Scotland's Archaeology Strategy 2015–2025: Final Review Report

Report by Diffley Partnership
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From many voices to smart choices

Diffley Partnership

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Executive Summary

Review

In 2024, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) commissioned Diffley Partnership, an independent research organisation, to undertake a review of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS). The objectives of this review included assessing the following within the 2015-2025 period:

- How far Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has been adopted?
- To what extent has Scotland's Archaeology Strategy been successful in achieving its objectives?
- What impacts has Scotland's Archaeology Strategy had?

To meet these objectives, Diffley Partnership designed a three-strand research agenda, comprising:

1. Desk review of materials pertaining to SAS,
2. Roundtable and focus groups with past and current members of Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) and stakeholders from the wider sector. Taking place November and December 2024,
3. Public survey of 1,086 Scottish adults (16+) in January 2025.

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy 2015-2025

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS) was launched in 2015 with an eye to 'articulate an effective and ambitious archaeology agenda' in alignment with the historic environment strategy for Scotland and the strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries.

Using primary research methods, the reviewers prompted discussions on contextual factors during 2015-2025:

Political	• Changes in governance and policy within the sector, for example a new strategy for the historic environment. • Fluctuating political environments at the national and UK levels • UK exit of the European Union (Brexit)
Economic	• Covid-19 pandemic impacts on demand and supply of archaeology • Limitations on funding availability, in response to other pressing issues • Low pay for entry-level researchers, heightened by the cost-of-living crisis

Societal	• Growing emphasis on delivering social value and educational benefits within the sector • Ageing population impacts on demands and supply of archaeology • Changing consumer demand during cost-of-living crisis • Flexible working patterns for staff
Technological	• Growth in social media usage and number of platforms • Expansion and development of software and databases for archaeology • Technological developments in examination of artefacts and landscapes such as LiDAR
Environmental	• Climate change impacts on archaeological sites, artefacts, deposits and buildings • Net Zero goals driving change in funding and organisation priorities.

Success of SAS

Overall, SAS has helped the archaeology sector in Scotland collaborate on establishing what its joint priorities were and how it could deliver these. Through SAS, the sector has made efforts to communicate what archaeology is and what difference it makes. As a result of SAS, the sector has aligned its activities under the overarching aims of SAS, which is widely felt to have contributed to progress in these areas. All of these are positive developments for the archaeology sector, the wider historic environment sector, and ultimately for Scotland.

This review considered what progress is attributable to SAS being in place, or what would have happened anyway within the archaeology sector regardless of SAS. Based on the evidence received in desk materials, and gathered through primary research, SAS provided a platform for discussion of priorities for the sector, collaborative initiatives and engendered consideration of long-term ambitions.

A crucial development for the strategy to be adopted was the role of SSAC initially in setting the strategic tone for the SAS ten-year period, then working together to coordinate delivery of SAS. Then, in 2020, the SSAC created and employed an Operational Tracker spreadsheet to keep track of activity against each SAS aims and vision statements.

SAS is structured around five key aims. This report includes detailed findings relating to each aim. In summary, SAS has made important strides towards all five aims. Most actions have been fully

met, and Caring and Protecting is the only aim where most actions have been partially, rather than fully achieved:

SAS Aim	Delivering Archaeology	Enhancing Understanding	Caring and Protecting	Encouraging Greater Engagement	Innovation and Skills
Actions Delivered					
Fully	10	16	6	30	13
Partially	5	8	9	3	7
Not	0	1	2	3	1
Unknown	2	2	0	1	2
Total	17	27	17	37	23

In most cases there has been good collation of evidence of progress towards the aims and vision statements under each. Actions have been described, monitoring attempted and a generally positive picture of progress can be established. There are indeed gaps in information and some learning which can be applied to keep track of achievement and difference made by future strategic objectives.

The public research conducted as part of this review shows levels of engagement with archaeology at the start of 2025. by Scottish residents 16 years and older as follows:

- 79% Watch TV shows or movies about archaeology, 21% never do so.
- 78% Visit exhibitions about archaeology in museums or archives, 22% never do so.
- 58% Read or listen to newspapers, magazines, journals, books, or podcasts about archaeology, 42% never do so.
- 46% Engage with social media about archaeology, 54% never do so.
- 10% Take part in community archaeology projects or digs, 90% never do so.

While it is not possible to measure the contribution of SAS to these figures as there was no comparable data from before the SAS period, these figures are indicative of high levels of interest and engagement, and provide a baseline against which further activities can be measured.

Beyond 2025

The review finds that SAS has been successful overall. Fundamentally, the review recommends that the Scottish archaeology sector comes together to build upon the success, and learnings from SAS, to set strategic priorities and regularly prioritise collaborative initiatives which deliver against

strategic objectives over the next period. This has several advantages, as evidenced through the 2015-2025 SAS review:

- Harnessing existing expertise and resources
- Joining up efforts to secure more resources, including but not limited to HES funding
- Bringing in insights from UK and international developments in archaeology
- Encouraging considerations of the longer-term aspirations of the sector as new professional and voluntary archaeologists shape the sector and external social, political, economic, environmental contexts influence the sector.

Concerning the continued relevance of each SAS aim, all current aims were seen as relevant beyond 2025, but review participants reflected that the grouping of aims could be revisited. Also, that environmental sustainability should feature more prevalently within any strategic documents.

Reviewers recommend insights from the 2015-2025 period inform consultation on aims, objectives and actions for any subsequent archaeology strategy period. This review includes several recommendations for consideration concerning future:

- Strategic alignment, especially with Our Past Our Future, historic environment strategy.
- Delivery approaches, building upon what worked well for the 2015-2025 period, and acknowledging the crucial role of the SSAC committee and archaeology organisations.
- Understanding the difference strategic goals are making, including recommendations on how to keep track of delivery, investment in archaeology, and public attitudes and impacts.

Encouragingly for future discussions, 64 individuals already took part in this review consultation - including 13 current committee members, 19 past committee members and 32 wider stakeholders. Interest and appetite for strategic ambition for Scottish archaeology is high.

From the public survey conducted January 2025 as part of the review, this shows levels of public interest are also high for:

- How people lived in the past (88%)
- Learning from the past to help inform the future (88%)
- History (88%)
- Our environment and landscape (86%)
- Science and technology (80%)

Although a lower proportion are interested in archaeology (67%) this is over two-thirds of the population. And this finding shows how important it is for the sector to explain and showcase the part archaeology plays within the public's existing areas of interest.

1. Approach to SAS Review 2025

1.1 Purpose of the strategy review

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS) was launched in 2015 and is set to conclude in 2025.

The SAS is structured around five key aims:

1. **Delivering Archaeology:** Increasing "the public benefit of Scottish archaeology", whilst amplifying its visibility nationally and abroad. This requires evaluating the frameworks we've constructed to deliver public benefit and examining their effectiveness.[1]
2. **Enhancing Understanding:** Ensuring knowledge is "deliverable, accessible and reusable" to "increase knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past". This entails supporting and implementing research with transparent and suitable objectives. [2]
3. **Caring and Protecting:** Caring for physical evidence with sustainability in mind to ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations. This also relates to setting standards for the transfer of archaeological assemblages (artefacts, samples etc.) as well as guidance related to cataloguing. [3]
4. **Encouraging Greater Engagement:** Inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, championing "the role archaeology can play in learning" and exploring "new ways of presenting and interpreting information." [4] A number of projects such as the Heritage Resources Portal, Archaeological Learning Leaflet and Heritage Hero Awards are contributing to progress along this aim.
5. **Innovation and Skills:** Archaeological skill building can improve innovation in the understanding analysis and interpretation of archaeology. [5]

In 2020, HES prepared a Five-year review of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy.[6] This contained:

- A forward by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture,
- Narrative and figures relating to delivery of the SAS strategy aims from 2015-2020.

This report contains findings from the final review of the current SAS. It was designed to answer three questions in relation to SAS from 2015-2025, namely:

- How far Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has been adopted?

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[1] Delivering Archaeology
[2] Enhancing Understanding
[3] Caring and Protecting
[4] Encouraging Greater Engagement
[5] Innovation and Skills
[6] SAS-Five-Year-Review-Single-Page-Compressed-v.2.pdf

- To what extent has Scotland's Archaeology Strategy been successful in achieving its objectives?
- What impacts has Scotland's Archaeology Strategy had?

Therefore, the review assesses how far Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has been adopted; the extent to which it has been successful in achieving its objectives and the impact it has had.

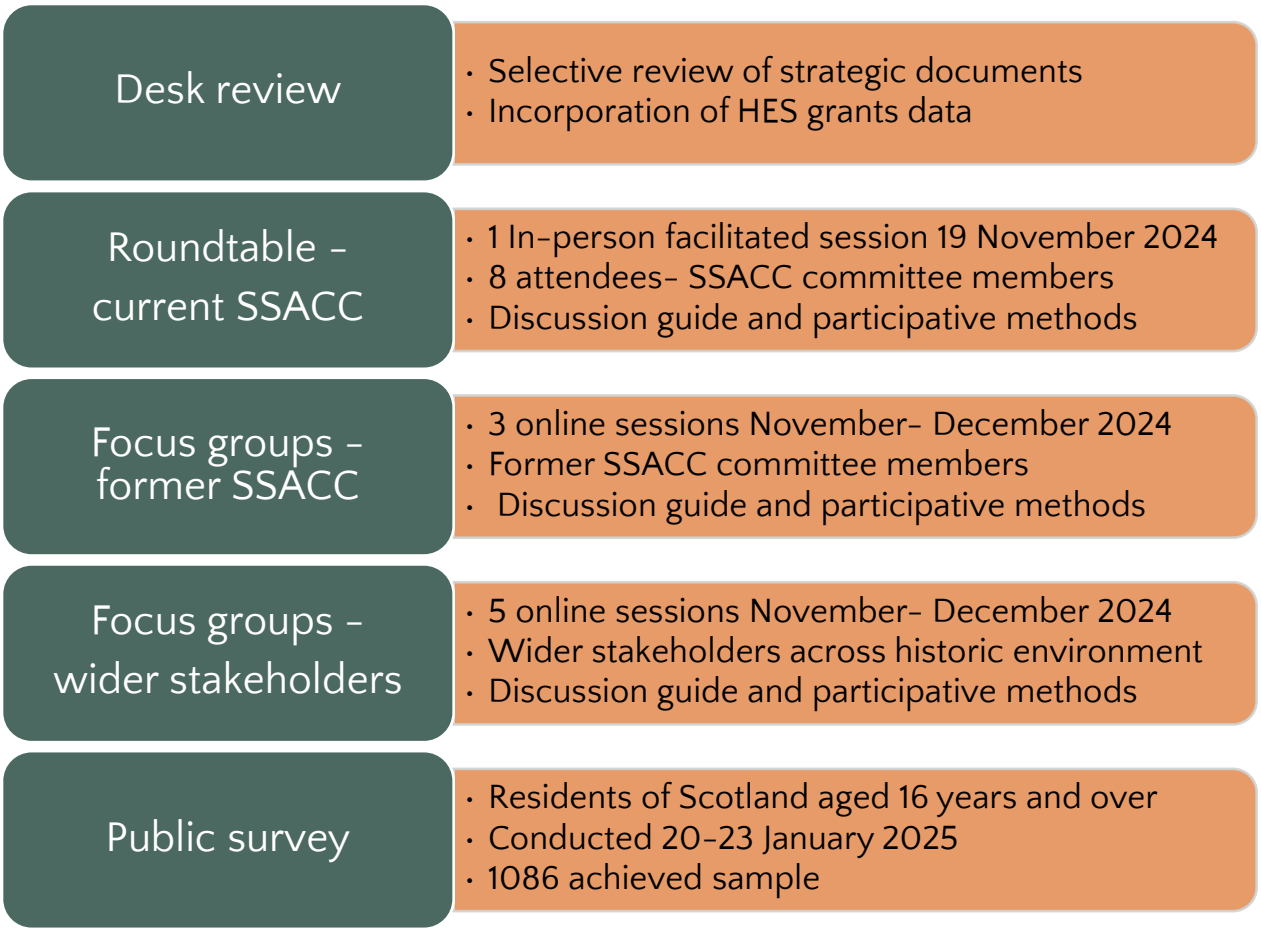
1.2 Overview of approach

Commissioned towards the end of 2024, the review was structured to maximise efficiency while ensuring a thorough assessment. Methods included a mix of qualitative research through targeted focus groups and a roundtable discussion, selective desk research, and a brief public survey. This brought a wide range of insights within the given timeframe, ensuring that all questions are met. See Figure 1.1 for details of each method.

The approach was carefully designed to address each of the key objectives as follows:

- **Measuring Success:** The desk review ensured this review could refer to the key published, and unpublished documents about the SAS and its delivery. Through focus groups and roundtable discussions, reviewers gathered qualitative data on how far the objectives of SAS have been delivered. By analysing the discussions using structured techniques like SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), reviewers could pinpoint specific achievements and gaps.
- **Impact**: Reviewers could assess SAS's impact by exploring stakeholder perceptions and evaluating the outcomes of funded projects. The PESTLE—Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental— analysis at the roundtable was used to identify external factors that contributed to or hindered the strategy's success.
- **Awareness:** Focus groups were facilitated by the reviewers to explore the extent of awareness and understanding of SAS within the sector. Additionally, the public survey was conducted to provide insights into the general public's awareness of and engagement with archaeology, complementing the qualitative findings.
- **Value for Money:** Reviewers requested HES Grants data, to include in the review.
- **Future Objectives:** This review can inform next steps by SSAC, HES and others in considering the future strategic aims, objectives and activity for beyond 2025.

Figure 1.1: Review approach - methods



Inclusive and ethical participation was at the forefront of the design of this review. All participants for the roundtable and focus groups received information and privacy notices. No participants are attributed in this report. Instead brackets after quotes indicate if a participant is currently member of the SSAC, a former member of SSAC or a stakeholder.

Within the constraints of the time-period of the review, accommodations were made to include as many interested participants as possible. To set dates and times polls were issued. In cases where a former SSACC member could not attend a session, they were invited to focus groups with wider stakeholders. When participants had last minute changes to their availability, they were offered other options to participate at a later date and time. In total 64 individuals took part in the review consultation- including 13 current committee members, 19 past committee members and 32 wider stakeholders. Both the reviewers and the commissioners appreciate the interest shown,

consideration given and time dedicated by these individuals and their organisations to take part in this review process.

1.3 Data collection and analysis

The review drew on existing data, gathered a substantial amount of primary qualitative data from SSAC and stakeholders and conducted a large-scale public survey. Details of the collection and analysis for different types of data are included below.

1.3.1 Secondary data

The desk review included a review of key documents such as SAS itself, SAS Delivery Plan,[7] and the most up-to-date version of the delivery tracking document used by SSACC.[8] HES grants data was provided for incorporation. This report includes this secondary data in various parts to provide context and support findings. References are included, and where the source is published a hyperlink is included.

1.3.2 Qualitative data

Discussion guides were developed for the roundtable and focus groups (see Appendix A). Versions contained common elements and different elements appropriate for each of the three participant groups- current SSACC, former SSACC and wider stakeholders. Reviewers ensured to ask questions relating to each of the five key themes of SAS.

Participatory elements, derived from the field of business management were included:

- **PESTLE** analysis framework to evaluate the external factors influencing the strategy's implementation. PESTLE considers political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors. In this case, the legal element was not included.
- **SWOT** analysis, allowing participants to critically evaluate the strategy's contributions and areas for improvement. SWOT concentrates on internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. This analysis helped identify key trends and potential challenges that are crucial for understanding how the strategy has performed in the wider context. This participative method enabled reviewers to better understand strengths and vulnerabilities in light of external conditions when providing feedback and recommendations.

[7] Delivery Plan version 2017 https://archaeologystrategy.scot/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/01/SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf
[8] Unpublished source as of 17 January 2025.

For the in-person roundtable, reviewers took detailed notes and gathered in the participative materials. For the online focus groups, reviewers had access to recordings and selective transcription was conducted. The reviewers grouped qualitative data in relation to SAS' aims. Within this report, illustrative, anonymised quotes are included. Brackets indicate whether the quote as from a current SSAC committee member from the Roundtable session (Current SSAC), a former SSAC committee member (Former SSAC) from a focus group, or a wider stakeholder from a focus group (Stakeholder).

1.3.3 Quantitative data

SAS's vision is making archaeology a part of everyone's lives, and there are many references to public impact and value throughout SAS. Although no public survey was conducted at the commencement of the SAS in 2015, this review gave another opportunity to collect public data.

The survey was designed to be completed by the general public without any specialist knowledge of archaeology (see Appendix B). The questions and answer options were designed to:

- **Measure Public Interest:** Gauge general interest in Scotland's past and archaeology, identifying how engaged the public is with this aspect of cultural heritage.
- **Support for Preservation:** Assess the level of public support for caring for and protecting archaeological sites and artifacts.
- **Engagement Methods:** Identify how the public engages with archaeology, whether through visits to museums, participation in community archaeology projects, or through media such as television and social media.

The survey was administered through the ScotPulse online panel from 20 to 23 January 2025. With around 46,000 adults (aged 16+) across Scotland, the panel brings a large and representative cross-section of the population to take part in surveys across a range of important issues. The survey achieved 1,091 completed returns.

Responses were tabulated, weighted to the Scottish population by age and gender, and examined statistically. These results are summarised within the report, highlighting the key findings of the survey including differences in demographics, with the aid of data visualisations. Only differences that are found to be statistically significant are discussed within the report. By performing z-tests on demographic groups, we can be 95% sure these differences have not occurred by chance and the differences observed between these groups are a real effect rather than random variation.

Aggregate percentages (e.g. 'agree'/'disagree') are calculated from absolute values. Therefore, in this report, aggregate percentages may differ from the sum of the individual scores due to rounding.

Results from the survey are included in this report. Without data from 2015 it is not possible to use these results to evidence the impact and success of SAS from a public viewpoint. At the same time, the data is useful to establish awareness of archaeology and aspects SAS. The survey could be repeated at a future date to allow comparison between time points.

1.4 Report structure

Chapter 2 of this review includes key context of SAS, its origins and the unfolding social, political, economic, environmental and technological landscape across the ten-year period.

Chapters 3 to 7 consider each of the SAS aims in turn:

- Aim 1: Delivering Archaeology
- Aim 2: Enhancing Understanding
- Aim 3: Caring and Protecting
- Aim 4: Encouraging Greater Engagement
- Aim 5: Innovation and Skills

Chapter 8 culminates with conclusions from this review of SAS 2015-2025. Review findings on the adoption, success and impact of SAS are included. Lastly, the review makes recommendations for the consideration of SSACC in its development of the next archaeology strategy.

2. Context of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy

2.1 Introduction

To set the scene, this chapter contains context on the origins of SAS, mainly taken from published sources.

Next, the political, environmental, societal, technological and economic factors affecting the 2015-2025 SAS period are outlined. These findings are derived from the discussions and activities of participants of this SAS review. To provide more economic context, information and data related to HES grants is included.

2.2 Origins of SAS

The government agency Historic Scotland (HS) conducted a review of their role in the archaeology sector in April 2012 which led to the SSAC and the SAS.[9]

The 2012 Review made the following conclusions:

- Archaeology in Scotland has enormous potential. Many, many talented and committed people are involved in different ways. A great deal of innovative work is taking place.
- The sector would benefit from input from Historic Scotland to provide more co-ordinated leadership, real partnerships and effective policy. There is a need for a long-term strategy for archaeological resources within Scotland involving all stakeholders that is aligned with the overall desired outcomes and vision for the historic environment.
- This long-term strategy should, in the first instance, be developed by Historic Scotland, on behalf of Scottish Ministers, working closely with stakeholders and partners within the sector as well as those who 'consume' archaeology. Historic Scotland is ideally placed to carry out this leadership role because their staff possess the depth of knowledge, experience and specific archaeological skills required.
- The long-term strategy should be developed in the context of the wider review of Historic Environment policy and the outlook for public expenditure.

In developing a long-term overall strategy, the 2012 Review recommended HS should:

[9] Published originally, no live link as of 03/02/2025.

- With relevant stakeholders, identify future priorities, in particular how the output from archaeology can be made accessible even more readily and quickly for the purposes of education and interpretation and public display as well as for academic consumption.
- Build a clearer picture of the size of the archaeology sector in Scotland and who is involved including as much information as possible about numbers, skills, qualifications, experience, purpose and demand and consider future scenarios for its sustainable development.
- Identify options for measuring the impact of the voluntary sector in supporting and providing community archaeology, and the relationship between the public and voluntary sectors in this area.
- Consult local government, the development industry and private sector archaeology companies about the operation of developer-led archaeology and its place in the wider strategy and consider the need for any changes in the framework, e.g. legislation, within which they operate.
- Ensure all the various funding streams for Scottish field archaeology are identified and co-ordinated as far as possible so that all funders, including HS, are clear about funding priorities, the potential funding leverage and their criteria in line with the overall strategy so that the sector gets the maximum value from all the funding available.
- Work with Higher Education institutions, the careers service and the Institute for Archaeologists on a long-term strategy for attracting and training recruits to the profession, in particular at post graduate level, and preparing them for relevant employment in the sector in line with HS strategy and Scottish archaeology requirements such as SCARF run by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and other mainstream projects.
- Examine the scope for better marketing of Scottish archaeology to domestic and international audiences, working with VisitScotland and other agencies, and communicating achievements and potential.
- Examine the scope for generating more economic value from Scottish archaeology, including from commercial activity on HS sites.
- Ensure that innovation, particularly in using new technology, is supported and good practice shared and adopted.
- As part of the drive to secure maximum value from and raise the profile of Scottish archaeology, HS, in its leadership role, should support the work of the committee currently being led by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and Archaeology Scotland to make 2015 a Year of celebration of Scottish archaeology and the work of the University of Glasgow and others in hosting the major European Archaeology Association conference in the same year.

- In order to develop the overall strategy HS should appoint a senior leader with an appropriate mix of skills to a new role of Head of Archaeology Strategy. At the same time HS should consider how the wealth of archaeological expertise within the organisation could be used most effectively and the scope for a rolling programme of secondments to and from the organisation.
- HS should look at the scope for more synergy, in relation to its own estate, between its collection and conservation work and its archaeology function.
- HS has a key role to play in investing in the whole of the historic environment, including archaeology. HS should consider aligning the management of the archaeology investment programme with its other investment programmes and the estate and properties in care of Scottish Ministers.
- HS should, over the course of the next 12 months, pursue the completion of all outstanding publications of HS funded works.

2.3 Governance developments since 2015

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) was formed in October 2015 from a merger of HS and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS). HES is a non-departmental public body with charitable status, governed by a board of trustees appointed by the Scottish Ministers. The body is charged with implementing Scotland's historic environment strategy. Therefore, the formation of HES coincides with the first year of SAS, 2015.

Scotland's Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) was formed in 2013 and further developed between 2015-2025.[10] Its remit was updated in 2016 to include responsibility for the SAS Delivery Plan once finalised and published.

The group meets around three times per year following which meeting minutes are published.[11] The committee has membership which, 'represent key partners / interests, to help with the development and delivery of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy.'[12] Members have expertise in:

- Archaeological Science
- Commercial Archaeology
- Community / Voluntary Archaeology
- Education and Archaeology

[10] For more details see website- https://archaeologystrategy.scot/committee/
[11] Minutes – Archaeology Strategy Scotland
[12] Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee – Archaeology Strategy Scotland

- Land Management
- Local Authority Archaeology
- Marine Archaeology
- Museums (including the National Museums Scotland)
- The Professional Institution (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists)
- University Archaeology
- Other areas as deemed appropriate by the committee.

The aims of the SSAC are to: [13]

1. Help create, promote and deliver Scotland's Archaeology Strategy
2. Offer advice and guidance to the Archaeology Team within Historic Environment Scotland
3. Represent key areas of expertise in the sector.

Key areas to be supported by the Committee include:

- Development and promotion of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy- including development of a regularly updated implementation plan and oversight of delivery
- Discussion of timescales, funding and priorities for areas to be addressed.

Committee members take on lead for each SAS aims.[14] As of the start of 2025, these leads are listed on the SSAC website as:

- Kirsty Owen, Historic Environment Scotland, for Delivering Archaeology
- Helen Spencer, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, for Enhancing Understanding
- Andrew Robertson, East Lothian Council / ALGAO Scotland, and Hugo Anderson-Whymark, National Museums Scotland, for Caring and Protecting
- Gavin MacGregor, Archaeology Scotland, for Encouraging Greater Engagement
- Cara Jones, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, for Innovation and Skills.

[13] Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee – Archaeology Strategy Scotland
[14] Strategy Delivery & Aims – Archaeology Strategy Scotland

2.4 Political factors

During the roundtable, some participants pondered the archaeological workforces' consideration of the influence of politics on the sector, with one of the view that "most heritage professionals do not really understand how much of how and why we work is generated by political agendas" (Current SSAC).

Overall, both roundtable and focus group participants felt that the political context has been **changeable** over the past ten years, with various different Prime Ministers and First Ministers.

