Time, the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland* (2014) and is looking at the way in which archaeology contributes to the vision for the Historic Environment. The Strategy also seeks to work with *Going Further: the National Strategy for Scotland’s Museums and Galleries*, cognisant of the key role that Museums play in the investigation, curation and celebration of our archaeological heritage.

The ethos behind the strategy is to demonstrate the continued relevance and value of archaeology, ensuring the widest participation in its role in our understanding of Scottish place-making and identity, so enriching and improving the quality of people’s lives.

Aims

The aims of the SSAC are to:

1. Offer advice and guidance to the Archaeology Strategy Team within Historic Scotland.
2. Represent key areas of expertise in the sector.
3. Assist in the creation and promotion of an Archaeology Strategy for Scotland.

Members

The SSAC is Chaired by Professor Stephen Driscoll, Professor of Medieval Archaeology at the University of Glasgow and a Historic Scotland Advisory Board member. Secretariat support is provided by the Historic Scotland Archaeology Strategy Team. Colleagues have been invited from across the sector with expertise in the following key areas:

- Archaeological Science

- Commercial Archaeology
- Clients / Development interests
- Community / Voluntary Archaeology
- Education and Archaeology
- Land Management
- Local Authority Archaeology
- Museums
- The Professional Institute (Institute for Archaeologists)
- University Archaeology

In addition, there will be links to the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF) in the first iteration of the committee (through representation from the ScARF Steering Group) and a connection with the 2015 Dig It! initiative. There will also be links to the Built Environment Forum Scotland Historic Environment Working Group (BEFS HEWG) through a member with designated responsibility for liaison with BEFS. Committee members can represent multiple areas of interest or expertise on the committee if necessary.

There will be a representative from RCAHMS in the initial phase of the Committee and from the Historic Environment Policy Unit (HEPU) within the Scottish Government in the first term in order to provide links with the Historic Environment Strategy. Subsequent to the creation of HES, representation from within the organisation and HEPU can be considered further.

There will also be a representative from the HS Advisory Board who will provide the link between the HS Advisory Board and the SSAC. This is provided by Professor Stephen Driscoll, the Chair of the SSAC. We anticipate there being representation from the Board of Historic Environment Scotland once it is established.

Committee members will serve four year terms, although it is anticipated that the first group of committee members will serve between 2-5 years to ensure that there isn't a sudden change of membership in 2017. Members will only serve one term to ensure regular change of personnel and dynamism to the committee.

The committee will meet three times a year.

The Group will report annually to the Chief Executive of Historic Scotland (Historic Environment Scotland from 2015).

Members of the Committee are as follows:

<i>Area of expertise</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Date to leave Committee</i>
Archaeological Science	Dr Karen Milek	Lecturer	Aberdeen University	2016
Commercial Archaeology	Dr Alan Leslie	Director	Northlight Heritage	2015
Clients / Development interests	Simon Stronach	Senior Associate Director	CgMS Consulting	2016
Community / Voluntary Archaeology	Dr Susan Kruse	Project Officer	ARCH – Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands	2017
Education and Archaeology	Eila Macqueen	Director	Archaeology Scotland	2018
Land Management	Matt Ritchie	Archaeologist	Forestry Commission Scotland	2017
Local Authority Archaeology	Dr Chris Bowles	Archaeology Officer	Scottish Borders Council	2016
Museums	Mark Hall	History Officer	Perth Museum & Art Gallery	2018
The Professional Institution	Pete Hinton	Chief Executive	Institute for Archaeologists	2017
University Archaeology	Professor Stephen Driscoll	Professor of Historical Archaeology	University of Glasgow	2018
ScARF / BEFS	Dr Simon Gilmour	Director	Society of Antiquaries of Scotland	2018
RCAHMS	Robin Turner	Head of Survey & Recording	RCAHMS	2015
Scottish Government Policy	Luke Wormald	Head of Strategy	Scottish Government	2015
HS Archaeology Strategy	Dr Rebecca Jones	Head of Archaeology Strategy	Historic Scotland	
HS Archaeology Strategy	Rod McCullagh	Deputy Head of Archaeology Strategy	Historic Scotland	