Looking back to the beginning of the Strategy period (2015), several participants discussed the impact of **Brexit** – including the referendum in 2016 and the United Kingdom's formal exit from the European Union in 2020. They mentioned its cross-cutting political and economic impacts on research funding, particularly those from European Union streams, reducing the ease of partnership working, and the 'loss of European skills talent'. One of the focus group participants (Former SSAC) outlined the particular knock-on effects of Brexit on the workforces of universities and contracting commercial units.

Another participant (Former SSAC) mentioned how one part of the strategy related to promoting Scottish archaeology within the international context, and some of those international opportunities were "basically whisked away with Brexit and that included access to European funds". They described the contradictory steers of the Scottish and UK Governments in the wake of Brexit, which could make it difficult to navigate the funding landscape:

> "There was also the opportunity for certain types of research funding and actually sort of sitting there and thinking, well, actually we've got really strong connections through our sites, our material culture, whatever it happens to be with countries in, you know, the Low Countries, Ireland, whatever it happens to be. And there was a massive move away from that steer, even though the Scottish Government was basically saying carry on working internationally, the UK government was totally pulling back. And it's very difficult to try and do that citing your archaeology in its international context when you're dealing with political tensions and political difficulties of that scale. And that then affects the ability to apply for the grant funding in certain ways".

The impact of **austerity** and diminishing public money was also raised, with one focus group participant noting that there has been "an increasing erosion of public service and ability for public authorities to support archaeological issues in a range of ways" (Former SSAC).

Participants also explained how connected construction and archaeology sectors are. **Cancelling of major public sector infrastructure projects** results in change of plans to commercial archaeology contracts for examination and excavation. An example given was the delay of duelling of the A96 which they felt "would have brought in significant investment into the sector" (Current SSAC).

A few of the participants mentioned **positive policy developments** over the period, including relatively strong support for heritage within Scottish Government (compared to within UK Government), the publication of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), and an increased focus on boosting the Scottish tourism sector, having a positive effect on interest in heritage.

Several of the participants touched on the **internal politics within the Scottish archaeology** sector since 2015. This time period coincided with the establishment of Historic Environment Scotland (HES), a merger of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and Historic Scotland, and there was a general sense that this restructure had led to a change of focus within the organisation.

One focus group participant (Former SSAC) felt that "for people sitting outside the organisation, it [the restructure] didn't seem the smoothest ride" and that "the kind of activities that the Royal Commission used to take aren't really being fully accommodated now, so that's a loss in the subject area".

There was an overall appreciation of that HES can face challenges in navigating Scottish Government and cascading ministerial demands, which can "sometimes pull them in a different direction from this strategy, and they have to answer to two different aspects, as it were, as opposed to the rest of us" (Former SSAC).

Others felt that the "'small p' politics of the strategy is how HES have used it to deliver things", including their grants system, and "how they've used the strategy to develop lead organisations like Archaeology Scotland and the Society of Antiquaries for Scotland and whether or not that has impacted on smaller organisations". Another focus group participant felt that HES had taken existing resource and turned it into the delivery mechanism for the strategy.

2.5 Environmental factors

Participants saw **climate change as a major issue over the strategy period, affecting the status, survival and management of archaeological sites, artefacts, deposits and buildings:**

> "I suppose the obvious one is climate change – whether that's coastal erosion or changing water levels. And climate mitigation [steps like] windfarms, creating peatbogs, forestation, these are major drivers changing the amount of development-led archaeology that's going to happen over the next decade" (Former SSAC).

Relatedly, some participants described **the goal to reach net zero as becoming more and more prominent**. They felt the role of the archaeological sector in contributing to this goal is becoming an increasing focus in funding applications:

> "If you apply to the Society of Antiquaries or these other ones it's kind of in there, 'How are you reducing your carbon footprint?' and such" (Former SSAC).

They also gave examples of the **everyday decisions and steps that archaeology can take in helping to reduce their environmental impact**, including undertaking some work online to minimise travel and carbon footprint, or sanitising and re-using equipment where possible:

> "I guess thinking about how we bag samples and these sorts of things, bagging finds, it's can you, in between washes, wash the find bags as well as opposed to using a whole new set? These sorts of kind of smaller still scale questions are something I've kind of been coming across, but I'm sure that the kind of commercial units will have it on a far larger scale" (Former SSAC).

2.6 Societal factors

Looking to societal developments, a few participants considered the **general public's propensity to interact with archaeology since 2015.** They discussed how, on one hand, the disrupted structure of people's lives during the COVID-19 lockdowns might have given people more time to learn about archaeology, the economic pressures (e.g. from the cost-of-living crisis) may have reduced people's capacity to pursue it as a hobby or passion.

There was also consideration around the **age of those typically engaged in archaeology** and the **wider impact of the UK's ageing population**. They noted how strategic projects set up over the last few decades, such as Scotland's Rural Past, had been very successful and ran initiatives over many years, but were "now at the stage where they they're no longer able to continue because they're [those working on them are] over an age, they just aren't fit enough". This was seen to demonstrate a "real generational shift", bearing particular impacts for community or grassroots archaeology initiatives.

Relatedly, participants acknowledged a **struggle to engage and develop younger audiences**, "partly because of the barriers and pressures they face in both economic terms, but also in terms of changing behaviours and a range of other factors". One participant described the ending of a local adult education programme within the Glasgow Archaeological Society, which trained local archaeological enthusiasts, as an example of a barrier to attracting younger people to actively participate in the sector.

Meanwhile, some participants felt there can be an **embedded perception or stereotype of archaeology** which can be "difficult to break out of", with one (Current SSAC) remarking "we [people working in archaeology] regularly get pigeonholed as 'boffins'".

However, a few participants pointed to a **growing recognition – including amongst funders – that archaeology can provide social value and educational benefits and help people improve their lives**. They mentioned the use of archaeology as a vehicle for other things, like mental health or physical rehabilitation, using the example of Operation Nightingale in England (an initiative to assist the recovery of wounded, injured and sick military personnel and veterans by getting them involved in archaeological investigations). They discussed the role archaeology can play in advancing the wellbeing agenda, including as part of social prescribing, and in providing an opportunity for people feel connected and talk.

A couple of participants mentioned how the **COVID-19 pandemic halted the ability to carry out in-person fieldwork**, impacting both projects themselves and opportunities for staff to meet and work together on sites. They touched on the shift in work patterns following the pandemic, with some pointing to the advantages of this:

> "The fact that we routinely now no longer expect staff to be in the office five days a week if they're not on site, that they're enabled to work from home or other environments. And that that also has a significant cost saving them and environmental improvement saving, in that we focus more time in coming together in group meetings online than physically - and I think that's been a huge benefit" (Former SSAC).

2.7 Technological factors

The rise is **social media platforms** within the strategy period was frequently mentioned by participants, and seen to have had a large influence on how the sector communicates with the wider public. Those working in large organisations observed how it took "a few years "to establish a presence on social media platforms". There was a sense that the COVID-19 pandemic

accelerated their use of these accounts from 2020 onwards, as a way of connecting with remote audiences:

> "Thinking back to 2015, I'm not sure we really had our act together enough to take advantage of what we had. It took us a few years, I mean we only started doing social media sharing in 2020, at COVID. But it wasn't that conversation back then, anywhere" (Current SSAC).

Others described the evolving set of 'core' social media platforms over the past decade, all of which have "different levels of consumption depending on age groups and what categories you fall into". They noted how archaeological organisations, including HES, must be consistently able to 'tap into' each of these to reach a variety of users:

> "It used to be Facebook and Twitter were the two main things. But actually, I think there's an awful lot more platforms out there now. I've got two teenagers, so I'm much more familiar with TikTok and some of the other ones now. Twitter seems to be used less, Blue Sky is obviously a new a newish thing for lots of us. LinkedIn seems to have moved into a space that it wasn't in ten years ago. So, I think there has just been a change around and as a result, probably a need to monitor multiple platforms. Headland obviously do quite a bit and so does Archaeology Scotland. I don't know if your organisations have pivoted what they're doing on social media or whether we're too busy looking at the landscape going 'Oh my God'" (Former SSAC).

Several participants described the **benefits of technology in widening access and engagement with archaeology**. The use of video-conferencing applications, such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, were seen as useful in drawing in a wider group of people and making it easier for those in various locations to meet. Cloud storage and cloud working was also seen as helpful in allowing staff to "work from anywhere". Some described how local talks can be filmed and uploaded to the internet, making them available to be viewed by a much larger audience:

> "Kilmartin House museum, for example, has a really good YouTube channel and the views on some of the videos are into the tens of thousands, which we wouldn't have dreamt of ten years ago" (Former SSAC).

Another participant mentioned the online publication of outputs from archaeological projects, including an interactive website featuring 3D models, as helping to boost engagement with archaeology:

> "I'm thinking particularly the excavations of Hyndford Quarry site and there's the really amazing and in-situ website with 3D models that you can explore of the site with the interpretation points. There's photos from the excavations and such all within kind of like a nice digital publication web platform. And are you are seeing more and more opportunities [...] and non-traditional ways of publishing work that can have multiple angles within a single public education because of that digital realm. It can be both that kind of public engagement resource and an academic publication and a repository of data all in a one-er" (Former SSAC).

Many of the participants discussed the **plethora of software and databases** available for archaeological investigations and recording. They noted how Historic Environment Records (HERs) and museum datasets are largely online, allowing for greater integration of data sets and research infrastructure. They felt that the ability to carry out research online has been useful to "a lot [of] companies and even HES" in "looking at data and discovering new sites or doing research online, like community-led stuff" (Former SSAC).

Others pointed to **technological benefits, such as the widespread accessibility of LiDAR** and the development of the national map library online resources. Participants were particularly pleased that LiDAR data is freely available from Scottish Government.

However, participants noted how, **despite having more technologies available, these are not always joined up**. This was seen as problematic and as something that had not been sufficiently addressed over the period:

> "And still, HERs [Historic Environment Records] are not talking to Canmore [online database or index to information on archaeological sites, monuments, and buildings in Scotland] and vice versa – there's still not the exchange. This goes back to your SHED [Scotland's Historic Environment Data] issue which is so important and has just been shelved" (Former SSAC).

Others raised that **some resources are "virtually inaccessible"**, such as the NCAP [National Collection of Aerial Photography]:

> "You have to be incredibly wealthy to be able to use that – so there archives available there but there are barriers for people using them" (Former SSAC).

Some participants also saw a **need for training in using new technologies**, so that more of the workforce can use them effectively.

2.8 Economic factors

Throughout our engagement, participants pointed to changes in the funding landscape over the strategy period. Several discussed the **economic challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic**, starting in 2020 and into 2021 as society tried to 'get back on its feet', and even with long-term impacts. For example, one participant (Former SSAC) explained their archaeology organisation was still in debt as a result:

> "And they all mount up. We're still paying back COVID loans. Those are coming out of profit that that that's removing profit to clear those debts that kept us afloat through COVID. They're not paid off".

There was an overall sense that the **availability of grant funding for projects was negatively affected** from the COVID-19 pandemic to the end of the strategy period. This was summarised up by one participant (Former SSAC) who observed that:

> "Those of us that are outsourced in trusts are certainly feeling far worse in terms of resources, staffing, everything really is much, much tighter. And it is the same story in local authorities as well. There's a reduction in how far the money goes and what local authorities are prepared to fund. So yeah, life is getting much more difficult".

A few participants described how this squeeze on funding has resulted in "**a lot" of the funding received going towards direct delivery** "because that's what a lot of other funders wanted", and felt that this focus reduced their "ability to do some of the most strategic work that should be done as part of the strategy" (Former SSAC). They felt that their time for 'non-direct delivery' tasks had dwindled over the years, and emphasised that engagement opportunities should be reinstated as these are just as important for strengthening the sector as pure project delivery:

> "Just thinking about like quite a number of years ago, you would have lots of time to do networking, to go out and do nice events with the broader sector. And although we have to do some of that as part of the strategy, we should probably have been doing more of that, but there was just such a drain on our resources to do practical delivery as well and that came from the funding landscape" (Former SSAC).

In tandem, others discussed the **competing demands facing public sector archaeology and commercial archaeology**:

> "And that creates crossover tensions back into commercial sector, our access to their skill set, which we need to do our side of the job, is very hard to gain that access because there's fewer of them and they have more demands in their time elsewhere, and they try incredibly hard to facilitate what we need but there are natural limitations there. And also we have pressure coming the other way in that, more and more, we see the public sector looking for more ways to bill our clients for various things that they do, which however reasonable that is, creates a tension and it creates a flow of demands from all aspects of local and central government looking for monies from our clients" (Former SSAC).

When considering economic issues, many participants raised the **issue of pay and affordability for entry-level archaeologists**. They noted how around 90% of archaeologists working in Scotland come from university, and reflected on the cost barriers those hoping to attend, and attending, university can face:

> "And obviously the different issues in in Scotland around the cost of higher education and whether that also ties in to[…] whether you're seeing fewer students coming in from outside to study in Scotland because there are more home-grown students because of the different tuition fee situation and all the rest of it. So, there are some complex political, economic and social issues there that sort of link together" (Former SSAC).

Relatedly, they felt that **graduates' pay expectations have changed** – and increased - in keeping with the rising cost of living. A few looked back to the beginning of their careers, where archaeology was poorly paid, but they were 'still able to make a career out of it'. However, they recognised that this may not be feasible for current graduates. A few participants highlighted that job roles and prospects may also be dependent on how well subscriptions to university courses in Scotland align with job openings, with one explaining:

> "We probably have a disproportionate number of forensic archaeologists…the skill set coming through for when there are two or three jobs at best, as it were, as opposed to 40 graduates looking each year for employment and something like that. And it's managing expectations and getting people matched up into the appropriate job opportunities" (Former SSAC).

The **cost-of-living crisis** also emerged as a key economic issue, with several participants referring to **people leaving the industry** as they feel they can no longer afford to work in it. Similarly, one participant (Former SSAC) underlined the "archaeology sector has always suffered with poor wages, poor turnover, poor profitability" and felt the "stresses and strains of the last ten years that has really exposed how fragile the whole thing is". They saw this as an underpinning issue for the

sustainability of the sector, and one which highlighted the importance of workforce expansion and skills sharing to avoid the sector shrinking or disappearing:

> "If the units and everything else fails, the whole thing stops. You know, we can't expect at the end of the day, retired community groups to step in and, and pick up the slack. That's not how it works. So the economy side has become even sharper focus than it ever has been" (Former SSAC).

SSAC are transparent about their current and former committee membership. Indeed the minutes of the first SSAC meeting explained their remit 'is not about the specifics of funding priorities for the Archaeology Programme, especially as a number of people involved in the committee regularly bid to the programme.'[15] However, it is also clear from SSAC minutes that funding requirements were considered by committee members at the time of strategy development.[16] In SSAC meetings, aim leads have disclosed their organisation's bidding for or award of grant funding from HES.[17]

Also, from the minutes it is clear that the viability of lead organisations for the strategy aims was a concern; all aim leads likely to have a funding deficit for 2021-22 were given an action in September 2020 meeting to let the SSAC chair and HES members know.[18]

2.8.1 Grant awards- Historic Environment Scotland

This section includes context of HES grant awards and relevant grants data provided by HES for 2015-end 2024. See Appendix C for fuller information.

The grants data provided to this SAS review indicates a substantial investment made by the public body for Scotland's historic environment. HES have awarded 397 grants, from various grants programmes and of various sizes of award, to archaeology across the SAS strategy period. This averages to 40 grant awards per year.

Grants awards are affected by the grant stream configuration, grant assessment processes and decisions, and grant guidance. HES stated their 2024-2025 grants awards would be 'focusing on supporting the heritage sector to adapt to the impacts of the climate emergency.'

[15] SSAC-meeting-minutes-2013-Oct.pdf
[16] SSAC-meeting-minutes-2014-March.pdf; SSAC-meeting-minutes-2016-October.pdf
[17] SSAC-meeting-minutes-2017-October.pdf; SSAC-Minutes-2018.03.27.pdf; SSACMinutes2020.09.01.pdf; SSAC_2021.10.27.pdf
[18] SSACMinutes2020.09.01.pdf

Impacts of grant awards is not all instantaneous and will depend on individual projects and their direct and indirect impacts. Indeed, some impacts from awards made within 2015-2025 may create impacts beyond 2025, and within the next archaeology strategy period.

HES have awarded £14,355,415 to archaeology across the SAS strategy period. This is the equivalent of just under £1.5 million for each year of the strategy. HES explain in connection with their first annual Grants Funding Report, for 2023-2024 that they award, 'around £13.5 million in grants each year on behalf of the Scottish Government to projects that protect and promote the country's historic environment'.[19] They also explain that in 2023-2024 the value of grants applications requested was almost double the grants awarded.

2.9 Summary

Table 2.1 summarises the main factors which have affected the period of SAS from 2015-2025. This is taken from SWOT analysis with review participants and desk materials provided to the reviewers.

Table 2.1: Factors affecting SAS

Dimensions	Factors affecting Scotland's Archaeology Sector 2025-2025
Political	The formation of HES coincides with the first year of SAS, 2015. Review participants raised this period contained: • Relatively changeable political environment – changing leadership at Scottish and UK governments • Austerity- badly affecting public services and resulting in reduced budgets from public bodies to support archaeology. • Cancelling of major public sector infrastructure projects impacting construction and especially commercial archaeology. • Brexit- seen as detrimental development for Scottish archaeology, including to international collaboration, access European-wide funding opportunities. Seen as especially negative for the higher education parts of the archaeology sector in delivering teaching, training and research. • Positive policy developments at Scottish Government level- including NPF 4
Economic	Review participants raised this period contained:

[19] Grants Funding Report | Historic Environment Scotland

	• Covid-19 pandemic- immediately impacted economic conditions, and still has longer term financial impacts for the financial health of archaeology organisations in Scotland. • Funding availability- perception that grants funding less available following pandemic. • Reflection that available funding had to focus on direct strategy delivery, perhaps at the cost of wider work to develop the sector which has indirect and less immediate positive benefits for the sector. • Pay for entry-level archaeologists- seen as a long-term issue, but intensified for those considering joining or staying in the sector whilst experiencing a cost-of-living crisis. The HES grants data provided to this review indicates: • A substantial investment made by the public body for Scotland's historic environment. HES have awarded 397 grants, from various grants programmes, and of various sizes of award, to archaeology across the SAS strategy period. This averages to 40 grant awards per year. • HES have awarded £14,355,415 to archaeology across the SAS strategy period. This is the equivalent of just under £1.5 million for each year of the strategy. HES explain in connection with their first annual Grants Funding Report, for 2023-2024 that they award, 'around £13.5 million in grants each year on behalf of the Scottish Government to projects that protect and promote the country's historic environment'.[20] They also explain that in 2023-2024 the value of grants applications requested was almost double the grants awarded. • Impacts of grant awards is not all instantaneous and will depend on individual projects and their direct and indirect impacts. Indeed, some impacts from awards made within 2015-2025 may create impacts beyond 2025, and within the next archaeology strategy period.
Societal	Review participants raised this period contained: • Ageing population- a societal challenge in Scotland, experienced in archaeology as workforce ageing and retiring and those skills and expertise being lost.

[20] Grants Funding Report | Historic Environment Scotland

	• More flexibility in working patterns and location of work- experienced in society following the pandemic, framed as a positive development for the sector's workforce. • Perception that public's interest in the past and heritage had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic- perhaps more interest in archaeology, but less disposable income to pursue those interests. • Feeling that there are some embedded stereotypes of archaeologists within the general population. • Delivering social value and educational benefits- a growing recognition – including amongst funders – that archaeology can provide these public benefits.
Technological	Review participants raised this period contained: • Social media platforms- growth in usage and number of platforms to engage with and manage. • Benefits of use of new communications technology in widening access and engagement with archaeology. However, reflections that despite having more technologies available, these are not always joined up. • Examples of the plethora of software and databases to utilise for conducting all the work associated with archaeology. However, some resources are "virtually inaccessible". • Technological benefits particularly valuable to the sector- such as the widespread accessibility of LiDAR. But calls for a need for training in using new technologies.
Environmental	HES stated their 2024-2025 grants awards would be 'focusing on supporting the heritage sector to adapt to the impacts of the climate emergency.' Review participants raised this period contained: • Climate change- a major issue over the strategy period, affecting the status, survival and management of archaeological sites, artefacts, deposits and buildings: • Support for the goal to reach net zero more prominent in sector, including its funders • Growing examples of everyday decisions and steps, which can reduce archaeology organisations' environmental impacts.

3. Delivering Archaeology– SAS Aim 1

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Aim 1 of SAS– **Delivering Archaeology.**

This chapter summarises:

- Why was this aim important?
- How has the sector performed with respect to this aim?
- What enabled progress?
- What barriers to progress were experienced?
- How relevant is this aim in 2025 and beyond?

The findings are largely based upon discussion of this aim and a SWOT analysis, allowing review participants to critically evaluate the strategy's contributions and areas for improvement. In addition, the reviewers also drew upon the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC and last updated February 2025.

3.2 Importance

Initial discussions around this aim saw many participants refer to the **public benefit element of 'Delivering Archaeology' as at the core of their work,** particularly where public money is being spent:

> "So for me, this has got to remain a kind of absolutely core thing. If what we're doing as public servants or whatever is indirectly or directly funded by taxpayers' money, if what we're doing is not for public benefit, I would ask the question of why we're doing it. Rather than thinking of it as first on a list, perhaps I would think about it as the core of why we do what we do" (Stakeholder).

A few participants reflected that "archaeology delivered through the planning system technically is for the public benefit because it's environmental protection", and felt the **development of guidance by several key players in the archaeological sector has bolstered this importance**:

> "So obviously it's a multi million pound industry but the end of it is about public engagement. We are improving it. ALGAO Scotland produce our own guidance on it. We've been working with the sector across the private sector, Federation of Archaeological Managers and

> Employers, basically commercial side, CIfA [Chartered Institute of Archaeologists] and all that. So it's about enabling. It's a path which is up and down, but I think we're going in the right direction. It's improved a lot over the last ten years" (Stakeholder).

A cross-cutting theme across discussions of all of the aims was the **significance of a holistic understanding of archaeology, as not just 'stuff'** but processes, practices and as having meaning and cultural importance to people. Several participants mentioned how delivering archaeology is more than presenting artefacts for viewing, for example, and can play a broader role in society:

> "From my perspective, I really like that this is about archaeology as a practice and a process and not stuff. Because for me, archaeology is a creative process. The very doing creates new cultural value and meaning. I often describe it as a process by which we create the collage of place, memory and meaning. And this is actually really quite a dynamic approach to archaeology, which is not something you see in England where everything is about stuff and it's really constricting. Whereas having this upfront and a link to that public benefit, it's a really clear message that archaeology has a social role to play and that it can draw people in through that process" (Stakeholder).

> "Doing stuff with our hands and being together in person is really crucial, as well as participating online, but archaeology brings that in a way that a lot of other subjects cannot do. And they do it differently, obviously, but I think that's why when we're talking about delivering archaeology, the term 'delivering', for me, is a little jarring. And it may be about doing or being archaeological in our practice when we critically reflect on the world around us as well" (Stakeholder).

Relatedly, some participants described instances where they have **delivered useful archaeological information as part of their work with other sectors**, like building and construction, which can help to give others a fuller picture of an area:

> "And one thing that strikes me, especially when I do building surveys, for example, is that people are really grateful if you can add a little bit of historical background to their building. You know, you're not just photographing it before it gets changed, but you're also able to offer something they maybe don't know just by having a look back in the census. It doesn't take very long - most of that stuff is online now anyway. So you're giving them more of a perspective for their building in its historical context. And I think that's really important" (Stakeholder).

There was a sense that **large scale projects and discoveries tend to be most visible**, particularly where these are **widely publicised in general media**, such as public news outlets. As one participant (Stakeholder) summarised, "big discoveries [and] big strategic initiatives around research can really capture the public imagination. And I think that's something that we should be trying to push for". A few participants emphasised the importance of having a "flagship set of research projects", and pointed to the success of the Discovery Programme in Ireland as a way of enhancing the public profile of archaeology and leading to further public benefit:

> "But I think if something like that had more kind of wider sort of institutional collaboration and underpinning and was a bit more organised and able to be promoted nationally, it would do a tremendous amount of good in terms of attracting people from outside into Scottish archaeology, but also promoting it publicly" (Stakeholder).

Participants also reflected on **the overall importance of having a national archaeology strategy** in helping to amplify the visibility of archaeology in Scotland and enabling the delivery of archaeology – particularly compared to England, which does not have a national archaeology strategy. They also described how some relevant groups have used the strategy to structure their agendas:

> "Things like the MRC, the Mediaeval Research Committee…created a sort of agenda for action on the basis of the fact that there was an archaeology strategy. And they recognised the usefulness of that to drive it. So they did something very similar and I think that's been impactful. I also think, like I said at the beginning, the actual strategy itself was and is still lauded externally. There is no archaeology strategy, for example, for England specifically. There is an historic environment strategy, but there isn't an archaeology specific strategy" (Stakeholder).

3.3 Performance

The SAS Delivery Plan[21] and the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC,[22] included vision statements for the strategy period:

- Increase number of projects that encourage collaborations with international partners to increase Scotland's global visibility
- Make sure Scottish archaeology is protected and recorded through national legislation, policy and practice effectively

[21] SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf
[22] Unpublished, Reviewers were provided with working document last updated February 2025.

- Improve archaeological commissioning and procurement (in order to stimulate project design and encourage innovation)
- Promote best practice in the management of archaeological projects
- Encourage, incentivise or require compliance with existing codes, standards and guidance
- Make information from incomplete projects publicly available
- Support better management of the historic environment including minimising duplication of effort.

Reviewers had access to the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC. This was last updated February 2025 so provides a good indication of performance. Appendix D, Table D1 summarises content relating to Aim 1. In addition, primary research participants gave their views on performance of Aim 1.

3.3.1 Encouraging collaborations with international partners

Projects including collaboration with international partners are seen as beneficial by the sector for a number of reasons. Primarily, international working can enhance understanding of those involved (which connects to SAS Aim 2) and can promote knowledge exchange (which connects to SAS Aim 5).

Review participants explained that from a financial perspective, international projects can attract funding from not only Scottish-based funders, but European or international bodies. As the Operational Plan Tracker explained, the indicators for success for the SAS period were capturing the number of international projects Scottish archaeology is involved in and the outcomes of discussions between funders. Due to reasons described, these were not monitored across the strategy period. If the vision was to increase instances of these types of projects, it is not possible for the SSAC, nor reviewers to establish if this has been the case. Certainly, encouragement for international working is integrated into HES grants funding guidance and assessment.

3.3.2 Protected and recorded through national legislation

Making sure 'Scottish archaeology is protected and recorded through national legislation, policy and practice effectively' has largely been achieved through a review of national approach to archaeological protection and recording by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). This review was clearly valuable and well-received by sector stakeholders. This has led to changes and improvements where this has been within the power of SAS Aim Leads, including CIfA itself.

Several participants recalled attending **workshops** relating to Aim 1, these were led by CIfA on behalf of SSAC and took place in Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow.[23] While the workshops and report were commended, they felt these were **not followed through with** or picked up on again:

> "We even went down the route of talking about how do you rip up the funding model and what ways that you could do it. And I remember at the time thinking, well 'this is great. I wonder what will come out of it'... I don't know why it didn't necessarily go anywhere. I do remember seeing a report from it, but I think they were trying to see how much appetite there was for completely changing how we do stuff. And from memory there wasn't an appetite to fundamentally change things" (Former SSAC).

As highlighted in the Operational Plan Tracker, recommendations relating to national legislation and policy need traction within policy circles and are not fully in the control of archaeology stakeholders. Also, as explained in Chapter 2, this wider policy context has changed throughout the SAS period.

3.3.3 Archaeological commissioning and procurement

Improvements to archaeological commissioning and procurement were desired in order to stimulate project design and encourage innovation (which connects to SAS Aim 5). CIfA led workshops and resulting outputs were praised by review participants. However, it is not possible for reviewers to establish how far the recommendations relating to procurement have been adopted by those commissioning or procuring archaeology in Scotland.

3.3.4 Management of archaeological projects

'Promote best practice in the management of archaeological projects' is an ongoing priority for the sector, as best practice is not static and is informed and established by practitioners.

The reviewers observe that the archaeology community in Scotland has made significant efforts to assess existing standards, guidance and promotion and then refresh and update these. In some cases, new Scottish-specific guidance has been created. This guidance is targeted at archaeologists and other professionals working with archaeologists in areas including professional practice, timely reporting against research designs, research framework use, ethics. Examples include Dendrochronology Framework and Marine and Maritime Review. Each of these outputs is the result of collaborative and concerted work.

[23] See more about the workshops referred to Aim One: Delivering Archaeology – Archaeology Strategy Scotland, and the report referred to CIfA-Feedback-Report_Recommendations_updated_final_Aug20.pdf

3.3.5 Compliance with existing codes, standards and guidance

'Encourage, incentivise or require compliance with existing codes, standards and guidance' is now supported through the HES production of HEPS – the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland, after extensive consultation. HES's Grant programme now mandates CIfA accreditation for archaeological project leads. As such, HES has employed levers to encourage adoption of this aspect of SAS.

3.3.6 Information from incomplete projects publicly available

The SAS vision to 'make information from incomplete projects publicly available' seems to have come from a concern that there was a large number of HES funded archaeology projects which were not completed, or were taking longer to complete than planned. In the meantime, the sector were keen to understand the learnings from these projects.

In the primary research, participants felt that public visibility of all projects, not only incomplete projects was one of the key indicators of performance of Aim 1.

One participant (Stakeholder) said they saw "quite a lot of effort [being] put in during COVID", including the presentation of local talks which gained positive press coverage. While this has "receded back" during the post-COVID period, they felt that "it certainly facilitated I think some of that that visibility that practitioners had with community through that kind of a process". They also said that this engagement was tied to a range of elements, including the SAS, frameworks, and "quite a lot of it was probably tied back to people who knew people and trying to encourage interesting things" in local communities.

Others cited 'Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland' – the **magazine** style annual report on the delivery of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy – as an important resource in amplifying visibility and showcasing the work and projects delivering the aims of the Archaeology Strategy:

> "I think the point at which the magazine started to be produced, it felt like that had real impact in the visibility side of things. I think all the stuff that is in magazine every year is absolutely 100% things that were already happening and partly facilitated by the strategy, that sort of backing and focus. But having something where those kinds of projects and what was happening within the strategy could be highlighted, that made a real difference" (Former SSAC).

Similarly, the existence of the '**ScotArchStrat' hashtag** was seen as useful in helping users to easily reference the strategy and centralising tweets (or X posts) containing the hashtag.

Meanwhile, one participant raised that it can be **challenging** to gain the same traction when highlighting **repeat finds**:

> "Whenever you find the same kind of thing again, the public benefit of a repeat discovery is almost ten times harder to articulate. And you would find in certain areas saying, 'no, if it's just another one of those, you need to spend the money more wisely'. But I think in the context of the public benefit of development led work, that's a bit of a tricky part to be getting into [...] but it is part of a targeted thing that developers need to do" (Stakeholder).

The Operational Plan Tracker mentions the value of HES' Heritage Hub portal, which was launched as Trove to share information publicly.[24]

3.3.7 Support better management

The vision for supporting 'better management of the historic environment' including minimising duplication of effort is in line with ambitions at the start of the SAS period for better joined-up-working within Scottish archaeology.

In itself, the establishment of the SAS, SSAC and SAC Delivery Plan supports this vision. The Operational Plan Tracker makes the very important point that the SAS is referenced in Our Past Our Future.

3.4 Enablers

Several participants saw the **development of a revised approach to research frameworks** – namely **ScARF** (Scottish Archaeological Research Framework) - as enabling better realisation of the public benefit of Scottish archaeology, including a focus on greater involvement of communities and a range of sectors:

> "Yeah, just from a research frameworks perspective, I think from the 2015 mark and the revised frameworks approach that came in the wake of the national ScARF framework approach, that has done a lot to better realise the public benefit of Scottish archaeology. There's been much greater emphasis on the regional framework development and the thematics framework development on the involvement of a much broader audience. There's been much more community involvement, much greater involvement across the whole range of sectors. So, I think that is a significant enabler" (Stakeholder).

[24] See: Welcome to trove.scot | The key to Scotland's past

Others felt that the work in the **SAS chimes with the national challenges outlined in OPOF** (Our Past, Our Future – Scotland's strategy for the historic environment), and saw this alignment in helpful in "enabling, encouraging involvement, making sure it's driven by value, making sure it's tapped into opportunities across society":

> "[OPOF] is [a] strategy which is working towards national challenges. It has very clear outcomes which are driven by public interest, and it is evaluating on that basis. And I have certainly found in conversations with the archaeology Strategy committee in the last year, they can see quite clearly how the work in this strategy, which designed more around KPIs rather than delivering against outcomes, they can see how they relate to those national challenges in OPOF [...]. So I think we have a structure there which they believe they can work in, which would be a positive thing to continue" (Stakeholder).

Some of those working in **commercial archaeology** discussed how part of the sector's planning system "now include, as a rule, a note against NPF4 [National Planning Framework 4] regarding **public benefit** that can be gained from archaeology":

> "Obviously, this would only be applied if something of note is found, but it is noted at the outset for a written scheme of investigations and methods statements that there may well be a requirement to add additional public benefit on the back of archaeological discoveries. So that's now tied in tightly with the planning system. That doesn't help the broader sector of course, but it's good that that has been highlighted as a rule because previously in recent years it's been quite sporadic and maybe tied into the public contracts for councils, etcetera" (Stakeholder).

The same participant raised that, in the past, "it wasn't always a requirement to note public benefit or dissemination or other similar outputs as part of the planning process - it was just 'go in, dig it, publicise it, done'" – and saw a need for increased efforts in the wider sector apply this approach to community archaeology and other incentives.

3.5 Barriers

While participants discussed the importance of **enhancing the visibility of archaeology**, they were aware that only a fraction of this work may be seen by the public:

> "Visibility is the key part of this, isn't it? Because there's actually a lot of archaeology that happens in this country constantly. And probably 90% of it doesn't reach the public consciousness" (Stakeholders).

However, there was a sense that **beginning each project – whether small or large scale – by thinking about the benefits** that will arise from the outcome is critical in maximising the effectiveness of projects:

> "[It's] just asking at the start of a project, why are you doing this? And who benefits and what's the outcome of it going to be? And that should equally apply to a community group doing a small dig on a post mediaeval shielding, for example, to a commercial company doing a big strip and map excavation. Why does it exist in legislation and why do people raise money to do it on a Sunday afternoon? And if no one benefits, then delivering it is irrelevant, and people only benefit if they know about it. I think it's improved because there's been recent attempts to make it front and centre in the past couple of years, saying 'OK, that might be a good project, but if no one sees it, no one knows about it and no one learns anything from it, then what's the point?'" (Stakeholder).

Participants expanded upon some of the political, societal and economic challenges affecting the sector (see Chapter 2) in relation to 'Delivering Archaeology'. A few participants noted how the fallout from **Brexit** posed barriers to the delivery of archaeology, impacting on European funding opportunities:

> "I don't know the ins and outs in terms of Scotland, but it definitely would have had a massive impact. And I think actually it's something that probably, I know you're not talking about the future [in this section], but actually this is an important thing about how it all fits with archaeology within Scotland, within the broader European and world context. So it's still very relevant. It's just tricky" (Stakeholder).

Others cited the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on **funding**, where it is particularly crucial that applicants clearly outline the public benefit of their work to have the best chance of receiving a funding award. Relatedly, they emphasised the **importance of diversifying funding streams** to avoid problems arising from 'putting all the eggs' in the baskets of traditional funders:

> "And I think also because there is obviously the cost-of-living crisis at the moment and funding is tight in all quarters across heritage and archaeology, diversifying our funding streams beyond the normal lottery, you know, Historic England has and going out to the Arts Council and other broader non-traditional funders. But we need to be able to demonstrate the public value, not necessarily around archaeology specifically, but the public value to people – wellbeing has been mentioned already. So I think having that resource there to draw on to do that would be really valuable" (Stakeholder).

> "I think one of the things that runs through all of these is the vulnerability of grant funding. So, yes, we're in a good position but a lot of us are heavily reliant on grant funding and I'm not sure how we make ourselves more resilient in that way" (Current SSAC).

Changes to workforce, including the perceived "loss of HES expertise" and "constant restructuring and people not being replaced" were also seen as threatening the delivery of archaeology. There were particular concerns about the **retention and transfer of skills and knowledge** when replacing personnel, if "someone else can get that job but they won't have the expertise" (Current SSAC).

The concerns of others stemmed from the **potential removal of archaeological advice from the planning process** in certain areas if local authorities "stop paying for it":

> "Then that work stops happening and then if the work's not happening, we're not going to have any public benefits" (Former SSAC).

Others echoed this, referring to the **knock-on effects of reductions in local authority funding** on the sustenance of new and existing archaeological and heritage touchpoints:

> "That threat carries all the way through because the financial situation in local government at the moment is such that everything in terms of provision is under threat. So, we've just opened this fantastic new museum and there's a real financial black hole around its continual resourcing. So it affects everything, not just that archaeological advice" (Former SSAC).

3.6 Relevance

Participants felt that this aim is still **highly relevant**, and that **public benefit** element should remain at the forefront. Some mentioned how one of the goals of the strategy was to increase its national and global visibility, but felt an importance on **local visibility** is just as important:

> "I think one of the things that's missing there is the level where a lot of the visibility particularly matters, which is at a more local level. Because although you can feel a warm glow about national visibility and national public benefit, when it comes to engaging with local communities and taking a more active engagement with it, something that's regional bottom up, a little bit more local is relevant" (Stakeholder).

Participants working in funding felt that elements of the 'Delivering Archaeology' aim, including **public benefit** and **community involvement** in the design and/or support of projects, are **highly relevant– and increasingly important demonstrators – for funding**:

> "We recently refreshed our grant programmes and they're open now. The archaeology ones are up against every other type of project now – they've not got their own programmes. So, to make them be a priority, that's the kind of thing we're looking for. And I think they probably are a lot more impactful, these projects where the communities are brought in to support them and to even design projects sometimes. So, as much as our priorities might change slightly, I think the underpinning thing about this is something that's not going away and that's for other funders as well. I think this one is really crucial for the sector" (Stakeholder).

Some participants raised the **overlap between 'Delivering Archaeology' and some of the other aims**, namely 'Enhancing Understanding' and 'Encouraging Greater Engagement'. They felt that all of these comprise aspects of public benefit and this could be made clearer:

> "So with the two other aims which is [sic] Enhancing Understanding and Encouraging Greater Engagement, my question is about public benefit which includes both of those, so I suppose it's that connection and overlap and then the actual title 'Delivering Archaeology' doesn't really say what the public benefit bit - it's quite abstract" (Stakeholder).

Another participant, having recently looked at the **SAS Delivery Plan**, felt there was a **disconnect** between it and the Delivering Archaeology aim. They also thought that more specific information on how to measure or capture information on public benefits would be useful for future:

> "Just looking at the delivery plan [...] there's a slight disconnect with it and this aim in that there's not that many things in it that are relevant to measuring or capturing information about public benefits. So maybe that's something to think about whilst developing the new strategy" (Stakeholder).

3.7 SAS Aim 1 Summary

Table 3.1 includes a summary of Aim 1 'Delivering Archaeology' based upon secondary and primary sources for this review.

Table 3.1: Summary of Aim 1 Findings

Importance	Delivering Archaeology is regarded as core or central to the sector and to any strategy for archaeology. Public value resulting from delivery of archaeology regarded as essential for that core work to be important beyond the archaeology sector. Public value is of key importance to the whole archaeology community.
Performance	The sector performed highly, in regards to its planned actions: • 10 fully delivered • 5 partially delivered • 0 not delivered • 2 unknown
Enablers	During the 2015-2025 period key enablers were considered to be: • Revising approaches to archaeology research frameworks. • Alignment with Our Past Our Future. • National Planning Framework 4.
Barriers	Brexit affected delivery of archaeology, but also opened up opportunities around increasing the visibility of archaeology to the general public. Felt public visibility could be further improved. Review participants highlighted the ongoing challenge of retaining, developing and valuing specialist workforce expertise towards delivering archaeology.
Relevant	Regarded as highly relevant for beyond 2025, particularly the sector finding ways to maximise public benefit.
Lessons for SAS	Find better ways to measure or capture and then share public benefits from archaeology.

4. Enhancing Understanding– SAS Aim 2

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Aim 2 of SAS, **Enhancing Understanding**.

This chapter summarises:

- Why was this aim important?
- How has the sector performed with respect to this aim?
- What enabled progress?
- What barriers to progress were experienced?
- How relevant is this aim in 2025 and beyond?

The reviewers considered all discussions of this aim from the roundtable and focus groups, including SWOT analysis. Also, the reviewers drew upon the latest Delivery plan tracker. To add value to SSAC's consideration of the relevance of this aim, the reviewers include findings from a survey of Scottish residents on this topic.

4.2 Importance

As with 'Delivering Archaeology', several participants viewed 'Enhancing Understanding' as a **critical** foundation of everything those in the sector do:

> "Through enhancing understanding, we've actually got something that we can do something with. It's not a static resource, it's absolutely critical. I'd [reiterate] my point about it's not just understanding what happened in the past, it's actually understanding what it means to us today, and that is a complex relationship and ever evolving" (Stakeholder).

Participants saw this aim as encompassing the sharing of knowledge, enhancing of data standards and "making sure that we get all of our information out there so that others can reuse it" (Stakeholder). Participants also mentioned a dual importance in enhancing the knowledge and understanding of both those working in the sector and the general public.

However, there was some disagreement over the importance of delivery mechanisms for this aim, and a feeling that most efforts were put into research frameworks rather than sharing knowledge more widely:

"But they took the existing resource and turned it into the delivery mechanism for the Strategy and I don't know if that was a good thing or a bad thing but it did possibly lead to a lack of transparency. So for example, Aim 2, which would be the Society of Antiquaries in terms of research, it has led to a massive resource funding of regional archaeological research frameworks, which arguably we didn't need. That political angle has had implications or repercussions that we, who sat on the committee at the start, didn't think about when we nominated the lead organisations" (Former SSAC).

4.3 Performance

The SAS Delivery Plan[25] and the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC,[26] included vision statements for the strategy period for Aim 2 as follows:

- Create a stronger research ethos in all interested in Scotland's past.
- Ensure research frameworks encompass all aspects of archaeology (including collections, thematic and theoretical research for example) and use them to explain and promote the multiple stories the evidence can be used to tell.
- Encourage the creation of 'big picture' stories based on bringing together research results.
- Support effective methods of sharing research results, through collaboration with a range of partners, including museums, archives and the education sector.
- Ensure knowledge is increasingly discoverable, accessible, referable and reusable now and for future generations by 2025.

Reviewers had access to Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC. This was last updated February 2025 so provides a good indication of performance. Appendix D, table D2 summarises content relating to Aim 2. In addition, primary research participants gave their views on performance of Aim 2.

4.3.1 Stronger research ethos

'Create a stronger research ethos in all interested in Scotland's past' was a vision for the SAS Aim 2. ScARF is clearly central to this, and from this review it is apparent that ScARF has evolved throughout the strategy period.

[25] SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf
[26] Unpublished, Reviewers were provided with working document last updated February 2025.

The ScARF website includes the Regional Research Frameworks for different parts of Scotland and thematic research resources as these are developed. Although challenging to ascertain how far these have been adopted, case studies are provided on the website.

4.3.2 Research frameworks encompass all aspects

A related vision was to 'ensure research frameworks encompass all aspects of archaeology (including collections, thematic and theoretical research for example) and use them to explain and promote the multiple stories the evidence can be used to tell.' The Operational Plan Tracker gives examples of discussions at Scottish, UK and international levels to try and join up efforts.

Within the primary research for this review, there was a general sense that research frameworks are a success, having been set up in most Scottish regions. However, some raised that the 'Enhancing Understanding' aim focused less on synthesising the information gathered and saw this as an important next step in enrichening data and making it more useful:

> "Synthesis is not really part of the strategy -it's kind of in there, but it's not. So we've done very, very well of getting the machinery, the infrastructure, the processes, the plans, everything built in. And then the next stage is actually how do we manage that in terms of the processes, but also what do we do with the information that's generated? Because there's a vast amount of information and there's very little who people who are actually doing that synthesis and making meaning from it" (Stakeholder).

A few participants thought that the broad nature of the current research frameworks can be problematic, and that they could benefit from being more specific in prioritising different types or topics of research:

> "I think being clear on what the strategy covers when it comes to research and understanding. It's why we do it, what value comes, but also what areas do we want to target that research in. And the research frameworks start that, but they're not restrictive enough to really channel research into 'we need to understand this type of monument' or 'this type of climate change impact' or 'this type of community benefit'. So, we end up quite broad and amorphous and that's because the sector itself is quite broad and amorphous. But I think that's a fundamental question of now we've got that building block, where might we go? Can we be a bit more directive and a bit more specific in the way that we prioritise through this kind of thing?" (Stakeholder).

Another participant (Former SSAC) noted how the SHED – Scotland's Historic Environment Data – Strategy "genuinely should have been core to what would end up happening" but faced obstructions where it "just simply wasn't resourced and it wasn't funded and it wasn't taken seriously enough".

4.3.3 Bringing together research results

Under Enhancing Understanding, the SAS intended to 'encourage the creation of 'big picture' stories based on bringing together research results.'

From the Operational Plan Tracker, associated actions concern joining up research findings, and sharing findings with different audiences. Media metrics were seen as a way of monitoring the latter, however these do not appear to have been collected.

4.3.4 Sharing research results

Under Aim 2, another vision was to 'support effective methods of sharing research results, through collaboration with a range of partners, including museums, archives and the education sector.' Progress has been made in understanding Open Access, organisations encouraging Open Access. Albeit there is no way to establish which organisations are or are not adopting these approaches.

4.3.5 Sharing knowledge

'Ensure knowledge is increasingly discoverable, accessible, referable and reusable now and for future generations by 2025', was a vision for SAS. The actions related to data linkage and Open Access strategies for databases. From the Operational Plan Tracker it is not possible to establish what progress has been made. However, the primary research brought up relevant projects such as Towards a National Collection (UKRI funded) attempting to address many challenges towards both data linkage from a technical and from a legal perspective.

A few participants in the primary research talked about the role of archaeology in enhancing understanding in other disciplines, giving examples of their work relating to medicine and the environment/climate:

> "We're also participating in major medical research in Scotland over the last 10 years. As techniques advance, we're involved, a lot of other units, universities involved with Crick Institute, big DNA projects, big science projects where we can have the ability and we are telling story of climate change, we are actually digging up the evidence for climate change over the last, well past climate has gone back to the year dot well, maybe not Scotland, but you

know the last well, certainly 15,000 years if not longer. So we can change that, we have a role to play in the climate change agenda, which would be more story and not the leader, but we can provide the pivotal evidence a lot of the time for it" (Stakeholder).

4.4 Enablers

Participants discussed how the **availability of online resources** has enabled wider access and exposure to archaeology, with a particular growth during the strategy period. Participants mentioned how these **non-technical avenues**, such as YouTube videos, are especially useful in reaching broader, non-specialist users like the general public:

> "You're able to access the society's talks and all these YouTube videos and stuff. There's a fantastic resource out there now and it's being promoted, and it's being well used. So, when you think about what used to [be like], I suppose the driver for that wasn't just the strategy, but it's certainly something that everybody's got on board with in trying to make sure that we make things as accessible as we can to a wider audience" (Former SSAC).

Other participants commended the **work of HES** in "resourcing the bringing forth of backlog sites to public consumption" and enabling **extra funding for the research to be open access**, meaning that anyone can access it at no cost:

> "[Open access] is the best access possible. So, I think that that should be applauded and continue because this is the way to bring research free to everybody, not just different libraries and universities. And that's really been a great thing" (Stakeholder).

Some participants drew on the **experiences of their own organisations in coming up with innovative ways to engage with the public**. For instance, one participant described how a university course they are running tasks students with making climate films with a focus on heritage, and mentioned the prior building of interactive websites to showcase archaeological sites to those who may not normally interact with them:

> "They're going out and looking at heritage sites and then talking about climate change through the medium of film. And in the past, we've made 3D and 4D websites and we made models where we had little Sim characters like zooming around in archaeological landscapes and all the rest of it. And that kind of innovation is absolutely key to engaging a wider audience for those people who can't actually get out to the sites, because everything now is being done online" (Stakeholder).

Another participant noted the steps taken during one of their projects to ensure that their information can be reused and easily viewed by all, including those with sensory impairments. One participant used the example of a workstream within a Towards a National Collection, UKRI funded Discovery Project:[27]

> "Making sure that all of our information is reusable and can be accessed online. This was one of the key aims of Unpath'd Waters as well, making sure that everything's accessible to a range of audiences. So I was actually working with a group of visually impaired people as part of the project that we were involved in. So just making sure that that accessibility is there so that everyone can use the knowledge" (Stakeholder).

Others commented on the **usefulness of ScARF** (Scottish Archaeological Research Framework) in supporting the aim of enhancing understanding:

> "ScARF predates the strategy but the strategy provides a nice home for it, a nice justification and support, and that's quite an important component on stuff that's been done and the ability to keep doing these regional frameworks. Because obviously they generate new knowledge and understanding but they also can generate local engagement as well, and these things are pretty good" (Former SSAC).

Indeed, several participants cited the approach taken with the **research frameworks** as an enabler in terms ensuring knowledge is deliverable, accessible and reusable:

> "And that revised approach which has been illustrated in the more recent thematic and regional frameworks, you can see that there's a much greater emphasis on accessibility in particular and that the knowledge is delivered in an accessible fashion. […] If you make that knowledge accessible, it's going to generate further knowledge" (Stakeholder).

Another participant thought that the research frameworks are effective at highlighting knowledge gaps in specific areas, "which helps PhD students go find topics to research which hasn't been done before". Overall, enhancing knowledge and understanding was seen as an essential outcome of the research process, with some referring to the OASIS - the online system for reporting investigations into the historic environment and linking research outputs and archives – as a key enabler:

[27] See: Towards a National Collection; Introduction video, Unpath'd Waters

> "If you're not answering research questions, then why are you doing it. And in reporting through OASIS and so on, the fact that they are part of that is tying them to the research questions. Having got people together to agree what these questions are has been a great cross sector activity" (Current SSAC).

4.5 Barriers

While, on one hand, participants were pleased with the increased availability of open data, some mentioned how **issues with copyright, licensing or unstated terms of reuse** can delay or prevent them from accessing the data they need:

> "On top of the accessibility we need to look at removing the barriers of copyright and licencing, so promotion pushing the open data. Making sure that the information is accessible and that the terms and reuse of data is clearly understood. I think that opening up the data is an enabler, but the current barrier is copyright being unclear or in the case of many of ours record systems, unstated terms of reuse" (Stakeholder).

Others described facing more **general difficulties in finding archaeological data**, and felt that "as we've moved away from research excavation as the main delivery of information and towards commercial archaeology, it's becoming more and more difficult for researchers to actually locate information within the system, actual artefacts, information":

> "I think there's a lot of cases where things that should be published are just never published. And that I suppose sometimes developers just go out of business before the process is finished or local authorities don't have the resources to keep chasing. But I think there's a gap emerging of information that's just very hard to find or not there at all. And we do need to, over the next while, have a good look at that because it's valuable having strategies and it's about how we take the subject forward. But it is really difficult to find out where things are, what's available and how to get your hands on them. And I think maybe even just providing more help for people that are trying to find information, so how do you go about locating when it's not through published journal information or through things on that are in museums. There's just a lot more stuff that's just not quite reached that stage yet" (Stakeholder).

A few participants discussed how the **university sector can be "a difficult to reach community"**, particularly where "everybody's doing their own areas of research and there's no easy forum to bring people together to contribute as part of a bigger picture". They felt this meant most working

relations were borne from academic researchers reaching out to archaeological organisations, and saw a need for more proactivity to jointly meet this aim:

> "We end up dealing with the universities, the researchers who get in touch with you. We're not very proactive in that - we've always got a good working relationship with SCAPE, otherwise it's very much up to the individual lecturers and researchers. So I think that's something that the strategy hasn't really addressed as much as it could or should" (Stakeholder).

Others suggested that **updates to the SAS website** could be a useful first step in further enhancing understanding of archaeology, and that having **additional case studies** of recent work would give people a more up-to-date and comprehensive view of "what is happening with archaeology in Scotland":

> "With Enhancing Understanding, if you go on to the strategy delivery and aims part of the strategy website, the only thing that's mentioned there is ScARF and I do think that the website maybe doesn't fully represent what has been going on over the last ten years. I can understand why ScARF's there because it's Helen is leading that particular package at the moment. But it might help everyone to understand a bit better if more case studies were brought to the fore" (Stakeholder).

Issues with the **longevity of online sources** of archaeological data and information were also seen as a threat to enhancing understanding, especially where these become clunky to navigate:

> "There's worries over Pastmap, not so much the Canmore bit but the Pastmap, which is a bit more drilling down. There are issues, it's getting clunky but may die in the next couple of years. There needs to be how do we look at the IT sort of side and provision and resources for that at HES level" (Stakeholder).[28]

Others were concerned about the **impact of resourcing issues** on the sector's ability to maintain comprehensive and high-quality Historic Environment Records that can be used to better understand the local historic environment:

> "There's not been a growth because we got the big hit just before this strategy turned up, we don't have in terms of HERs, resourcing in that across the sector, bringing it all up to standard, how we link it all in, even the ones that [have] got very good HERs, we've got less than one

[28] See, Welcome to Pastmap | Pastmap

archaeologist per region in Scotland. And that's at all levels, which is wrong, So this is the thing about being deliverable and accessible because we need the staff to pump into our local HERs, which should be a virtuous loop" (Stakeholder).

4.6 Relevance

At the core, participants felt that "there is no point in doing archaeology if no one hears about it or learns from it or can use the information that came from it" and therefore saw the 'Enhancing Understanding' aim as fundamental to the entire archaeology sector:

> "It's the accessibility of the information, whether that's data or nice pictures or news articles or opportunities to visit or see artefacts. The sort of the thing that I would emphasise from where I sit in the sector is that that should apply equally to everything that we do. Because we're talking about the sector here, we're not just talking about particular types of project. And I think that has to be incumbent on everyone doing any kind of archaeology, even if it's commercial, as part of the planning process – the aim should be to make the information and the experience accessible. Again, I think it's just basic stuff. It's fundamental to why we're doing it in the first place" (Stakeholder).

Several participants saw the content and terms used in the current aim as 'muddled'. They believed the sentences 'increasing knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past' and 'making knowledge discoverable, accessible and reusable', while highly relevant to the aim, covered a wide range of concepts and could be better explained to readers:

> "I'm not someone who's used this strategy document that much really over the last few years. And it seems to me that what's presented there, that sort of one sentence thing kind of muddles up a number of different things. And I just wonder if the increasing knowledge, understanding and interpretation is one thing, and then delivering, making accessible, making reusable is another thing. And I wondered if there's a bit too much squished into this aim and if this is something that maybe needs to be expanded. Because there's a huge number of dimensions to this maybe compared to some of the other elements within the strategy document" (Stakeholder).

> "So I do think this needs kind of slightly pulling apart and reshaping and rephrasing, but I'd say relevance and accessibility are key elements to it" (Stakeholder).

Some participants pondered the target audience/s of this aim, noting that **enhancing understanding of the past is important for a range of audiences in different ways**, including **developers**, the archaeological workforce and the wider public:

> "It's the enhancing understanding as in those who we think might want to have more knowledge and understanding, interpretation of the past, but maybe doesn't focus on those who we need to understand - developers is what I'm thinking of. Apart from CIfA's guide for clients, I'm not aware of any other publication that goes direct to commercial developers, infrastructure institutions, etcetera to explain to them why archaeology is important. And so perhaps as part of the strategy in this particular aim, more can be done in that sense to give it broader scope across different sectors other than just the public, which I think this is mainly aimed at, and those who maybe don't know so much about archaeology and the process. So something more in that the commercial sector and developers in particular to help them understand more about the process and why it's important and the benefits that can come from it" (Stakeholder).

One participant suggested **rethinking** – and going further than – **the phrase 'increasing knowledge'**:

> "What we're doing is we're redefining knowledge, we're reimagining knowledge, we're looking at it differently. And so I would like to see rather than 'increase', I'd like it to be about 'enhancing knowledge' and looking at knowledge might be created differently" (Stakeholder).

They also emphasised how the **acquisition of new archaeological knowledge could have varying levels of impact on different groups**, in that what one group might consider unremarkable could be hugely impactful for another:

> "If you're a professional archaeologist with thirty years' experience, what you might gain as a piece of knowledge might be terribly limited in the greater sphere of your knowledge. What a local group might gain from just understanding somebody existed in that community in the past might be exponentially really different. So, it's the impact of knowledge as well and what impact can actually look and how people understand how they might want to use it. So, it's just about trying to be a little bit more dynamic with our language and whilst increasing the number of reports you produce can form a lovely KPI and be easy to measure, again, who is that increase for? And actually how we're just broadening as much as possible the ways we might measure and talk about that" (Stakeholder).

Another participant believed it would be beneficial for the aim to include a piece on **the generation of knowledge** – which can then be used to enhance understanding:

> "There's nothing in here about how knowledge is generated. What's behind this? Is it simply just assuming that there are archaeologists out there kind of digging stuff, recording stuff and something, and not a good enough job is being done with doing something with, it's not" (Stakeholder).

A few participants described **Aim 2 as following on from Aim 1 (Delivering Archaeology)**, in focusing on understanding – and increasing understanding around – what is being delivered:

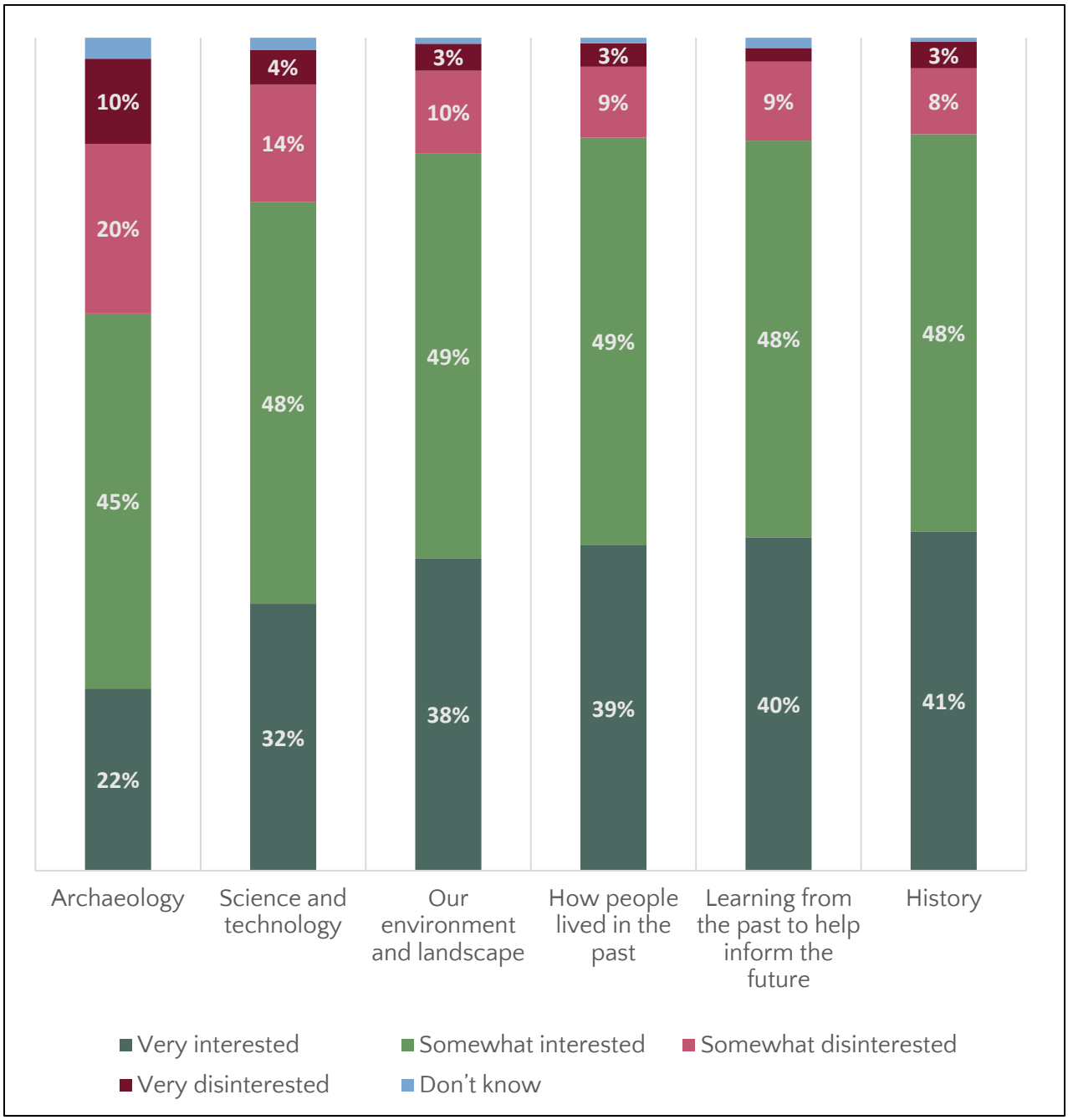
> "I think it has a strong relevance. It's about pushing us to do more with what and understand better why we're doing what we're doing. So, I think delivering [archaeology] has the public benefit, [thinking about] how are we giving the public benefit, how we reach out – Aim 2 is about how are we actually building knowledge and building better understandings of the past" (Former SSAC).

4.6.1 Public survey results

The public survey conducted at the start of 2025 is a useful source towards establishing the relevance of the current Aim- enhancing understanding.

Survey respondents were asked about their level of interest or disinterest in topics relating to archaeology, and archaeology itself (Figure 4.1, overleaf). The majority of respondents were very or somewhat interested in History (88%), Learning from the past to help inform the future (88%) and how people lived in the past (88%). This was closely followed by our environment and landscape (86%) and science (80%). There were greater levels of interest in all the terms relating to archaeology, than the term archaeology itself. This indicates the importance of explaining specialisms and their value using plain English.

Figure 4.1: What is your level of interest or disinterest in the following topics?



Base: All (1,087)

4.7 SAS Aim 2 Summary

Table 4.1 includes a summary of Aim 2 Enhancing Understanding based upon secondary and primary sources for this review.

Table 4.1: Summary of Aim 2 Findings

Importance	Enhancing understanding seen as a critical foundation for the archaeology sector. Strong support for efforts to enhance understanding of those within the archaeology community; within related sectors; and of the wider public.
Performance	The sector performed highly, in regards to its planned actions: • 16 fully delivered • 8 partially delivered • 1 not delivered • 2 unknown
Enablers	During the 2015-2025 period key enablers were considered to be: • Research frameworks- as comprehensive and useful for the sector and related sectors. • Wider developments in communications technology • Trends towards Open Access
Barriers	However, technological and legal barriers to sharing knowledge and information are prevalent. Any repositories for sharing information need design, management, promotion, updates and improvements. Online resources can become quickly out of date.
Relevant	Regarded as highly relevant for beyond 2025 as "there is no point in doing archaeology if no one hears about it or learns from it or can use the information that came from it"
Lessons for SAS	Opening up knowledge takes long-term planning, resourcing, evaluation and improvements. To know if understanding is being enhanced, the sector needs to appreciate what this means for the different audience groups and needs ways to establish if understanding is increased such as digital metrics or audience research.

From the public survey conducted January 2025 as part of the review, this shows levels of public interest are high for:

- How people lived in the past (88%)
- Learning from the past to help inform the future (88%)
- History (88%)
- Our environment and landscape (86%)
- Science and technology (80%)

Although a lower proportion are interested in archaeology (67%) this is over two-thirds of the population. And this finding shows how important it is for the sector to explain and showcase the part archaeology plays within the public's existing areas of interest. Intentions to bring together 'big picture' stories envisaged at the start of 2015 are still relevant in 2025.

5. Caring and Protecting– SAS Aim 3

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Aim 3 of SAS **Caring and Protecting**.

This chapter summarises:

- Why was this aim important?
- How has the sector performed with respect to this aim?
- What enabled progress?
- What barriers to progress were experienced?
- How relevant is this aim in 2025 and beyond?

The findings are largely based upon discussion of this aim and a SWOT analysis, allowing review participants to critically evaluate the strategy's contributions and areas for improvement. In addition, the reviewers also drew upon the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC and last updated February 2025.

5.2 Importance

Participants considered the theme of caring and protecting as **critical**, with one (Stakeholder) noting that "the whole future generations line is at the premise of everything we [those in the archaeology sector] do".

At the same time, several participants highlighted the **importance of ensuring this aim is realistic** and recognising that factors, like those related to climate, may reduce the sector's ability to care for and "protect everything":

> "I suppose one of the reasons that we can't care and protect for everything is that the climate is going to increasingly we'll see bigger storm events and particularly up here, think about coastal erosion, it's more and more sites getting eroded out into the sea, and there's not an infinite amount of money. So, we can't protect everything. So, I think that there will need to be some kind of overall judgement made on how we address the issue. We've got 50 sites that we know are a great risk, so what do we do with them and where does the money come from to look after that basically" (Stakeholder).

As described later, some questioned the focus on caring for 'physical evidence' and underlined the **importance of caring and protecting for all different types of archaeology**:

> "This is maybe aimed [at] the scheduled monuments and properties and care, etcetera. Maybe it's not, that's how I read it though, but hopefully it's not just about those, what are seen as important monuments, and it's actually everything, all archaeology we should be caring and protecting. And we always try and preserve in situ what we find, and if that's not feasible, then we excavate and publish it. And that makes it more accessible" (Stakeholder).

Others discussed the **wider societal value of caring and protecting as "archaeology's real value"**, through uncovering and discovering the historical significance of items or places:

> "I often refer to this concept that archaeologists are the therapists of deep time. What we're actually looking at is the process of human loss and abandonment and trauma. It's deep trauma written in our landscape and that actually if we researched that more understood our processes in dealing with that we would become far more relevant to society today in framing the questions that society might need to address moving forwards" (Stakeholder).

5.3 Performance

For Aim 3, Caring and Protecting, the SAS Delivery Plan[29] and the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC,[30] included vision statements for the strategy period:

- Provide access to suitably qualified expert advice in decision making.
- Help those providing expert advice and managing change keep abreast of new knowledge and innovations.
- Improve how we manage change in the historic environment, including assessing where change is not being actively managed (with an emphasis on new and creative ways of providing incentives including policy drivers).
- Develop a clear, properly resourced, co-ordinated approach to chance discoveries and archaeological emergencies.
- Review the current provision for national and local archaeological collections in museums and archives (in line with recent reports undertaken in England and Wales).
- Improve collection and archiving practices.

[29] SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf
[30] Unpublished, Reviewers were provided with working document last updated February 2025.

Reviewers had access to Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC. This was last updated February 2025 so provides a good indication of performance. Appendix D, table D3 summarises content relating to Aim 3. In addition, primary research participants gave their views on performance of Aim 3.

5.3.1 Suitably qualified expert advice

The SAS envisaged an increased awareness of public bodies of the importance, and access to expert advice. The Operational Plan tracker includes example of outputs and collective groups including national and local government. As this would be indirect impact, it is unclear whether the efforts of SSAC and partners has resulted in increased awareness, or more importantly increased appreciation and the value of expert advice. At the time of this review, there is a broad concern, covered in the press, of loss of archaeology expertise amongst local authorities.[31]

5.3.2 Keep abreast of new knowledge and innovations

Within the SAS period, there have been many initiatives to help those providing expert advice and managing change keep abreast of new knowledge and innovations. These are listed in the Operational Plan Tracker and include efforts by ALGAO and others.

5.3.3 Improve how we manage change in the historic environment

The SAS wanted to 'improve how we manage change in the historic environment, including assessing where change is not being actively managed (with an emphasis on new and creative ways of providing incentives including policy drivers).' From the review it is not possible to establish how much progress has been made. At the same time, the Operational Plan Tracker states that reviews are continually undertaken when there are changes to national policy or guidance, such as NPF4. Also, there are examples provided of wider policy and guidance which has been updated.

5.3.4 Approach to chance discoveries and emergencies

SSAC point out further work to achieve the vision of 'properly resourced, co-ordinated approach to chance discoveries and archaeological emergencies'. This can build-upon the important improvements made to HES call-off contracts, and the joint work of the sector with Police Scotland regarding discovery of human remains.

[31] See Scotland risks 'wholesale loss' of heritage as archaeology cuts leave numbers at 'bare minimum'

5.3.5 Review the current provision for collections within museums and archives

The vision to 'review the current provision for national and local archaeological collections in museums and archives (in line with reports undertaken in England and Wales)' resulted in plans to devise a number of working groups. The original plan to establish working groups for accessioning and cataloguing, and retention and disposal processes were seen by SSAC to be partially achieved through Before the Museum (ongoing at start of 2025) and At the Museum (yet to begin) projects. Two of these working groups were superseded by a published review of Treasure Trove for King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (KLTR). This reviewed the Treasure Trove process and considered the under-reporting of finds and presumably Scottish-based archaeology stakeholders participated. Published in August 2024, KLTR are considering next steps based upon the review. Additionally, the Scottish Archaeology in Museums Working Group was set up to cover objectives for this part of the sector.

5.3.6 Improve collection and archiving practices

SAS had the vision to 'improve collection and archiving practices.' This is a very broad vision and it is not possible from the actions detailed, measurements or updates by SSAC to establish its progress within the SAS period. Indeed, the main action in the Operational Plan Tracker was a working group to consider the Treasure Trove process, which was then superseded by the Treasure Trove review.

Participants in primary research for this review expanded on some of the challenges of improving collection and archiving practices. A few participants noted the **storage constraints of museums**, affecting their ability to hold and display – i.e. care for and protect– archaeological collections:

> "The problem is museums simply can't hold the collections, the archaeological assemblages that are coming. And we certainly address this during the strategy, but we haven't made progress on it" (Former SSAC).

Others described how **inconsistencies in the comprehensiveness of records** impact on the sector's ability to care for and protect archaeology. They explained how notes on associated folklore or other aspects of potential interest to communities can be lacking and felt the inclusion of these details would help to provide a fuller picture. They also suggested the use of technologies (e.g. Artificial Intelligence) in aiding this:

> "I think it goes back to [the] point about sometimes the record can be inconsistent and they've developed over time. So not every record will include every instance of folklore associated with a site, with a monument. And that, again, for what communities value, what they want to access, how they want to access it, I think it's trying to develop more of that consistency. And maybe as we come on to talking about opportunities for things like AI to help develop those records and to develop that consistency, I think that would be a fantastic place to be able to aim for where we do have much more of that" (Stakeholder).

Relatedly, others suggested **greater consideration of "selection, retention strategies, discard policies and so on and so forth at an early stage"** to help direct the caring and protecting of archaeology**:**

> "And perhaps [it's] being more brutal than we currently are in our approach to retention, which of course always carries risks. But I think I think there might be an opportunity to look at all of that again" (Former SSAC).

5.4 Enablers

Looking to enablers, one participant suggested that others in the archaeological sector "can learn a lot from what [their] colleagues in **Cultural Assets** are doing within **HES**", noting their involvement with the Dynamic Coast project undertaken by School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow.[32] They also described taking efforts within their "own estates, managing our own properties and care, identifying the impact of climate change", as well as the limitations of protection and the **usefulness of models and guidance in determining value**:

> "We can't save everything, it's impossible - the coastline in particular - but we can provide models and guidance as to what to look at and maybe think about what we really do value" (Stakeholder).

Equally, they outlined the **efforts of agencies in improving the conditions of buildings and being more energy efficient**, for instance, and felt these actions could have been better accounted for by the strategy:

> "The other areas, they're dealing with the built environment, they're dealing with trying to develop efficiencies in heating and buildings more efficient. And I think we're not presenting

[32] For more information on the project, its funders and partners see: https://www.dynamiccoast.com/

enough of those stories through the strategy. I think there needs to be more visibility on, there will be local initiatives, but a lot of that steer has to come from the bigger agencies" (Stakeholder).

A few participants mentioned the greater **alignment of SAS with National Museums Scotland (NMS) and Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) policies and outputs** as a key enabler in meeting the 'Caring and Protecting' aim, while others cited **collaboration between HES and ALGAO** (Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers) on policy.

Several participants discussed the links between **ALGAO and museums sector**, with many referring to the '**Before the Museums' project** being delivered by ALGAO Scotland and NMS through the Museums Working Group as part of SAS. They saw this collaborative project as important in bringing "improvements to how archaeological assemblages are handled going forward, redirecting some monies into the museums directly through the processing fees" (Former SSAC).

Some described having **better working relations with the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (KLTR)**, allowing them to 'iron out' roles and responsibilities and discuss potential process improvements. They also referred to the 'Treasure Trove' system, which operates on behalf of the KLTR to ensure heritage is recorded and preserved, as archaeological finds made in Scotland are a category of ownerless property:

"Just a better understanding and working relationship not just with the Treasure Trove unit, but with the KLTR behind the scenes as well. So we're actually having proper grown up conversations with the Crown about actually 'can we improve this process', 'can we improve this system'. We've spent a lot of work thrashing out roles and responsibilities, things that the general public would think should be understood in black and white. And even I will probably say cheekily say the sector really should have known in black and white a long, long time ago. But it's never been written down on paper" (Former SSAC).

Other participants cited the 'Adopt-a-Monument' scheme as an example of "where **local participation** has been brought in to try to raise awareness and help in the caring and protecting" (Former SSAC). They emphasised how the project encourages groups to get involved in hands-on activities to improve the condition, accessibility and interpretation of their chosen site.

5.5 Barriers

Issues with resourcing were seen as a key barrier, with one participant (Stakeholder) feeling that while 'Caring and Protecting' is "fundamental", it has been "particularly challenging to deliver the ambitions of this particular aim in the strategy". They felt that the "framework wasn't there to push stakeholders towards making real change happen in this area" and were conscious of the resource restraints facing those involved in meeting the aim:

> "And this is definitely, I know in terms of across all culture and heritage organisations and local government etcetera, all of the stakeholders that sit around the caring and protecting piece have huge resource constraints at the moment. So having a really solid aim in this area with specific goals in mind and a strong framework to deliver it would be quite essential I'd say".

Another participant (Former SSAC) remarked on difficulties in meeting this aim, including time pressures on staff, where "**everything was on top of the day job**". They also commented on the use of **partnered leads** for this aim and how joint resourcing improved over time:

> "And while it is also the only aim to have a partnership lead, a split lead so between two different organisations, so ALGAO and NMS. And I think NMS struggled with resourcing for a long time for a start, but that has balanced out really well I think, that is a really strong partnership and has opened up all sorts of conversations that didn't exist without this strategy".

One participant made a wider point around the importance of **clear communication** with the public and others outside the sector around **steps taken to care for and protect archaeology**, such as the 'fencing off' of monuments. They saw this as key in avoiding **confusion** or deterring the public from taking an interest in such items:

> "Well, can I start by saying it's very important and how annoyed people were when all of Historic Scotland's monuments were fenced off recently and some of them still are. I understand part of the reason that was being done, but I don't think that was ever explained properly. So, people would arrive at Saint Andrew's Cathedral, for example, to be wondering why they couldn't actually get into it because of all this fencing. And I just think again, that's a need for more broader explanation of why these things are happening so that so people can appreciate that" (Stakeholder).

Others talked about the **interplay between caring and protecting** and "the whole way in which **scheduling and protecting sites** works". They observed how those dealing with their own

scheduled site/s can work in silos and felt this prevented a joined-up understanding of what is, and can be, cared and protected for:

> "I was at the Edinburgh Lothians Borders Archaeology Conference last Saturday and there was a phrase that came up a couple of times in different presentations, which was 'we were working in this area and over there it's a scheduled site, so we don't know much about it.' And I thought that was quite a telling phrase that in fact, what's driving an awful lot of discovery of archaeology in Scotland is being pushed away from the scheduled sites because they constrain the type of archaeology that can be done. And I think one thing that would be very nice to come out of this process is, not to do away with scheduled sites - there are lots of very good reasons why sites are scheduled and sites do need to be protected - but perhaps to think of a more flexible framework" (Stakeholder).

The same participant remarked on a need to avoid the restrictions of "having a passive set of scheduled sites that are there and they're protected and are therefore kept for future generations, even if we don't know much about them and our knowledge of them gets increasingly dated because it depends on the old excavations that gave those sites their prominence". Another participant reiterated this:

> "Maybe we should be more careful about our resources and what we're trying to protect and concentrate on those things that are worth protecting rather than just sticking with a red line drawn around something 100 years ago that we don't know a lot about" (Stakeholder).

Relatedly, a few participants saw a **lack of focus on intangible heritage** in the current aim as a barrier and commented on its importance:

> "But if I can link this to intangible heritage, in a way, caring, protecting, interacting with heritage, is something that's performed as well as something that just exists, it's got to do with sometimes an active interaction. And we need to think about enabling, in appropriate ways, that interaction with the physical heritage - and I think in some ways scheduling can fossilise things and can restrict that sort of active engagement" (Stakeholder).

5.6 Relevance

While participants saw the 'Caring and Protecting' aim as remaining **highly relevant**, they felt it **"all comes back to 'what are we valuing?'**, as that decision "then has a series of consequences in what we [the archaeology sector] what we do" (Stakeholder).

Looking at the content of the aim, some felt that it "**slightly covers too much**" and "doesn't work as well as some of the others" (Stakeholder). Others felt that the use of the term '**material evidence**' was **too narrow** and prevented scope to think about '**intangibles'**:

> "To say it's just physical evidence, it's really missing out all the intangibles. But I suppose because this is the archaeology strategy rather than the heritage strategy, that's a bit of a clumsy way of trying to stress the physical, whereas actually it shouldn't just think of when you talk about the path, of course it's full of intangibles. So that might help, but yeah there are a lot of issues" (Stakeholder).

Others echoed this point and remarked on opportunities arising from – and a need to think about – Scotland's (and the wider UK's) connection to the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage:

> "And then I think, yeah, just to echo that point, why on intangible heritage, why wouldn't we want to care for folklore associated with sites, with landscapes, if that helps to inform our understanding of it and what it's significant and how people value it. So I think bringing that in more strongly, especially now that the UK and then Scotland, we're connected to the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage. So there's really good opportunities there both to support intangible authority" (Stakeholder).

Relatedly, participants stressed that **archaeological knowledge should also be cared for and protected**, so that it can be enjoyed by future generations:

> "Obviously, a lot of archaeology is about physical evidence. But I think harking back to what we've just discussed and I didn't come in on the last one - you're talking a lot about knowledge and accessibility and data and also legacy was lurking in there for future generations, I think and accessibility for future generations and that's here under caring and protecting for physical evidence. So it makes me think there's something there about not necessarily just focusing absolutely on the physical evidence and it's sustainability thinking about it's just caring for it for future generations. There's something in the knowledge and data and information and the rest of it as well as we've just discussed, which then makes me think, well, maybe this is getting drilling down too much into just the physical. And maybe there's an opportunity to reflect back on the caring and protecting in terms of a larger sense of more intangible elements or of data and information" (Stakeholder).

Others commented on the **existence of heritage legislation** as another interpretation of caring and protecting for archaeology and the human past:

> "I think maybe I'm just thrown by the word 'protecting' because you've got thinking about protecting the physical assets like we talked about that about climate change and risk and all that. But then you've got its protection in terms of heritage protection legislation, planning law, where does archaeology fit with it? And I think maybe that needs to be slightly unpicked" (Stakeholder).

One participant (Stakeholder) suggested that this public benefit angle should be "tied into every planning application" and "pushed along with the NPF4 [National Planning Framework 4] public benefits stuff".

Reflecting on the previous decade, participants were keen for the 'Caring and Protecting' aim to be "looked at with that **climate impact** in mind", particularly where climate change is "probably the biggest driver for how we [the archaeology sector] manage and protect the historic environment" (Stakeholder). They touched on the importance of thinking about how the sector manages loss, including that resulting from climate change:

> "We can't care and protect for a lot of these sites which are going to be a washed away and we have to come up with alternative strategies. And therefore, I think maybe if we're going to put climate change in here, we have to think about how we're going to do that. Obviously with the sites which aren't being, which aren't falling into the sea, there are all sorts of different things that you can do. But the reason that I wasn't engaging with this one originally is because I was thinking, well, because of our type of work, we can't protect these sites. I've had enough conversations with people to say that we can't afford to build walls all the way around Scotland and nobody would want that anyway. However, it has opened my eyes" (Stakeholder).

These conversations led some participants to suggest the **more explicit mention of 'climate change'** as opposed to sustainability, as well as tie-in with the terms used in other related strategies:

> "I just wonder if we can have climate change explicitly as part of this aim, even if not, you know, several objectives basically talking about climate change. the term sustainability is used in the shorthand, but it's not really specified what that means. I mean, it can just tie into other, you know, ICOMOS [International Council on Monuments and Sites] and HES's own strategies, it needs to mention it" (Stakeholder).

Participants also made **links between this aim and 'Enhancing Understanding' aim**, noting "maybe we can't protect things past things that we can learn from them" (Stakeholder).

Beyond this, participants considered the **relevance of wider factors** on the sector's ability to care for and protect archaeology. They talked about **political** and **economic** influences, as well as the **general public's understanding** of the rationale behind this aim amidst these influences:

> "And the other thing is, of course, changes happening in sort of political and economic [arenas]. So, you know, global challenges aren't just climate change – that's going to have a massive impact on archaeology but it's a whole suite, I guess why changes in management priorities might change" (Stakeholder).

> "I this comes back to relevance again. You know, we are having a cost-of-living crisis and there are lots of competing agendas that many people would say are more important than archaeology. So I think, getting that message out about why we care and protect and why we invest and what it means to us as a society. And some of the well-being stuff we've talked about is really important because I've had conversations with my own family about 'why are they investing so much in this when, you know, I can't get a doctor's appointment' And I know that's a bit flippant, but that narrative and that conversation is being had. So I think investing in people and investing in those narratives about why we care and protect for ourselves now, but also for future generations is also really important" (Stakeholder).

5.7 SAS Aim 3 Summary

Table 5.1 includes a summary of Aim 2 'Enhancing Understanding' based upon secondary and primary sources for this review.

Table 5.1: Summary of Aim 3 Findings

Importance	Caring and protecting was seen as critical so that future generations can see the remains of the past. Having said that, the sector and stakeholders are pragmatic-not everything cannot be cared for and protected indefinitely.
Performance	The sector performed highly, in regards to its planned actions: • 6 fully delivered • 9 partially delivered • 2 not delivered • 0 unknown

Enablers	During the 2015-2025 period key enablers were considered to be: • Projects to manage cultural assets have useful findings and recommendations. • Have been developments in understanding more about the environmental implications of caring and protecting e.g. energy use • Positive joint working between museums bodies and archaeology sector has been built up during SAS.
Barriers	However, the resource required to care and protect is even more challenging to secure in challenging economic climate. Key organisations to deliver this aim were affected by Covid-19- funding, resource and priorities. It can be hard to achieve balance between protecting assets and making them accessible to the public.
Relevant	Caring and protecting regarded as highly relevant for beyond 2025, but needs a rethink around what is cared for and protected and what is prioritised when resource is not infinite.
Lessons for SAS	Acknowledging how we assign value then affects what is most cared for and protected. Caring and protecting can apply to intangible, as well as tangible heritage. Caring and protecting is resource intensive and resources in archive and museum sectors are subject to economic trends. Caring and protecting creates a carbon footprint and environmental sustainability could have been more visible within SAS.

6. Encouraging Greater Engagement– SAS Aim 4

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Aim 4 of SAS, **Encouraging Greater Engagement**.

This chapter summarises:

- Why was this aim important?
- How has the sector performed with respect to this aim?
- What enabled progress?
- What barriers to progress were experienced?
- How relevant is this aim in 2025 and beyond?

The findings are largely based upon discussion of this aim and a SWOT analysis, allowing review participants to critically evaluate the strategy's contributions and areas for improvement. In addition, the reviewers also drew on the latest Delivery plan tracker. To add value, to SSAC's consideration of the relevance of this aim, the reviewers include findings from a survey of Scottish residents on this topic.

6.2 Importance

Many participants underscored the **importance of encouraging greater engagement with archaeology, including amongst those who would not typically interact with, or be exposed to, it**. One participant (Stakeholder) noted that "this [approach] is what funders are looking for" when assessing project applications, while another again highlighted the value of projects that have worthwhile **public benefit**:

> "I think this is probably core for the next 10 years because public engagement, community engagement is part of that big public benefit of why we do archaeology. It is really, really important. There are some fantastic examples and some really good work in Scotland in it and sustaining that type of work" (Stakeholder).

Similarly, participants raised the benefits of **archaeology as a vehicle for education**, particularly where it can be used to make learning about history or geography, for instance, more enjoyable or digestible for young people:

> "I think it's important for engaging young people, people from different backgrounds, it encourages archaeology heritage to be relevant but also to build those connections and become lifelong advocates for things like archaeology and heritage and to understand the importance of it, that public value. And I also think archaeology, in all its facets, is a really great mechanism for teaching lots of different types of things. Whether it's history, geography, maths, it's a really engaging and exciting way to teach. And it often works for young people who aren't necessarily comfortable and happy in the classroom, for example, but they do have a different way of learning. So, there are all sorts of reasons why it's important" (Stakeholder).

Others talked about the **importance of having a workforce that is generally representative of the wider population**, so that more people can relate to those working in the archaeology sector and see it as something they can engage with, as opposed to being something that is disconnected from their everyday lives:

> "If we're talking about engagement with archaeology, I think we also think about actually archaeologists reflecting communities in terms of diverse backgrounds, ethnicity, etcetera. So, we need to think about more how we can diversify the sector, the professional sector as part of this sort of greater engagement with archaeology. So it's not just making archaeology great and fun for local communities when archaeologists parachute in and do projects, but it's actually building that forward in terms of those communities actually doing archaeology as a as a job in many ways, as well as for their own things in their own communities" (Stakeholder).

A few participants highlighted the further advantages of **increasing public engagement** with archaeology in **pushing it into political consciousness** and agendas:

> "The more inclusive and the more engagement you have with archaeology, the more relevant it is to people's lives, the more relevant it will be to government and the more pressure will be put on them and to take it into account across government. So yeah, I don't think you can over emphasise how important that is" (Stakeholder).

Relatedly, some participants saw a need to **look beyond 'engagement' and adapt terminology and approaches** in line with current trends in government policy, such as an emphasis on local democracy and co-creation of local projects:

> "Engagement is a challenging word, increasingly, in the context in which I work. I think you need to be more about participation and be more about that kind of collaboration, co creation, that kind of thing. So that it's more in tune with the current trend in a government policy around

local democracy and things like that. You want more of that really. And that will help with the other aims in terms of the knowledge and understanding and things that we've already been discussing too" (Stakeholder).

6.3 Performance

The SAS Delivery Plan[33] and the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC,[34] included vision statements for the strategy period for Aim 4:

- Support collaborative partnerships within and beyond the archaeological community to: enable wider public engagement; reach broad and diverse audiences; maximise resources; promote information exchange.
- Develop and promote best practice around integrating archaeology within the wider learning framework (promoting it as a key learning tool in the Curriculum for Excellence and helping teachers be better prepared to engage with archaeology and incorporate it into their teaching).
- Enable and promote opportunities for wider public engagement through interpretation and presentation of archaeological projects (such as museum displays, travelling displays and onsite interpretation).

Reviewers had access to Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC. This was last updated February 2025 so provides a good indication of performance. Appendix D, table D4 summarises content relating to Aim 4. In addition, primary research participants gave their views on performance of Aim 4.

6.3.1 Collaborative partnerships to enable wider public engagement

One of the visions under Aim 4 of SAS was to 'support collaborative partnerships within and beyond the archaeological community to: enable wider public engagement; reach broad and diverse audiences; maximise resources; promote information exchange.' Many of the actions devised related to working in collaborative partnership to hold productive discussions, hold workshops, and produce useful resources.

At the time of this review the intention is still to produce- 'Measuring Participatory Success in Archaeology' framework and guidance', although it appears that plans to successfully secure funding towards this are still progressing.

[33] SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf
[34] Unpublished, Reviewers were provided with working document last updated February 2025.

Even though mention of climate change does not feature within the SAS aims or the vision statements, it is clear from the Operational Plan tracker that collective actions have taken place within the SAS period for example for 'encouraging the use of archaeological results to predict impacts of climate change', multiple partners are cited in this endeavour.

6.3.2 Integrating archaeology within the wider learning framework

'Develop and promote best practice around integrating archaeology within the wider learning framework' was envisaged for the SAS period. A working group, The Archaeology and Learning Working Group, has been created and is meeting regularly. The Operational Plan Tracker shows that SSAC have made attempts to monitor indicators of success such as the number of loan kits borrowed, Heritage Hero Certificates issued, instances of training workshops and events, and sign-ups to e-newsletters for teachers. Encouragingly, an Archaeological Ambassadors Scheme is being piloted.

Several participants in the primary research for this review cited the **Heritage Hero Awards** as a demonstrator of success in encouraging engagement.[35] One (Former SSAC) explained how these have "involved more and more people and engaged more and more people over the years" and noted that while it is "mostly school children, anybody at any age can do them and that directly encourages engagement with archaeology".

Resources for learning, such as the Heritage Resources Portal, were not given by those taking part in focus groups for this review.[36]

6.3.3 Opportunities for wider public engagement

'Enable and promote opportunities for wider public engagement through interpretation and presentation of archaeological projects (such as museum displays, travelling displays and onsite interpretation)' was a vision within Aim 4 of SAS. Best practice guidance on 'popular presentation' has been produced, but it has not been determined how this is being used.

The reviewers feel that much work has been conducted by museums and other heritage organisations which has not been captured in the current Operational Plan Tracker. This indicates the importance of efforts of the Scottish Archaeology Museums Working Group to make explicit connections between archaeology and the Scottish museums strategy and the programming of individual museums.

[35] See Heritage Hero Awards | Archaeology Scotland
[36] Heritage Resources Portal

In the roundtable and focus groups one participant remarked that it "was very innovative of the original strategy to put this [aim] at the forefront" and believed it "has been, in many ways, successful" in raising engagement and promoting more awareness:

> "I mean, it's permutating far wider than it was originally. And so I think that's good. Still, there's plenty of opportunities here. We haven't only just scratched the surface of the opportunities for getting more people involved. But on the basis, I think looking at what it was like in 2015 and what it is now, there's been a sea change" (Former SSAC).

Similarly, another participant agreed that this aim helps to keep the topic of engagement with archaeology on the agenda of those working in the sector:

> "You keep focus on 'this is what we're doing. We're encouraging greater engagement'. We're not improving educational standards or increasing mental health, you know, or we're not doing all the other laudable things that we that we do aim to do. But keeping this at the fore is a great strength" (Former SSAC).

Others described how the benefits of community-based archaeology "aren't necessarily simply about what people learn from archaeology or archaeology learns from people" (Stakeholder). They recognised that "the various sorts of archaeology activities create spaces in which all sorts of other things happen in terms of community engagement", pointing to the example of Operation Nightingale:

> "A really obvious example where there's a benefit to doing archaeology that's not just about teaching people around heritage would be something like Operation Nightingale, the work that's been going on with ex-servicemen and creating spaces in which discussions can happen. Archaeology can bring a huge amount of benefit, perhaps particularly to diverse and challenged members of the community – because it's fairly unjudgmental, you've got activities that you can focus on, and there's a massive potential public benefit from that that does involve people learning about the past. And for many people, it's not even going to be their primary aim going into it or their memory coming out of it. And I don't think we should underestimate just the benefit of doing archaeology" (Stakeholder).

While sharing examples of encouraging greater engagement with archaeology, several participants underlined the importance of **maintaining this momentum** in the long-term and **continuing to look for ways to link engagement with archaeology into more of the public's everyday touchpoints**:

> "If you look at the work Archaeology Scotland as an example, I mean a lot of my colleagues do talks, like the centre does those vlogs and things. We just got an archaeological achievement award about reaching out to new audiences. But looking forward, how do we maintain that? How do we continue to help doing that? Because it's really about integration, there's a lot of projects where we just go there and walk out. But how do we do it sustainably as in the longer term, which is a role of local museums and local authorities. But it's also how National Trust Scotland and private sector, local communities... it's the cafe that's in an old setting. That's engagement. How do they do it, how to promote a wider sense of heritage? I think that's one way of exploring it in the future. It's not just about what we do, it's actually how do people feel about it" (Stakeholder).

6.4 Enablers

A few participants believed that having "**passionate, skilled archaeologists**" is a key enabler in encouraging greater engagement with the sector (Current SSAC). There was also a sense that the 'Encouraging Greater Engagement' aim is the "the easiest one to align to HES funding" (Current SSAC).

Linked with the other aims, several participants noted that '**getting the message out**" about archaeology and the work being undertaken in Scotland is **key in encouraging people to engage**. They reflected on the **demographics** of those who currently engage with archaeology, noting a dearth in middle-aged people who may be occupied by work or 'general life':

> "As an industry, we get lots of people who are young, lots of people who are retired, because that's the nature of the beast, and not a lot of people in the middle, because funny enough, they're all running off doing like things, you know...I'm not bothered about that because that's the way cycles go" (Stakeholder).

Participants also talked about **the work the sector is doing** to encourage greater engagement, with one (Stakeholder) mentioning that "Archaeology Scotland and local museums and my colleagues go out and talk to association groups. They do it all the time, they're very good".
Another participant (Former SSAC) felt that there has been "nice development" and expansion in the level of public engagement practice but saw a need to go further where the "the challenge is to break out of the middle-class audience, as it's not as diverse of an audience as we would want to have".

Responding to this, another participant suggested ways that **existing initiatives** to promote heritage and archaeology in schools, such 'heritage boxes' or 'handling boxes', could be improved to **better meet accessibility needs**:

> "It's different abilities as well. You know, the heritage boxes that go out to schools and stuff, I think they are an Archaeology Scoland thing - they could be adding like sensory things to make sure that all abilities are able to take part as well. That would be good" (Current SSAC).

Others observed the **role of educational institutions** in enabling engagement with archaeology at a young age, and discussed how such engagement can 'drop off' at the secondary school stage where students are constrained by the pre-set curriculum:

> "It's actually maintaining and increasing the education sector, get them young. I mean, getting them in primary school out to something is easy, but getting to them in secondary school is impossible because they're engaged in their programme" (Stakeholder).

Some participants suggested that having a secondary-level qualification in archaeology could help boost the number of those carrying on the subject:

> "There's the thing about people not taking archaeology and numbers going down across the UK is because of the lack of the A-Level. So if there was some support for a Higher in archaeology that could be offered then across the UK even, this would help bring more people into lifelong learning and then maybe go into archaeology. So there are things like this that could benefit having universities involved would benefit this" (Stakeholder).

In the same vein, they saw value in examining the ways information on Scottish history is disseminated to those in and outside of schools and incorporating heritage more strongly into things that the public are currently more engaged in, like the natural environment:

> "But I think there's a role for the sector, to try look at 'how do we teach Scottish history'? But actually teach 'this is how archaeology can fit into different skills'. If you get them at school level, people will have an interest in it, people drop off, but there will be a general interest. And then you got the community groups. But it's maintaining a presence, it's a PR exercise, it's calls, it's getting the message out there" (Stakeholder).

> "It's about making linkages between the natural environment and heritage. I'll go 'Well see that that lovely woodland you went through, actually it's not that old really. It was there for

economic reasons, like it was used for oak for ships'. So there's a heritage and then the natural environment people are very good, but it's linking the two so that they're [the public] willing to have greater engagement" (Stakeholder).

Some pointed to **opportunities arising from their work with other sectors,** such as construction, as archaeology colleagues can share useful information during the planning and building processes and **help clients meet wider corporate targets**:

"I think the opportunities are still there though, as archaeologists get a much better understanding of how, particularly on the last construction projects, we can help our clients meet United Nations sustainable development goals where archaeology is an absolute gift to them for meeting many of their corporate targets. They're often better off with archaeology on their projects than without. So, I think there's more that we can do there. So, looking at that interface with the construction sector is an opportunity and the other opportunity that has always been there is about encouraging, probably through policy, local authorities to put public engagement and public participation into some planning conditions" (Former SSAC).

A few participants pointed out how **tenders for public sector contracts** are increasingly focused on **public benefit**, giving **space for archaeologists to work on wider projects** and incorporate community outreach, training and other types of public engagement:

"But public sector contracts over the years have been a quite refreshing in comparison. They now always have public benefit, including archaeology tied into the contracts at tender stage for the main contractor and then someone like us coming in as the archaeology contractor. So it's jumping on the back of the other public benefits and community outreach, helping schools accessibility and plans for paths and all the rest that comes with the development of a road for instance. That's enabled us in some cases to offer educational opportunities, training for students as well as school visits, society visits, university visits, things that other developers in the past have dismissed due to the health and safety concerns. But if it's managed appropriately, there's no reason why greater engagement can't come in the back of other developments, not just public sector" (Stakeholder).

6.5 Barriers

Several participants mentioned how a **lack of funding and resourcing** – particularly at a local level – can threaten the archaeology sector's ability to carry out those projects or initiatives that seek to encourage greater engagement:

> "It's about resourcing at local level. And one of the issues that we face, for example, with the Young Archaeologist Club is because it's an ongoing project, it's been going forty years, we struggle to actually access any ongoing funding from Scotland. They're more interested in short-term projects that might be deliverable over six or twelve months. But to get that annual running cost to support those groups at regional levels has proved increasingly difficult and we still have not managed it yet. And so we resource that from other areas of the country at the moment, if you know that there's funders who will support that day-to-day running costs of a long term project" (Stakeholder).

The same participant underscored how the current resourcing landscape means that 'doing all of the right things' does not necessarily guarantee funding or assistance in undertaking projects:

> "We've done impact studies, we know that this meets all the criteria in terms of impact on young people and we're accessing different and diverse communities as well. But that's been a real huge barrier for us. But it's something that I think can be easily resolved and then becomes an enabler, right?" (Stakeholder).

Relatedly, some participants mentioned how **short-term or light-touch projects limit the potential for archaeology and archaeological learning to become embedded**:

> "[We need] to avoid this kind of parachuting approach where you arrive, you do something fantastic and bugger off, you know that that durability and sustainability, that aspect of sustainability can be hard. It's long term learning" (Stakeholder).

6.6 Relevance

While participants were confident that 'Encouraging Greater Engagement' **should remain a key aim** in the future, some felt that the high-level description in the strategy should be supplemented by including **more specific details and actions in the delivery plan**. They also recommended specifying the desired outcomes of efforts to increase engagement, so that these can be more easily measured:

> "I just keep flicking down at looking at delivery plan for these and I think these high-level strategic objectives are one thing, but it really where the rubber hits the road is in the delivery plan. And that's where the refinements could be made to really tighten these things up to deliver greater engagement from a baseline of something you know and have public benefit as

> well. So I think that's that the real hard work needs to go into the delivery plan objectives" (Stakeholder).

> "And maybe just going forward, it could be possibly refined or have some sort of baseline and properly capture proper outcomes that could be really delivered against. This one, encouraging greater engagement, is about as woolly as you can get really, isn't it? So maybe it could be refined. But then I also appreciate that a very open statement like this is very useful, and people can interpret it more widely" (Stakeholder).

Others noted that **work to encourage greater engagement should be based on the needs profiles of communities** and suggested that working – and designing projects - with third sector community organisations and other stakeholders could be a useful avenue for achieving this:

> "Again, I think this is fundamental, but it's written backwards. It needs to be much more about 'what do communities and societies need'. I think also one thing from my work with many of the stakeholders that lead in this area is that they're consistently in short term cycles of funding for engagement projects or staff. So there's a thing here about how that can become a more sustainable aspect of this holistic approach to archaeology. One of the great strengths they have is working with third sector community facing partnerships and perhaps designing this one much more with the third sector and more public societal focused stakeholders would be of benefit to archaeology. So I just think it's it needs to be written from the other perspective" (Stakeholder).

Indeed, some participants raised that **engagement cannot take a 'one size fits all' approach** and that it is **important for any future iterations of the strategy to consider why and how people might want to participate** in archaeology-adjacent activities or learnings:

> "I think engagement is something we've been doing for a long time on a whole range of different spectrums, but it's actually the participation as well. And I think that maybe is missing there a little bit in terms of how people participate in their own way and in also ways that we within the sector consider mutually beneficial or maybe not always mutually beneficial as well, recognising that sometimes it's not always balanced. But also, participation with purpose, why are people participating? And back to strategies and KPIs and enabling people to recognise what the purpose of their participation is beyond having free time and wanting to dig holes in the ground or learn things. So, I think there's an opportunity within this to broaden the engagement but also deepen the types of engagement that the strategy can not necessarily define but certainly exemplify as well" (Stakeholder).

6.6.1 Public survey results

The public survey conducted at the start of 2025 is a useful source to understand current levels of engagement with archaeology and with wider heritage.

Respondents were then asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements (Figure 6.1, overleaf). The vast majority of survey respondents (93%) agreed that young people should learn about Scotland's history and heritage. This was then closely followed by survey respondents supporting efforts to care for places and objects from the past (87%).

There are clear differences in agreement observed between age groups. However, fewer differences are observed between any other demographic group.

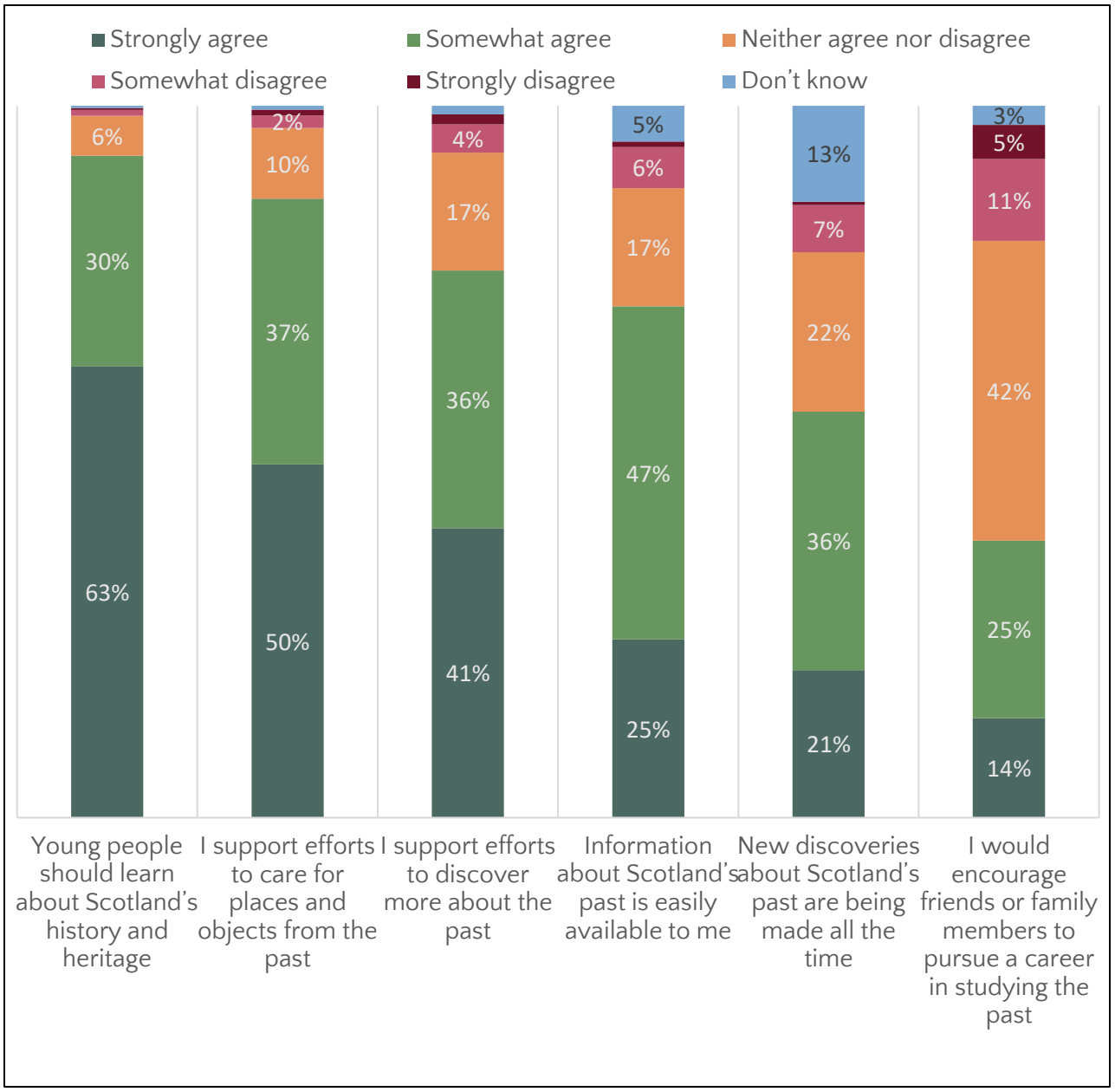
Older people (aged 65+) are more likely to agree with the following statements than their younger (aged 16–24-year-olds) peers; New discoveries about Scotland's past are being made all the time (68% vs 48%, respectively) and I would encourage friends of family members to pursue a career in studying the past (50% vs 29%, respectively).

Around three quarters of survey respondents agreed they would support efforts to discover more about the past (77%) and that information about Scotland's past is easily available to them (72%).

More than half of all survey respondents (57%) were in agreement that new discoveries about Scotland's past are being made all the time, while 22% neither agreed nor disagreed and a further 13% didn't know. Only 7% of respondents disagreed with the statement.

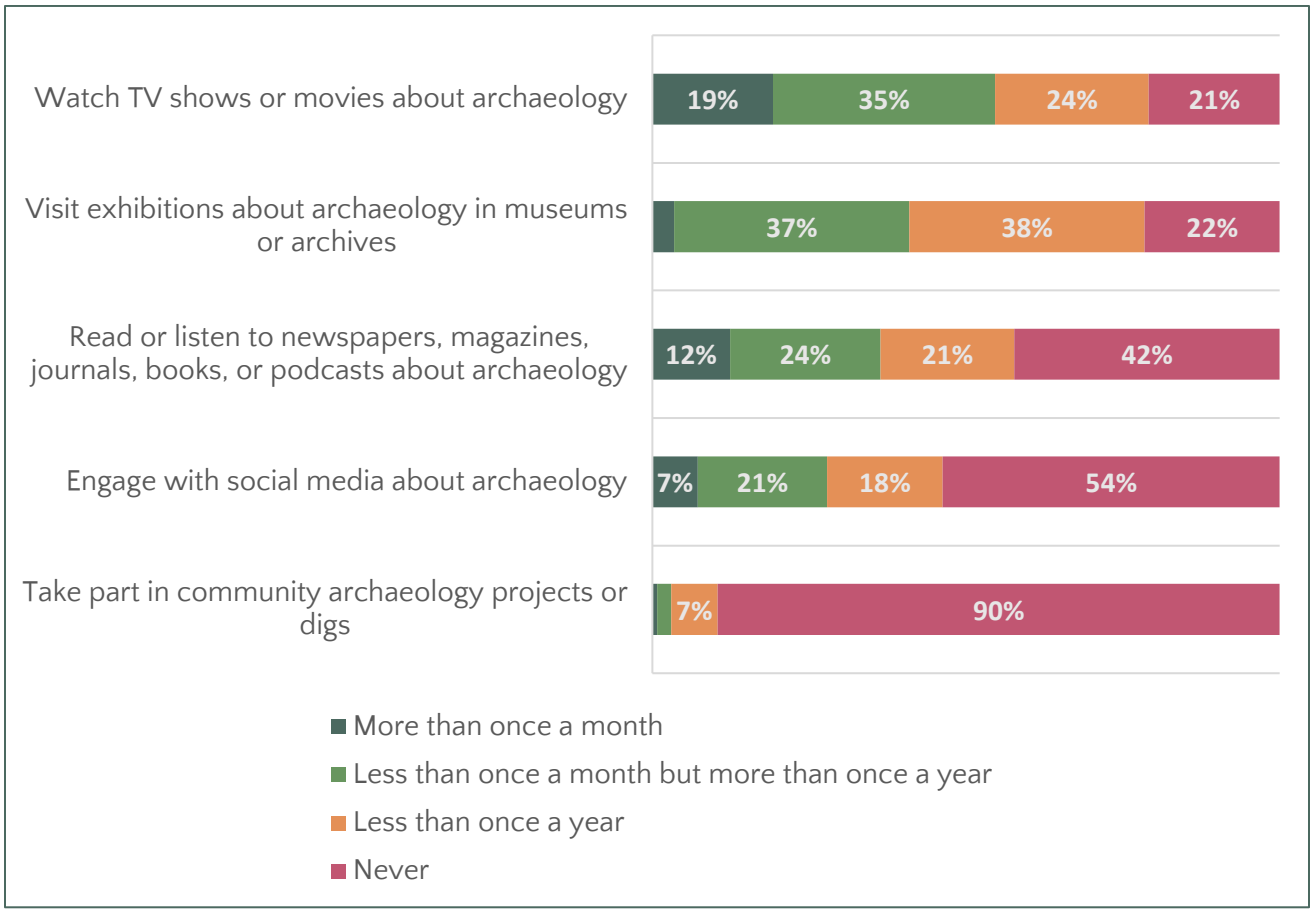
However, less than four in ten (39%) agreed they would encourage friends or family members to pursue a career in studying the past. Again, there is an increased level of indecision here as 42% of respondents reported they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and a further 3% didn't know. Around a sixth (16%) of all respondents disagreed; they would not encourage friends or family members to pursue a career in studying the past.

Figure 6.1: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All (1,090)

Figure 6.2: Do you do any of the following? Please estimate how often.



Base: All (1,085)

Survey respondents were provided a list of tasks and asked how often they do any of them (Figure 6.2, above).

The vast majority of survey respondents have engaged with tv shows or movies about archaeology (79% any engagement) and exhibitions about archaeology in museums or archives (78% any engagement). However, the frequency of engagement differed. Overall, 19% of respondents watched tv shows or movies about archaeology more than one a month. Only 3% of survey respondents visited exhibitions about archaeology in museums or archives more than once a month. Indeed, the most popular frequency for survey respondents to visit exhibitions about archaeology was less than once a year (38%). Around a fifth have never engaged with either tv shows or movies about archaeology (21%) of exhibitions about archaeology in museums (22%).

More than half of all survey respondents have never engaged with social media about archaeology (54%). The vast majority of survey respondents have never taken part in community archaeology projects or digs. Thos who have taken part in community projects or digs are most likely to do so less than once per year (7%).

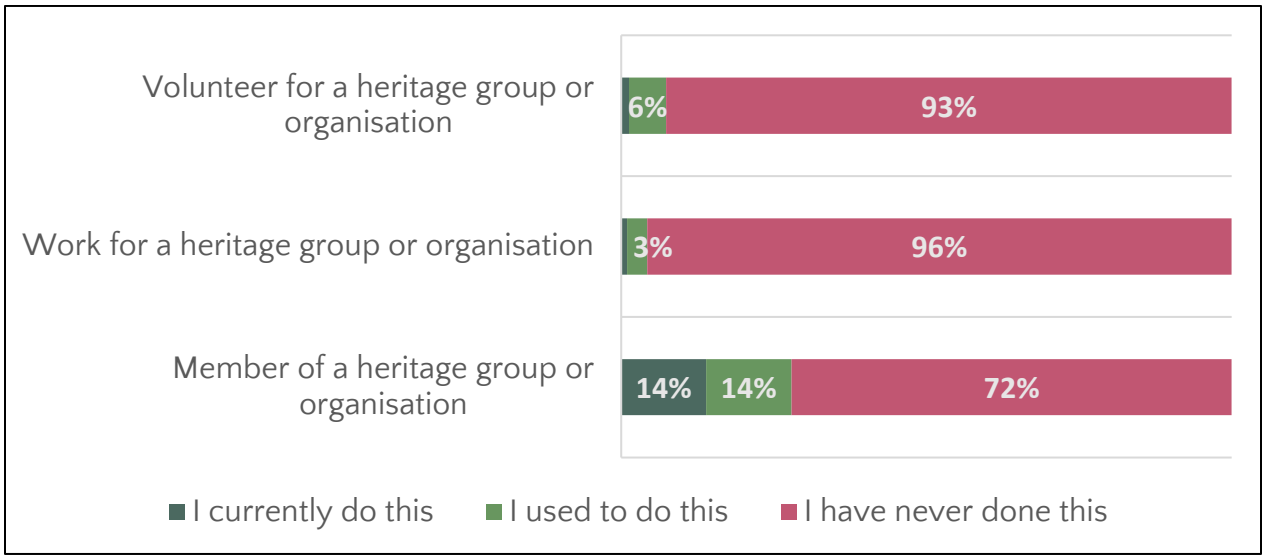
There are differences in engagement observed between groups. Males were more likely than females to have ever watched TV shows or movies about archaeology (84% vs 74%, respectively). However, this remains relatively high across both genders. Male respondents were also more likely than females to have read or listened to newspapers, magazines, journals, books or podcasts about archaeology (62% vs 53%, respectively).

Differences were also observed between age groups. The vast majority of those respondents aged 65+ have watched TV shows or movies about archaeology (86%). This group are more likely than those aged 16-24 years old to have watched TVV shows or movies about archaeology (72%). Indeed, those respondents aged 65+ were also more likely to have read or listened to newspapers, magazines, journals, books or podcasts about archaeology than those aged 16-24 years old (70% vs 44%, respectively)

Social grade only made a difference to those respondents who have visited exhibitions about archaeology in museums or archives. Indeed, those in the ABC1 grade were more likely to have visited exhibitions about archaeology in museums or archives (81%) than those in the C2DE grade (74%).

While very few survey respondents have engaged with a local community archaeology project or dig, this does differ by area. Derived from postcode, survey respondents were split into three regions: North, including those in Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness, Perth, Orkney, Shetland and Hebrides postcodes; West central, including those in Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Dumfries & Galloway, Motherwell and Paisely postcodes; and East central, including those in Edinburgh & Borders, Falkirk and Kirkcaldy postcodes. Those in the North region are more likely than those in both West central and East central locations to have engaged with community archaeology projects or digs (17% North vs 10% west and 7% east).

Figure 6.3: Do any of the following apply to you?



Base: All (1,090)

The public survey asked a question to establish their connections with heritage groups and organisations (Figure 6.3), above.

The vast majority of respondents have never worked for a heritage group or organisation (96%) or volunteered for a heritage group or organisation (93%). Despite this, 14% of respondents were currently a member of a heritage group or organisation. A further 14% of respondents have done this in the past.

As with other results in the survey there are clear differences when looking at respondent age.

Indeed, older people (aged 65+) are more likely to have engaged with any aspect than younger people (aged 16-34). More than a third of older respondents have been a member of a heritage group or organisation (37% either currently or used to do this) while this was only true for a fifth (20%) of respondents aged 16-24 years old.

While numbers are much smaller, there was a clear age group difference within those who have volunteered for a heritage group or organisation (12% aged 65+ vs 5% aged 16-24 either currently or used to do this) or worked for a heritage group or organisation (8% aged 65+ vs 3% aged 16-24 either currently or used to do this).

6.7 SAS Aim 4 Summary

Table 6.1 includes a summary of Aim 4 Enhancing Understanding based upon secondary and primary sources for this review.

Table 6.1: Summary of Aim 4 Findings

Importance	Encouraging greater engagement was regarded as an important aim, needing continuous development. The sector recognised the importance of encouraging diversity in its workforce, and in the communities engaging with archaeology.
Performance	The sector performed highly, in regards to its planned actions: • 30 fully delivered • 3 partially delivered • 3 not delivered • 1 unknown
Enablers	During the 2015-2025 period key enablers were considered to be: • Funding opportunities, including HES, align well with projects to engage with various groups. • Organisations working at local levels to engage communities and school groups with their heritage. • Links to the curriculum • Public procurement is increasingly focussed on public benefits of construction and development projects.
Barriers	Barriers were perceived as restricted funding or short-term funding of engagement projects. Also an acknowledgement that partners experiencing pressures in the social and economic conditions e.g. schools and community groups
Relevant	Encouraging greater engagement regarded as highly relevant for beyond 2025,
Lessons for SAS	Reflections that 'collaboration' and 'co-creation' are more in-line with current thinking than 'engagement' with the general public. Desire to avoid engagement being top-down. Lack of data and insight to understand what the baseline is- who is engaged and how? Who is not engaged and why? Seen as important to focus efforts and gauge progress.

The public survey conducted as part of this review commission shows levels of engagement with archaeology by Scottish residents 16 years and older as follows:

- 79% Watch TV shows or movies about archaeology, 21% never do so.
- 78% Visit exhibitions about archaeology in museums or archives, 22% never do so.
- 58% Read or listen to newspapers, magazines, journals, books, or podcasts about archaeology, 42% never do so.
- 46% Engage with social media about archaeology, 54% never do so.
- 10% Take part in community archaeology projects or digs, 90% never do so.

The public are mainly in agreement with a series of statements relating to engagement and support for the wider historic environment sector:

- 93% agree with- Young people should learn about Scotland's history and heritage
- 87% agree with- I support efforts to care for places and objects from the past
- 77% agree with- I support efforts to discover more about the past
- 72% agree with- Information about Scotland's past is easily available to me

Although over half, 57% agree with- New discoveries about Scotland's past are being made all the time. This shows that there is more work to be done to communicate new discoveries, including those within archaeology, with the Scottish public.

7. Innovation and Skills– SAS Aim 5

7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Aim 5 of SAS, **Innovation and Skills.**

This chapter summarises:

- How has the sector performed with respect to this aim?
- Why was this aim important? and What enabled progress?
- What barriers to progress were experienced?
- How relevant is this aim in 2025 and beyond?

The findings are largely based upon discussion of this aim and a SWOT analysis, allowing review participants to critically evaluate the strategy's contributions and areas for improvement. In addition, the reviewers also drew on the latest Delivery plan tracker.

7.2 Performance

The SAS Delivery Plan[37] and the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC,[38] included vision statements for the strategy period for Aim 5:

- Assess the current skills, knowledge and capacity to develop and evidence base.
- Use the skills audit to define gaps in learning opportunities needed to supply suitably skilled archaeologists.
- Foster a demand for skills from archaeologists, employers and those who commission services to encourage provision of training and development opportunities.
- Develop and support a sustainable learning infrastructure to satisfy sector-wide needs, including the development of amateur archaeologists.
- Take strategic steps to mitigate current and future skills shortages.
- Support science development in Scottish archaeology.

Reviewers had access to Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC. This was last updated February 2025 so provides a good indication of performance. Appendix D, table D5 summarises content relating to Aim 5. In addition, primary research participants gave their views on performance of Aim 5.

[37] SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf
[38] Unpublished, Reviewers were provided with working document last updated February 2025.

7.2.1 Assess current skills, knowledge and capacity and fill gaps

The skills, knowledge and capacity to develop and evidence base within Scottish archaeology were assessed by CIfA as part of their report 'Re-imagining Scottish Archaeology: structure, funding and delivery' published in August 2020. This audit was subsequently used to define the gaps in learning opportunities needed to supply suitably skilled archaeologists. Firstly, the report findings were disseminated by various organisations. Secondly, findings informed wider initiatives, such as the Skills Investment Plan 2023/2024.

Regarding filling of skills gaps, a participant in the primary research for this review from the Republic of Ireland commented on the barriers presented by changing demographics and **apparent skills shortage** as fewer people are studying or becoming involved in archaeology, and commented on the role of academia in addressing this:

> "Part of it is maybe also to do with society here, you know, Ireland's population is nearly twice what it was 30 years ago. It's a really big change in demographic and a lot of people who weren't born here or maybe first or second generation living here, which is something that Scotland has encountered for a lot longer than we have here. There's a couple of big skills shortages really starting to develop out here and part of those to do with academic opportunity to engage. Part of it is about actually knowing it's a thing you can do" (Stakeholder).

7.2.2 Foster demand for skills and training and development

Progress was made towards defining a career structure for Apprenticeship pathways. Regarding fostering a demand for skills from archaeologists, employers and those who commission services to encourage provision of training development and opportunities, important steps have been made during the SAS period by CIfA, working at a UK-level.

One participant (Former SSAC) raised that, while "**good work has been done on providing new routes for the acquisition of skills**, […] we are **still putting nearly all of our effort into supplying skills and not into creating demand for skills**". They therefore saw need to further highlight the value of archaeological skills to those who could benefit from them:

> "And I'm sure that our money would go further if we increased customer demand for skilled archaeologists and particular skills in archaeology rather than just kept pushing on string, which is bad economic theory. So I think it's an opportunity. So, strength on delivery skills, delivery opportunities, skills demand".

Indeed, a few participants emphasised how the **skills of those working in archaeology can be applied to other disciplines** such as medicine and the environment; avenues which should continue to be pursued.

Some participants observed how some efforts to encourage a more diverse group of people to get involved in archaeology had "fallen by the wayside". This was sometime due to shifting priorities or demands, including a **lack of employer demand for apprentices** and a preference to 'choose' from cohorts of graduates:

> "Trying to create college courses just seems to have fallen by the wayside and been replaced by apprenticeships because that's where the money was. Government was offering money for apprenticeships. Nobody wanted apprenticeships because they just saw them as expensive for one or two people. What they wanted were cohorts of people coming out with the skills that were required that they could then pick and choose from. They didn't want to have to train them all themselves, really. But they're being forced into it at the moment. So, yeah, I think we've been hindered by a certain lack of activity in some areas just because we're following the money rather than the ambition" (Former SSAC).

7.2.3 Sustainable learning infrastructure

The SSAC operational plan explains that work on career structures and models is ongoing in 2025. To 'develop and support sustainable learning infrastructure to satisfy sector-wide needs', continuing professional development workshops have been designed and delivered. These appear to be dependent upon joint working and securing funding.

During the SAS period, organisations have continued to support existing qualifications, and work with Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) towards a Professional Development Award. Encouragingly, the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board formally approved the CIfA Scotland Apprenticeship Scheme, and this should be rolled out by 2027. In the meantime, AOC will host two apprenticeships in 2025, setting an example in developing a non-graduate career entry training programme.

It is clear from this review that collaboration between universities and employers continues for courses and field schools, much of this is likely between universities and their partners. However, CIfA has provided advice and insights which could be an additional outcome resulting from joint working under SAS.

A central online portal for all archaeology skills and training resources has not been created, but this is being considered at UK-wide levels. From the SSAC Operational Plan, it appears that CIfA has continued to produce and update materials to promote archaeology as a career, although it is not clear what other efforts have been made by other organisations, and how these have been received by target audiences.

7.2.4 Take strategic steps to mitigate current and future skills shortages

Many of the participants in roundtable and focus groups acknowledged that **improvements in innovation in skills are not instantaneous** and take time to share with and work through the sector:

> "I think there have been significant achievements, but then they haven't quite come to fruition yet. Because these things take - at the beginning of a ten-year strategy, ten years seems a long time away, doesn't it? But when you're sort of whatever it is now nine years in it seems like no time at all to deliver sometimes quite fundamental changes in in the way that we think about skills development. Yeah, it's a challenge" (Former SSAC).

In primary research towards this review, the Skills Investment Plan (SIP) was highlighted. The first Skills Investment Plan for the Historic Environment was published in 2019 to support Our Place in Time (OPiT), Scotland's first historic environment strategy. In recognition of the changes in sector skills needs and to organisations' ability to access skills, the Skills Investment Plan is reviewed and refreshed through an independent review process and extensive consultation. The current Skills Investment Plan has ten work areas; archaeology is one of these.[39]

7.2.5 Support science development in Scottish archaeology

Specialist networks were cited by review participants for a**rchaeology and science innovations**:

> "In the area of science, it's the same again, it brought us together. It made sure that we were able to bring all the right people to the table. As I said, National Heritage Science Forum and others are very keen on the way that we approach the science, not just skills but in other areas of innovation" (Stakeholder).

Primary research participants in this review underscored the **importance of developing and maintaining expertise** across the different areas of archaeology, and saw this as just as importance as the "technological innovations that might bring us forward to being more efficient":

[39] Skills Investment Plan for the Historic Environment | Historic Environment Scotland

> "There's the acknowledgement that actually that expert skills level, as I was saying earlier as well, there's not so much of it. So, building the confidence of those people whose job it is, to know where to go or who to contact. So, I don't know if that exists already. But through discussions with colleagues across the sector, there's obviously understanding of the organisations and institutions and frameworks that are in place. But just thinking about those much smaller museums who maybe don't have access to either the physical or digital forum of those discussions as well. It's how do we support the skills-building of those individuals but also confidence around it" (Stakeholder).

7.3 Importance and Enablers

Participants believed that innovation and skill building are essential to the development of the sector and frequently mentioned this when reflecting on what has enabled this aim to be met over the strategy period. For this reason, discussions on the importance and enablers of the 'Innovation and Skills' aim are combined under one subheading.

Several participants saw the development of **national Skills Investment Plans (SIPs)** as important in bringing skills demand and supply – including those needed by the archaeology sector – closer together. One participant (Stakeholder) observed how "the committee have really pushed on this one" and "been a very effective partner in the development of the new national Skills Investment Plan for historic environment skills". The same participant expanded on how the plan links to archaeology and align with OPOF [Our Past, Our Future], noting:

> "And that (the Skills Investment Plan) has a pillar dedicated to archaeology to try and tap into what the skills at risk are in terms of archaeology. But that's also a skills investment plan that looks across the piece at all the things the historic environment, environment sector needs, which includes things like co-production, participatory practise, but also fundamental things like marketing and digital skills, fundraising. So again, I would emphasise the alignment with the national skills investment plan here and the pillars and plans that are put in place for archaeology rather than reinventing the wheel, because I think there's a successful model there. Also, the skills investment plan aligns with OPOF - that's another thing to say".

Similarly, others commented on how the Skills Investment Plan for the historic environment in Scotland raises the profile of the sector for both government and the public, helps to channel interest in it and highlights its career opportunities. One (Stakeholder) described how it guided focus and brought those involved in the strategy together:

> "The strengths are that we are infinitely further ahead in this because the strategy has brought us together, especially in the skills area of the sector, so that we were able to feed into the skills investment plan for the historic environment in Scotland. So it's a government strategy. As part, because archaeology was seen as a together sector, we're actually seen as the leaders in the SIP. And the only reason that we were so together is because of the archaeology strategy, bringing together all of the relevant people and ensuring that that we're we were looking at what was needed within the sector".

One participant (Former SSAC) described how the 'Innovation and Skills' aim is "very much focused on achieving elements in the delivery plan and that's sort of driven by funding". They saw "**being able to access the thoughts and input from the rest of the committee**" and saw the "the avenues that that opens up in developing and prioritising work and the understanding of the sector that that enables" as a key strength.

Advancements in the archaeology-related technology were considered a key enabler in innovation and skill-building. Participants referred to many of the programmes and approaches mentioned in the 'Technology' part of the PESTLE exercise, including the importance of LiDAR as a 'gamechanger' in carrying out surveys in the commercial archaeology sector:

> "In commercial, the use of LiDAR has completely changed how we do surveys. We now do a very targeted survey because we can see if the ground is blank, then we're not going to particularly make an effort to go walk it anyway. So, it's completely changed practice and just that introduction has innovated how we do stuff in the commercial world as well. But the future is quite interesting to see how far that'll go as well" (Current SSAC).

One participant (Current SSAC) pointed to how the **work of the Heritage Research Service (Archaeological Survey) team at HES** has moved towards a **focus on "remote sensing, laser scanning, geophysics, drone photography"** and "all of these sorts of things which have become absolutely central to the point where we could not really do the job without them". They also acknowledged the importance of such technology for the future of archaeology:

> "That's all science and it's innovation and it's finding the best ways of doing it. You know, what kind of geophysics will get you the right results in this area – that's experimentation – and then creating information that can be used by other people. So, I think for the future of archaeology, this is very significant stuff".

Some participants commented on the **influence of the SAS in encouraging skills building at university level**. This includes a move back to running archaeological field schools, with a sense that Scottish archaeology-based courses "had wandered into irrelevancy by being very much not Scottish archaeology focused at all and really having quite limited opportunities for training and field training, particularly for their students that weren't prohibitively expensive" (Former SSAC). They felt that the decision towards the field schools could be ground "at least in part in the pressures from the strategy and some of the kind of spaces it created for these discussions", therefore helping to mitigate skills gaps:

> "On the innovation and skills front, the strategy probably quite explicitly has a hand to play in a lot that's kind of going on. Particularly thinking from the university perspective and obviously I used to be involved with the student archaeology conferences and such. And then and then I ran aspects of Glasgow University field school for four seasons. But I think both from our perspective, some of the reporting from the strategy and such provides a nice place to see where there's room for work to be done in that realm of innovation and skills. I would credit it slightly with moves like Edinburgh Uni coming back to having a Scottish archaeology field school again, although being kind of delivered in commercial partnership" (Former SSAC).

7.4 Barriers

As mentioned above, many participants underlined the **existence of skills gaps and shortages** across the archaeological sector. Such gaps were seen to occur where, on one hand, long-serving archaeological specialists are retiring, while on the other, **those entering the sector are lacking some of the core skills and training needed for the role**. One participant (Stakeholder) expanded on the latter, drawing on their experience of hiring early career archaeologists in the commercial sector, the impact these gaps have on employers and the crucialness of "embedding core research skills earlier on in archaeologist training":

> "As someone who tries to hire new archaeologists, there is a problem at the moment with people entering the sector without some of the core skills required. My view has always been that if we can make the discipline something that people want to do and are engaged with an interesting interested in, then good archaeologists will come out of that. I think part of the problem is that there's been this sort of loss of direction in the route from going into train as an archaeologist and coming out of your training qualified to actually do it. And that means that people entering the sector are quite often not familiar with a lot of what actually is required to do the job and that then needs to be dealt with at a later stage in that process. I think

> embedding core research skills earlier on in archaeologist training could really benefit the sector as a whole".

Picking up on this, another participant (Stakeholder) – who is employed in the university sector – acknowledged this as "a real issue" and mentioned the influence of other challenges facing universities on their ability to provide fieldwork training, for instance:

> "That's obviously not the only route to come through to do archaeology professionally, but from the point of view of the training you provide within a university, a huge amount of that interfaces with all sorts of other challenges within the university sector that I think undoubtedly has damaged the level of field work training that students get within degrees".

The same participant suggested this barrier could be overcome by looking to "creative solutions" and "placements and things like that", which could be strengthened by stronger links between the university sector and commercial archaeology sector:

> "And it's maybe down on how this sort of aspiration gets delivered where it would be interesting to get better interaction between the university sector and the commercial sector, and I know that's not just limited to Scotland".

Another participant (Stakeholder) mentioned the barriers that colleagues in the sector have faced "in terms of **higher education institutions, colleges wanting to take on [facilitate] apprenticeships in archaeology" but struggling**:

> "It's incredibly challenging. So, the desire's there, the will's there, but at the moment the funding to kind of make it viable for those early career archaeologists to go and actually do an apprenticeship - whether it's an apprenticeship instead of university a graduate apprenticeship - it's incredibly challenging".

Participants then discussed the **impact of these skills gaps not being filled** and were concerned about some archaeological specialisms – such as pottery or glass – evaporating where there are only a few subject experts and "no one coming is to take their place":

> "One of the strings to my bow is that I've been a pottery specialist since 1979. I'm just very conscious that there is nobody coming along behind me. Currently there's probably about three pottery plus specialists in the whole of Scotland, and when CIfA was promoting its apprenticeship schemes I was hoping that they might think of doing one on ceramics. I think

> funding apprenticeships in different specialist areas is very important because otherwise there will come a point when specific specialists have gone and there's no replacement. It happened recently with a glass specialist, Robin Murdoch, who passed away, and there's nobody to replace him" (Stakeholder).

Thinking of potential mitigations, participants saw the funding of "apprenticeships in different specialist areas is very important because otherwise there will come a point when specific specialists have gone and there's no replacement" (Stakeholder).

Regardless, there was a sense that **the barriers posed by these skills issues must first be dismantled to enable innovation and other developments**:

> "What really struck me was that we're not talking about innovation here at all. We're talking about a basic lack of skills that we can't even maintain, let alone try and develop with them and do anything new and exciting and fun with them. […] But yeah, it was really striking that it's not innovation and skills at the moment, we're hearing that we desperately, desperately need to at least maintain the skills that are out there at the moment" (Stakeholder).

There were some conversations around the industry's attempts to improve the supply and flow of early career archaeologists and promote a variety of specialisms, including underserved ones. Participants also mentioned some of these attempts have been more successful than others:

> "I know BAJR (British Archaeology Jobs and Resources) has had a go, ScARF has had a go, CIfA's had a go. We're trying to create a geographical database of specialists across Scotland and beyond, which doesn't work. One because it's not updated, it's not dynamic enough. Things change, people move, people go to different institutions, go freelance, join a company so it's never updated. And so you're at a loss if you don't good network of people you can contact to find out who's in the know, then you're looking further afield for a specialist for various techniques" (Stakeholder).

Participants also highlighted the role of universities, other qualification providers and Scottish Government in bridging these gaps – and saw this as needing to be strengthened:

> "Also, universities and particularly those that offer external commercial work, so Stirling University for soil science, etcetera. Glasgow's making inroads into doing a lot more on that at the moment and but also building on that into the future, more lab work. But it'd be good if institutions like the universities were more forthcoming about 'Here's what we do, here's a

shopping list. We can do this for you. This is how you need to sample it. This is what you can get out of it. And you know what, we can offer some training for your staff as well. And we'll come along and visit your unit'. So there needs to be a lot more linking and collaboration and improving innovation and encouraging early career archaeologists to take the mantle and learn more about pottery, glass, clay pipes and all the rest of the things, and the new techniques that are coming along that it's difficult to get someone who can do it for you in a commercial sense" (Stakeholder).

"But yeah, how do we get people up? You know, CIfA have got a big part to play in it as well as Scottish Government and some of the stuff about NVQs, different ways of working, getting people into the organisation" (Stakeholder).

Relatedly, a few participants flagged how **much of the delivery of this aim** – including thar relating to qualifications and apprenticeships – is **dependent on the work and direction of other government agencies**:

"In terms of weaknesses, so much of what Aim 5 was delivering relies on interaction with other government agencies. So, things like development of qualifications and modern apprenticeships, it's not within the gift of the strategy to achieve those things. There are so many other agencies, Skills Development Scotland being one of them, and you are subject to their priorities and their changes of direction, changes of emphasis. So again, that as an aim feels very much like a work in progress" (Former SSAC).

7.5 Relevance

Many participants described the 'Innovation and Skills' aim as **extremely relevant** to archaeology going forward, **in keeping with a predicted a rise in innovations and advancements in the future**:

"The skills stuff is only just getting started. It took us a long time to get through the gatekeepers that are skills development Scotland with lots of things we want to do. There's lots of other things we want to do. We want to look at virtual learning environments, other types of degrees, specialist skills development. There's a huge amount going on in there too" (Stakeholder).

Another commended the strategy for its interpretation of innovation as linked to transforming processes and approaches, as opposed to purely technical innovations:

> "The way the strategy talks about innovation – it's quite an inclusive definition. It's not just technical digital stuff, its process, etcetera. And I think that's really good and it would be a shame to lose that because I think everybody on the call is for – not just here, but across what they've said previously – innovation in terms of doing things differently has been fundamental to what they've said. So, something that is good currently should be kept" (Stakeholder).

However, one participant (Former SSAC) raised that **"rethinking" this aim and "making it more explicit about science would be worth doing"**, with another (Stakeholder) observing:

> "Innovation, yes, but throughout all of it, skills incredibly important and still very relevant, but so is science. Science really needs its own area."

Some saw the term **'archaeological skill building' as being too restrictive** and ignoring the wider, soft skills needed to work on archaeology projects and within the sector as a whole:

> "We need to be broader in terms of skills to undertake archaeological work, for example, because that isn't just the archaeology, how to plan something, how to dig a nice section – it's about how to run projects, manage people, build sustainability, reduce your carbon emissions. How do you, you know, plan and design work to reduce your emissions, etcetera, etcetera. That's all going to be coming in" (Stakeholder).

> "It's fine, except it's not covering a lot of the skills that we've just identified that our field have, for example, around building impact and being able to evaluate and articulate that impact, or maybe they need more continuing professional development in relation to co-creation and participatory ways of working or something. So this is very much predicated on it's about understanding the stuff and that if we understand the stuff better, we can then do some wonderful things with it, which of course is a critical thing to do, but it's only part of the mix" (Stakeholder).

Relatedly, one participant (Stakeholder) suggested a **need for more context on "the understanding that is being sought"** in relation to 'innovation in the understanding analysis and interpretation of archaeology'. They also mentioned how some of the current avenues of exchanging knowledge or skills do not guarantee that the intended impacts will be felt:

> "Because a lot of knowledge exchange we've seen happening is teaching people how to use a piece of kit that goes 'beep' and they never use it again. And you think 'well, what's the point of

that'. It might be that it promotes well-being and does all sorts of other things, but actually it doesn't necessarily help people think about the past or how or why they value their past".

Looking to the future, participants saw **scope to grow the innovation and skills aspects**, using the strategy to help shape the uptake of developments to better understand analysis and interpretation of archaeology:

"So I think they need to do a bit of future thinking, and it probably taps into some of those conversations we had about what is significant, how this plays out over the next two to three years. They could be quite radical in this. But if you think about it in terms of the innovation, not just with skills, which do they want to bring that out in its own right? I don't know. That's a question" (Stakeholder).

7.6 SAS Aim 5 Summary

Table 7.1 includes a summary of Aim 5 Innovation and Skills based upon secondary and primary sources for this review.

Table 7.1: Summary of Aim 5 Findings

Importance	Skills was regarded as an important underpinning for all the work of the archaeology sector. Technical skills in excavation, heritage science, conservation were valued.
Performance	The sector performed highly, in regards to its planned actions: • 13 fully delivered • 7 partially delivered • 1 not delivered • 2 unknown
Enablers	During the 2015-2025 period key enablers were considered to be: • Skills Investment Plan (SIP) • Advances in archaeology technology mean the sector benefits from innovations.
Barriers	Barriers to achieving skills and innovation were identified as: • Loss of skills from those retiring, where specialists where legacy planning has not taken place. • Challenges with university provision, including running filed schools • Appetite for apprenticeships, but difficulties getting these in place

Relevant	Skills development regarded as highly relevant for beyond 2025.
Lessons for SAS	Skills has been more of a focus for discussion and collective work than innovation. Recognition that important to support broad skills sets, including communications skills, as essential for public engagement with archaeology to be possible.

8. Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This chapter includes key findings of the review of SAS 2015-2025. It commences by covering the objectives of this review of SAS for 2015-2025:

- How far Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has been adopted?
- To what extent has Scotland's Archaeology Strategy been successful in achieving its objectives?
- What impacts has Scotland's Archaeology Strategy had?

Recommendations for the consideration of SSACC in its development of strategic aims and collaborative actions for Scottish archaeology are made. These recommendations are solely based upon this review of SAS 2015-2025. These recommendations focus on the approach to setting strategy beyond 2025, rather than the content of any future strategic aims or objectives.

Reviewers recommend insights from the 2015-2025 period inform consultation on aims, objectives and actions for any subsequent archaeology strategy period.

8.2 Adoption of SAS

This review considered what progress is attributable to SAS being in place, or what would have happened anyway within the archaeology sector regardless of SAS. Based on the evidence received in desk materials and gathered through primary research it is clear that SAS provided a platform for discussion of priorities for the sector, collaborative initiatives and propagated consideration of long-term ambitions. Importantly, SAS focussed on the strategic ambitions of the sector and the first Delivery plan on visions for what success would look like in 2025.

A crucial development for the strategy to be adopted was the role of SSAC initially in setting the strategic tone for the SAS ten-year period, then working together to coordinate delivery of SAS. Later in the SAS period, SSAC created and employed an Operational Tracker spreadsheet as a working document for activity in connection to each SAS aim and all related vision statements. Reviewers note that the Operational Tracker has been effective overall, and there are some areas for improvement which will optimise this approach even further (see Appendix D for extracts).

Planning, discussing and monitoring activity relating to strategic aims on a regular basis, for example through SSAC committee meetings, is good practice - most importantly to avoid

duplication of effort in what can be a challenging economic and social context. SSAC has also made efforts to be transparent, for example publishing minutes of SSAC meetings.

It is not possible for the review to understand the full extent of adoption of the archaeology strategy by organisations not directly involved in SSAC.[40] Indeed on last estimate there were 6,300 FTE Archaeologists working in the UK, the number in Scotland undetermined.[41]

However, there are a few indicators which point to awareness and interest in SAS from across the archaeology sector and from the wider historic environment sector. Firstly, 64 individuals took part in this review consultation - including 13 current committee members, 19 past committee members and 32 wider stakeholders. Even more were interested in taking part in any future consultation on Scottish archaeology's strategic objectives outwith this SAS review commission.

Secondly, SAS was incorporated into HES grants guidance and assessment, therefore encouraging consideration and adoption of SAS for archaeology projects (see Appendix C for HES grants data). The top-funded organisations for the period 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2023 would certainly have referenced and utilised SAS in devising their successfully funded projects:

- Archaeology Scotland
- Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (SoAS)
- CAPE Trust
- Glasgow University
- AOC Archaeology Group
- Aberdeen University
- Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre, University of Glasgow and University of Edinburgh
- Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology- part of the University of Highlands and Islands Archaeology Institute.
- Bradford University
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)

Looking to the connection between SAS and the sub-sectors of archaeology identified by SSAC, the review has some key observations:

[40] For current members see- Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee – Archaeology Strategy Scotland
[41] 2020 Profiling the Profession Methodology – Profiling the Profession

- Archaeological Science- there is currently no representative for this sub-sector on SSAC. However, there are innovative developments at Scottish, UK and international levels.
- Commercial Archaeology- the most high-profile commercial organisation is AOC archaeology. Undoubtedly other commercial firms are delivering archaeology day to day. It is important to acknowledge the commercial sub-sector's role in areas such as continuous professional development and best practice, indeed adhering to professional standards (e.g. by CIfA). As the trade body for development-led archaeology in the UK and Ireland, FAME is the natural conduit to archaeological businesses.
- Community / Voluntary Archaeology and Education and Archaeology- various projects and programmes are delivered by SoAS and Archaeology Scotland and Association of Certified Field Archaeologists and others. Most of these initiatives are subject to funding, and these can be short-term funding awards.
- Museums- Key collection are held by National Museums Scotland (who are an Independent Research Organisation)[42], but also by museums run directly, or on behalf of Local Authorities, and independent museums such as Kilmartin Museum (Recognised as a Nationally Significant Collection).[43] As well as funding archaeology organisations, HES are responsible for management, care and access for archaeological sites across Scotland. The Scottish Archaeology Museums Working Group (SAMWG) has a key role in encouraging joint efforts.
- University Archaeology- Scottish-based universities are delivering archaeology courses and archaeology research. Any strategy for archaeology should provide a conduit for knowledge exchange between university researchers. Concerning learning and teaching, realistically only pre-competitive activity, or joint promotional activity would be in the interest of individual universities.
- Land Management- this branches out beyond the archaeology sector and is subject to much policy and practice. Archaeology organisations who can consult the broader sector, advocate and lobby are best placed to drive strategic goals concerning land management.
- Local Authority Archaeology- concerns about expertise loss within local authorities and through commissioned work have attracted press attention.[44]

It is clear from this review that there is an interdependency between achieving the aims of SAS and securing existing or additional resources for the archaeology organisations leading or

[42] UKRI list of approved research organisations - GOV.UK
[43] Kilmartin Museum, Recognised Collections - Museums Galleries Scotland
[44] See Scotland risks 'wholesale loss' of heritage as archaeology cuts leave numbers at 'bare minimum'; New Article: Scotland risks wholesale loss of heritage as cuts leave numbers at bare minimum | ALGAO

contributing. On organisational websites HES is acknowledged as a funder for specific projects which then align to SAS.[45] In the Operational Tracker used by SSAC, reference is made to providing HES with monitoring data for funded programmes to report annually and evaluation reports due to HES towards the end of funded programmes.

From reading the SSAC minutes, and conducting primary research on SAS, it appears that funding decisions are a key issue of interest for member organisations. Even when an initiative is aligned to the SAS and deemed important by a collective of organisations within SSAC, funding is not guaranteed. This important dependency is acknowledged by this review.

Throughout the review there were many references to HES, mostly to funding decisions. This review acknowledges that:

- HES grants funds organisations which SSAC committee members work for.
- HES grant funds organisations who lead on the current SAS aims.
- Archaeology organisations can be competing between each other, or with the wider historic environment sector for over-subscribed HES grant funds.
- Beyond funding, HES has statutory functions in relation to the management of archaeological heritage. HES has a heritage management function including in relation to planning and development support and World Heritage Sites.[46] HES manages an estate of properties in care on behalf of Scottish ministers, and looks after collections, including archaeology assemblages. HES conducts aerial, maritime and archaeology field surveys.[47]
- HES hosts a national strategy team, working to support the Our Past Our Future implementation, delivery and reporting. [48]

8.3 Success of SAS

The SAS is structured around five key aims. This report includes detailed findings relating to each aim. In summary, SAS has made important strides towards all five aims (see Table 8.1). A majority of actions in the Operational Tracker (see Appendix D) were fully achieved. Caring and Protecting was the only aim where a majority of aim actions were not fully achieved.

[45] For example, HES funding acknowledgement- What - Dig It!
[46] Advise and Regulate | Historic Environment Scotland | History
[47] Survey and Recording | Historic Environment Scotland | History
[48] New reports highlight the strength and contribution of Scotland's historic environment

Table 8.1: Summary of Aim Action Delivery

SAS Aim	Delivering Archaeology	Enhancing Understanding	Caring and Protecting	Encouraging Greater Engagement	Innovation and Skills
Actions Delivered					
Fully	10	16	6	30	13
Partially	5	8	9	3	7
Not	0	1	2	3	1
Unknown	2	2	0	1	2
Total	17	27	17	37	23

8.3.1 Aim 1- Delivering Archaeology

Aim 1 of SAS focuses on Delivering Archaeology. This involves increasing "the public benefit of Scottish archaeology", whilst amplifying its visibility nationally and abroad.

In the opinion of this review, Delivering Archaeology is what the sector does regardless of any strategy. However, the SAS has explicitly brought attention towards why archaeology should be delivered, and implicitly why archaeology should be supported through collaboration and funding.

The reviewers observe that the archaeology community in Scotland has made significant efforts to assess existing standards, guidance and promotion and then refresh and update these, to promote best practice in the management of archaeological projects. In some cases, new Scottish-specific guidance has been created. Encourage, incentivise or require compliance with existing codes, standards and guidance is now supported through the HES production of HEPS – the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland. Another important development is that HES's Grant programmes now mandates CIfA accreditation for archaeological project leads.

The SAS vision to make information from incomplete projects publicly available may have been complicated by the Covid-19 pandemic; however, Trove portal offers an opportunity to share information publicly.

There are two areas under this aim where it is harder to establish progress:

- SAS envisaged to increase the number of projects that encourage collaboration with international partners. For reasons explained more fully in this report, these were not monitored across the strategy period.
- In terms of improving archaeological commissioning and procurement, CIfA led workshops and resulting outputs were praised by review participants. However, it is not possible for

reviewers to establish how far the recommendations relating to procurement have been adopted by those commissioning or procuring archaeology in Scotland.

Both these areas are not only subject to coordination within the archaeology sector in Scotland, but joint working with stakeholders in broader historic environment sectors and public bodies.

8.3.2 Aim 2- Enhancing Understanding

Aim 2 of SAS is on Enhancing Understanding, ensuring knowledge is "deliverable, accessible and reusable" to "increase knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past". This entails supporting and implementing research with transparent and suitable objectives.

ScARF is central to creating a stronger research ethos in all interested in Scotland's past, and from this Review it is apparent that ScARF has evolved throughout the strategy period. The ScARF website includes the Regional Research Frameworks for different parts of Scotland and thematic research resources as these are developed. Although challenging to ascertain how far these have been adopted, case studies are provided on the website.

For the related vision, 'to ensure research frameworks encompass all aspects of archaeology (including collections, thematic and theoretical research for example) and use them to explain and promote the multiple stories the evidence can be used to tell,' the Operational Plan Tracker gives examples of discussions at Scottish, UK and international levels to try and join up efforts.

- Actions to encourage the creation of 'big picture' stories based on bringing together research results in the Operational Plan Tracker concern joining up research findings and sharing findings with different audiences. Media metrics were seen as a way of monitoring the latter, however these do not appear to have been collected.
- Progress has been made in understanding Open Access, organisations encouraging Open Access, supporting effective methods of sharing research results, through collaboration with a range of partners, including museums, archives and the education sector. Albeit there is no way to establish which organisations are, or are not adopting these approaches.
- From the Operational Plan Tracker it is not possible to establish what progress has been made to ensure knowledge is increasingly discoverable, accessible, referable and reusable now and for future generations by 2025. However, the Reviewers are conscious that this is a wider endeavour supported by projects such as Towards a National Collection (UKRI funded) and there are many challenges towards both data linkage from a technical and from a legal perspective.

8.3.3 Aim 3- Caring and Protecting

Aim 3 of SAS is Caring and Protecting, with a focus on caring for physical evidence with sustainability in mind to ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations. This relates to setting standards for the transfer of archaeological artefacts as well as guidance related to cataloguing.

For some statements, there is immediately discernible progress to reach this vision in the review period:

- The vision to 'review the current provision for national and local archaeological collections in museums and archives (in line with reports undertaken in England and Wales)' resulted in plans to devise a number of working groups. Some of these working groups were partially achieved through Before the Museum and At the Museum projects, both of which are ongoing at start of 2025. Some potential working groups were superseded by a published review of Treasure Trove for King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (KLTR). Published in August 2024, KLTR are considering next steps based upon the review.
- The Scottish Archaeology Museums Working Group, has been important in bringing together museum archaeologists to address the question of national standards. Reviewers understand this is cohesive entity which has brought people together to discuss big challenges and how to address these.
- Within the SAS period, there have been many initiatives to help those providing expert advice and managing change keep abreast of new knowledge and innovations. These are listed in the Operational Plan Tracker and include efforts by ALGAO and others.

However, for other statements, progress is inconclusive:

- In regard to 'improving how we manage change in the historic environment, including assessing where change is not being actively managed (with an emphasis on new and creative ways of providing incentives including policy drivers),' the Operational Plan Tracker states that reviews are continually undertaken when there are changes to national policy or guidance, such as NPF4. Also, there are examples provided of wider policy and guidance which has been updated. However, it is not possible to establish how much progress has been made.
- There are examples of outputs and collective groups, including national and local governments, that increase awareness of public bodies of the importance and access to expert advice. As this would be indirect impact, it is unclear whether the efforts of SSAC and partners has resulted in an increased awareness, or more importantly increased appreciation and the value of expert advice.

- The vision to improve collection and archiving practices is very broad and it is not possible from the actions detailed, measurements or updates by SSAC to establish its progress within the SAS period. Indeed, the main action in the Operational Plan Tracker was a working group to consider the Treasure Trove process, which was then superseded by the Treasure Trove review.

SSAC highlight further work to achieve the vision of 'a properly resourced, co-ordinated approach to chance discoveries and archaeological emergencies.' This can build upon the important improvements made to HES call-off contracts, and the joint work of the sector with Police Scotland regarding discovery of human remains.

8.3.4 Aim 4- Encouraging Greater Engagement

Aim 4 of SAS focuses on Encouraging Greater Engagement. This includes inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, championing "the role archaeology can play in learning" and exploring "new ways of presenting and interpreting information."

Considering the vision 'to support collaborative partnerships within and beyond the archaeological community to enable wider public engagement, reach broad and diverse audiences, maximise resources and promote information exchange,' many of the actions devised related to working in collaborative partnership to hold productive discussions, hold workshops, and produce useful resources. At the time of this review the intention is still to produce 'Measuring Participatory Success in Archaeology' framework and guidance, although it appears that plans to successfully secure funding towards this are still progressing.

For 'encouraging the use of archaeological results to predict impacts of climate change', multiple partners are cited but not much detail is given in the Operational Plan Tracker. From a quick search of organisational websites by the reviewers, there are certainly collaborative activities taking place which will be relevant beyond 2025.

The Archaeology and Learning Working Group has been meeting regularly to develop and promote best practice around integrating archaeology within the wider learning framework. The Operational Plan Tracker shows that SSAC have made attempts to monitor indicators of success such as the number of metrics. In addition, an Archaeological Ambassadors Scheme is being piloted.

For the vision statement 'enable and promote opportunities for wider public engagement through interpretation and presentation of archaeological projects (such as museum displays, travelling displays and onsite interpretation)', the Operational Delivery Tracker provides limited evidential or contextualised information. However, there are no doubt relevant activities being undertaken by the museums sector and case studies already produced which could be harnessed. The development body for Scottish museums and galleries, Museums Galleries Scotland are part of SSAC, presenting opportunities to further build connections between any archaeology strategy and the Scottish museums and galleries strategy.[49]

8.3.5 Aim 5- Innovation and Skills

The fifth aim of SAS, Aim 5, pertains to innovation and skills, with a focus on skill building to improve innovation in the understanding analysis and interpretation of archaeology.

Vision statements for this aim are included in the SAS Delivery Plan[50] and the Operational Plan Tracker used by SSAC[51] and show substantial progress, regarding skills albeit with some remaining actions.

The skills, knowledge and capacity to develop an evidence base within Scottish archaeology were assessed by CIfA as part of their report 'Re-imagining Scottish Archaeology: structure, funding and delivery' published in August 2020. This audit was subsequently used to define the gaps in learning opportunities needed to supply suitably skilled archaeologists, disseminated to various organisations, and informed wider initiatives.

Progress was made towards defining a career structure for Apprenticeship pathways. Regarding 'fostering a demand for skills from archaeologists, employers and those who commission services to encourage provision of training development and opportunities', important steps have been made during the SAS period by CIfA, working at a UK-level. Work on career structures and models is ongoing in 2025. To 'develop and support sustainable learning infrastructure to satisfy sector-wide needs', continuing professional development workshops have been designed and delivered. These appear to be dependent upon joint working and securing funding.

During the SAS period, organisations have continued to support existing qualifications, and work with Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) towards a Professional Development Award.

[49] Strategy Hub - Museums Galleries Scotland
[50] SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf
[51] Unpublished, Reviewers were provided with working document last updated February 2025.

Encouragingly, the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board formally approved the CIfA Scotland Apprenticeship Scheme, which should be rolled out by 2027. In the meantime, AOC Archaeology Group will host two apprenticeships in 2025, setting an example in developing a non-graduate career entry training programme.

While progress has been made to achieve other vision statements, other actions are still ongoing:

- Collaboration between universities and employers continues for courses and field schools, much of which is likely between universities and their partners. However, CIfA has provided advice and insights which could be an additional outcome resulting from joint working under SAS.
- Lastly, a central online portal for all archaeology skills and training resources has not been created, but this is being considered at UK-wide levels. From the SSAC Operational Plan, it appears that CIfA has continued to produce and update materials to promote archaeology as a career, although it is not clear what other efforts have been made by other organisations, and how these have been received by target audiences.

8.4 Impact of SAS

Public data from early 2025 shows interest levels, types of archaeology engagement and awareness at the end of the strategy period. As baseline data was not collected in 2015, these findings cannot speak directly to the impact of SAS on public interest, engagement and awareness of archaeology. However, such findings create a helpful baseline of public attitudes that can provide evidence on the impact of future strategy.

Subsequently, the review contains views on impact of SAS from archaeology stakeholders.

8.4.1 Public data

From the public survey conducted January 2025 as part of the review, this shows levels of public interest are high for:

- How people lived in the past (88%)
- Learning from the past to help inform the future (88%)
- History (88%)
- Our environment and landscape (86%)
- Science and technology (80%)

Although a lower proportion are interested in archaeology (67%) this is over two-thirds of the population. The sector has further opportunity to explain and showcase the part archaeology plays within these areas of interest above.

The public survey shows levels of engagement with archaeology by Scottish residents aged 16 years and older as follows:

- 79% Watch TV shows or movies about archaeology, 21% never do so.
- 78% Visit exhibitions about archaeology in museums or archives, 22% never do so.
- 58% Read or listen to newspapers, magazines, journals, books, or podcasts about archaeology, 42% never do so.
- 46% Engage with social media about archaeology, 54% never do so.
- 10% Take part in community archaeology projects or digs, 90% never do so.

The public are mainly in agreement with a series of statements relating to engagement and support for the wider historic environment sector:

- 93% agree with- Young people should learn about Scotland's history and heritage
- 87% agree with- I support efforts to care for places and objects from the past
- 77% agree with- I support efforts to discover more about the past
- 72% agree with- Information about Scotland's past is easily available to me

Although over half, 57% agree with 'New discoveries about Scotland's past are being made all the time'. This shows that there is more work to be done to communicate new discoveries, including those within archaeology, with the Scottish public.

Only 39% agree with 'I would encourage friends or family members to pursue a career in studying the past'. Further research would be needed to establish the reasons for this relatively low agreement level and whether this differs for different historic environment sectors, or professions.

8.4.2 Sector viewpoint

Overall, SAS has helped the archaeology sector in Scotland collaborate on establishing what its joint priorities were and how it could deliver these. Through SAS, the sector has made efforts to communicate what archaeology is and what difference it makes. As a result of SAS, the sector has collated its activities under the overarching aims of SAS. All of these are positive developments for the archaeology sector, the wider historic environment sector, and ultimately for Scotland.

This review considered what progress is attributable to SAS being in place, or what would have happened anyway within the archaeology sector regardless of SAS. Based on the evidence received in desk materials, and gathered through primary research it is clear that SAS provided a platform for discussion of priorities for the sector, collaborative initiatives and engendered consideration of long-term ambitions.

8.5 Recommendations

The review finds that SAS has been successful overall. Fundamentally, the review recommends that the Scottish archaeology sector comes together to build upon the success, and learnings from SAS, to set strategic priorities and regularly prioritise collaborative initiatives which deliver against strategic objectives over the next period. This has several advantages, as evidenced through the 2015-2025 SAS review:

- Harnessing existing expertise and resources
- Joining up efforts to secure more resources, including but not limited to HES funding
- Bringing in insights from UK and international developments in archaeology
- Encouraging considerations of the longer-term aspirations of the sector as new professional and voluntary archaeologists shape the sector and external social, political, economic, environmental contexts influence the sector.

The reviewers have several recommendations for consideration concerning strategic alignment, delivery approaches and understanding the difference strategic goals are making.

8.5.1 Strategic alignment

Strategic alignment was always considered during the period of SAS, most notably with the formation of Our Past Our Future (OPOF). In the reviewer's opinion, there are many strategies that archaeology could relate to, but the main ones for the coming period are OPOF for the wider historic environment sector and Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy for 2023-2030.

Individual organisations, such as NMS or universities, may wish to help interrelate strategic aims for Scottish archaeology and their strategic documents.
OPOF sets out a national mission to sustain and enhance the benefits of Scotland's historic environment, for people and communities now and into the future.[52] As part of this review of the current SAS, the reviewers have looked at the overarching priorities and outcomes of OPOF and provide some suggestions on the connections between OPOF and SAS. No doubt these have been considered by stakeholders and formed part of discussions ensuring OPOF references SAS.

OPOF Priority 1: Delivering the transition to net zero e.g. reducing its emissions or helping the historic environment be more climate resilient.
In OPOF there are actions to expand sector confidence, knowledge and data. Also, the archaeology sector could help inform the planned collective Historic Environment Route Map for Net Zero. OPOF references detailed action plans will stem from the Skills Investment Plan (SIP) for the historic environment, from this review it is clear that archaeology stakeholders are already fully involved in the SIP and see skills development as an ongoing collective endeavour. Due to SAS and SSAC, archaeology seems well placed to contribute to some work packages which will be developed by OPOF, particularly Adaptation, Skills, Guidance and Policy. CIfA explain on their website, 'a working group of CIfA's Advisory Council has been set up to look at how the Chartered Institute and archaeologists can reduce their impact on the environment and respond to the climate crisis we are facing.'[53]

Priority 2: Empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places explains how OPOF wants organisations that care for the historic environment to have the right skills and be more resilient.
The review of SAS has found that skills development is really valued by all types of archaeology organisation, there are collective efforts towards increasing routes to entry, types of qualifications and availability of continuous professional development. These are already well connected to the SIP. At a historic environment sector level, OPOF should bring more opportunities to support heritage skills which are deemed at risk, including by the archaeology sector. Initiatives already conducted under SAS, such as skills audits, help where there are skills gaps and shortages.

Archaeology in Scotland involves professionals, but also the skills and enthusiasm from community and volunteer archaeologists. OPOF intends for communities to have more opportunities to participate in decision- making about the historic environment. The archaeology sector's work to provide information, guidance, case studies and open up data and information is

[52] Our Past, Our Future | Historic Environment Scotland | History
[53] Climate change | CIfA

valuable to helping this OPOF outcome. Archaeology has the opportunity to input, and benefit from collective work to establish good practice in diversity and inclusion within the wider historic environment sector.

Priority 3: Building a wellbeing economy, combines economic and social benefits resulting from the historic environment.

One outcome is included as 'the historic environment makes a responsible contribution to Scotland's economy'. In itself this outcome is easily tied to the number of organisations within archaeology in Scotland and number of employees. The sector may also bring examples of indirect economic impacts, for example tourism spend by visitors to archaeological attractions. Indeed, OPOF references sharing successful approaches to Responsible Tourism.

OPOF encourages the wider sector to provide 'fair work'. This is an area where the archaeology sector forms part of wider initiatives for example Living Wage accreditation.[54]

The last outcome of OPOF under this priority brings 'a focus on activities that enhance wellbeing'. During the SAS period there are many examples from archaeology. The Young Archaeologists' Club[55] is run on behalf of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). The Attainment through Archaeology programme for schools 'uses hands-on archaeology activities to tackle the attainment gap and support skills development.[56] Dig It! 'a hub for Scottish archaeology coordinated by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and primarily funded by Historic Environment Scotland. It helps the Society work towards its strategic aims, particularly encouraging and improving access to heritage and promoting the sharing of knowledge.[57] With these examples and more, archaeology organisations should be essential partners within developing work packages and improving the evidence base for well-being outcomes from historic environment programmes.

In conclusion, SSAC may wish to consider in the development of any new SAS strategy:

- Whether OPOF's three priority areas are helpful overarching priorities which apply to archaeology in Scotland. Are there any gaps in these overarching priorities which warrant another archaeology-specific priority for the archaeology sector?
- Whether there are any outcomes under the three priority areas of OPOF where the archaeology sector should be an active partner at discussions and initiatives. And if so

[54] See, CIfA and pay | CIfA
[55] Young Archaeologists' Club | Archaeology Scotland
[56] Attainment through Archaeology | Archaeology Scotland
[57] Dig It! - Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

which archaeology organisation(s) are best placed to do this and how is the wider sector kept involved through the SSAC. This may already be well connected through the National Strategy Steering Group, with members including Archaeology Scotland.[58]

8.5.2 Delivery approaches

The model of longer-term strategic aims, for example for a ten-year period, with more regular setting, monitoring and evaluation of relating activities has largely worked well for the 2015-2025 period. This has ensured strategy and delivery are connected and delivery can be adjusted throughout the longer-term period.

The SSAC itself has changed and adapted in terms of membership across the SAS period. It is important that SSAC members reflect the diversity of the sector with various types of organisation. Strategy leadership can come from individuals working for organisations large and small, or with various job roles and levels of seniority. It is therefore important that SSAC equips members to ensure senior buy-in within their organisations and empowers them to think both strategically and practically. Strategic and collaborative delivery planning has to balance ambition with achievability. The archaeology sector is developing all the time, so there is a moving picture of contextual factors to negotiate. Employing management techniques such as the PESTEL or SWOT exercises utilised within this review, could help the SSAC going forwards.

In 2025, as the current SAS draws to a close, SSAC may wish to consider which aspects of the current SAS should be carried through into the next period, in particular aims and actions. Chapters 3-7 of this review provide summaries of the importance, performance, enablers, barriers and relevance of the current SAS aims. The reviewers observe that there are some overlaps between various SAS aims and actions within the Operational Tracker which contribute to different aims.

Reviewers can see SSAC has considered when best for delivery to take place at local, Scottish, UK, UK and Ireland or international levels. This is particularly important when there are various formal and informal networks for best practice in archaeology so as not to duplicate efforts. Ensuring a Scottish viewpoint forms part of cross-national efforts is important especially with regards to devolved areas of policy.

SAS has brought various collaborations together to deliver actions. All collaborative working takes transparency on priorities and where these match or differ, combined resource, and clear

[58] Our Past, Our Future | Delivery | Historic Environment Scotland

communication. However, from the review it seems easier to make progress when the main actors are within the sector. Examples would be best practice guidance. Each of these outputs takes time and effort from across organisations, but producing these and sharing best practice is largely in control of the archaeology sector.

When stakeholders are wider, for example concerning procurement of archaeological services, it is understandable that collaboration will take continuous efforts and priorities will have to align.

As highlighted in the Operational Plan Tracker, recommendations relating to national legislation and policy need traction within wider policy circles. As explained in chapter 2, the policy context has changed throughout the SAS period. Having a clear policy line from SACC may help these efforts in the future. We understand this approach was undertaken towards NPF4.

With all strategic plans, whether at historic environment sector level, or at the level of archaeology in Scotland, the main question is always resourcing. HES grants seem to be the go-to source for funding for activity relating to the SAS. However, looking at the current SAS aims and thinking about future aims for archaeology, this will not be the only source for financial support. The funding environment for any source may be competitive, and collaboration and reach of funding will likely be increasingly sought by funders. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the in-kind, non-funded, support of individual archaeology organisations to achieve any strategic aims. Organisations in the third sector, private sector, higher education sector and public sector are all crucial for a successful archaeology strategy to be formed and delivered.

It is promising that there is much alignment between OPOF and the current SAS. OPOF makes reference to actions which are dependent on coordination, time and expertise from across the historic environment and extra funding to support knowledge exchange, research and outputs.

8.5.3 Understanding the difference the strategy is making

Reviewers note that the Operational Tracker has been effective overall, and there are some areas for improvement which will optimise this approach even further:

- Providing guidance on the Operational Tracker so if there are multiple editors within SSAC membership the regularity of updates and level of detail are as consistent as possible.
- Ensure to capture which organisations are delivering each action so that anyone coming fresh to the tracker, such as a reviewer or indeed a new member of the committee can follow. Often the tracker included statements such as ‘this has been delivered’ or ‘funding awarded’ without explicitly stating which organisations were involved.

- Some measurement metrics devised did not work in practice as baseline or ongoing data was not collected, for example media metrics. This does not mean that the vision has not been achieved, but it does make it harder to evidence achievement. Therefore devising a few key indicators which are achievable for SSAC to collate timely data would help track progress. Context and narrative can be added to the tracker to compliment any metrics.
- Use the tracker to clearly mark which activity has been completed,

For the next strategy period, if investment from the largest public body is to be monitored as a meaningful metric, the SSAC committee would benefit from:

- Continuing to ensure that no one involved in grants assessment within HES is directly involved within the SSAC committee.
- Annual provision by HES of:
    - Annual figures - to see trends over time as some years may have lower or higher investment.
    - Figures of values and proportions for archaeology and non-archaeology grants- to understand how grants to archaeology fit within grants overall.
    - Grants data which can be attributed to strategic objectives- potentially the new strategic objectives of a new archaeology strategy.
    - Grants data which makes clear the instances of funded projects which involve international working, as long as international working is still a strategic priority for archaeology and the wider historic environment sectors.
    - Grants data which matches to the three priority areas of OPOF.
- With the permission of grant awardees, extracts from evaluation reports which help evidence achievements of strategic aims and findings to inform other organisations in the sector.

As part of this review, a baseline survey has been conducted in January 2025 of the public residing in Scotland on the topic of archaeology (see Appendix B). For the current SAS, the survey most relates to Aim 4, Encouraging Greater Engagement. The survey questions have been designed so they are relevant for archaeology for the coming period, regardless of the precise strategy aims. The survey is as far as possible in Plain English. It is recommended that descriptive statistics are monitored for the general population. With sufficient sub-samples, analysts can also test for differences between groups within the population. Regularity of repeating the survey could be considered by SSAC, but in the reviewer's opinion this does not need to be more regularly than once every two years.

Appendix A – Discussion Guides

Discussion Guide for Roundtable of current SSAC Committee Members v. 18 Nov 2024

In-person, 2 hours including break

Roundtable with Current SSAC Committee Members: The roundtable will bring together current SSAC members, leveraging their direct strategic experience with SAS. This session will either be conducted in person, ideally tied into one of their existing tri-annual meetings, or online to ensure full participation. The roundtable will employ the PESTLE analysis framework to evaluate the external factors influencing the strategy's implementation. We will facilitate a structured discussion to explore political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors that have shaped SAS's impact.

Note this Discussion guide is to be used in conjunction to slides and participative exercise materials (shown in green)

Set up- c.10 mins

In advance- room set up- chairs, IT, Dictaphones, materials

Welcome to the Roundtable on the Archaeology Strategy slide opening on screen

Introduce Diffley Partnership Team members Slide 1 of team and roles
Independent researchers
Commissioned to review the current archaeology strategy
The Diffley Partnership abide by the Market Research Society Code of Practice and the SRA Ethical Guidelines
We are contracted to conduct a review and produce a summary report
We are also engaging with past committee members, wider stakeholders, and will do a short public survey on archaeology.

Housekeeping- fire alarm and exit, toilets, break, key fob

Slide 2 on context

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS), which was launched in 2015 and is set to conclude in 2025.

The strategy was developed to provide strategic direction for the different groups within the archaeological community in Scotland, following the review of Historic Scotland's archaeology functions, and was intended to support the broader framework of *Our Place in Time*.

We acknowledge that archaeology spans heritage, built environment and construction sectors. Archaeology as a practice and discipline is part of private sector, public sector, third sector and academic sectors.

Since its inception, the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) has played a pivotal role in the strategy's implementation and is recognized as a key delivery group for the new historic environment strategy, *Our Past Our Future* (OPOF), launched in June 2023.

Slide 3 on purpose of today

The purpose of today is to understand what has happened in connection to the existing SAS.

The SSAC are working towards the next strategy beyond 2025.
What we find out from today can also be used by SSAC to help inform the next strategy.

Slide 4 of agenda and indicative timings
Explain the discussion will last up to 2 hours
There will be plenty of time to get your views across and discuss issues between yourselves, something we encourage; my role is to keep the conversation flowing, ensuring we cover the broad areas we need to and ask any follow-up questions,

Do you have any questions on that before we start?

Request permission to record discussion – with your permission I will record the all-group discussion; this is just so we can go back and listen again after the discussion and aid our analysis.
We will not share the recordings and we will delete these at close of our contract at the latest.

Introductions and opening discussion c.10 mins

Let's begin by going round the room, please tell me your name, organisation and how long you have been involved with the SAS?

Looking back c.30 mins

Let's look back together in the last ten years. What's has happened?

We are going to do a PESTLE exercise together.

PESTLE stands for—Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental

We'll miss out the Legal- but we have sheets for the other 5. There will be some overlap

Slide on 5 PESTLE exercise

Slide 6 on what they are doing and scope

Define scope-

Archaeology in Scotland since 2015

What have been the major political, economic, social, technological, level and environmental issues that have affected the different groups within the archaeological community in Scotland?

Think about what has directly impacted archaeology, given that archaeology spans heritage, built environment and construction sectors and archaeology as a practice and discipline is part of private sector, public sector, third sector and academic sectors.

Think about what has indirectly impacted archaeology, given that social and economic changes can impact public sector which then can impact archaeology.

5 Pre-populated sheets with PESTLE headings, post it notes

What have been the major political issues that have affected the delivery of archaeology since 2015?

What have been the major economic issues that have affected the delivery of archaeology since 2015?

What have been the major social issues that have affected the delivery of archaeology since 2015?

What have been the major technological issues that have affected the delivery of archaeology since 2015?

What have been the major environmental issues that have affected the delivery of archaeology since 2015?

So since 2015 what have been the major political, economic, social, technological, level and environmental issues that have affected the different groups within the archaeological community in Scotland**?**

Prompts: how have these impacted archaeology?

Only if needed, introduce prompts:

- Local government funding
- Public sector funding
- Procurement opportunities- number and size of opportunities
- Strategic Shifts: *Our Place in Time* has been succeeded by *Our Past Our Future* (OPOF), with SSAC continuing to operate as a central work group within this new framework. The alignment with OPOF highlights a continued commitment to key priorities such as achieving net zero, fostering resilient communities, and enhancing economic wellbeing.

- Funding Changes: Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has updated its grant processes, impacting the funding landscape for archaeology and related projects.
- COVID-19 Impact: The pandemic has had a significant effect across various sectors, including archaeology. This has influenced funding, commissioning stability, and the operational capabilities of universities, museums, and third-sector organisations.
- Technological Advancements: Ongoing innovations in archaeological technologies, such as satellite imagery and LIDAR, along with developments in media and social media, have implications for the strategy's focus on innovation and skills.

Strategy in the round c. 10 mins

How was the strategy implemented?
Prompts- delivery plan, role of SSAC, role of organisations

How far do you think Scotland's Archaeology Strategy was adopted?
Prompts- types of organisation public/ private/ third, sub-sectors in archaeology, organisations, wider organisations
Prompts- timeframe given launched in 2015
FYI SSAC member groupings

- *Archaeological Science*
- *Commercial Archaeology*
- *Community / Voluntary Archaeology*
- *Education and Archaeology*
- *Land Management*
- *Local Authority Archaeology*
- *Marine Archaeology*
- *Museums (including the National Museums Scotland)*
- *The Professional Institution (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists)*
- *University Archaeology*

How effective or ineffective do you think Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has been?

What impacts has Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has had since 2015?
Prompts- individuals, communities society; in Scotland, beyond Scotland; professionals, the archaeology, the public

BREAK 10 MINS

Strategy aims c. 45 mins

The SAS is structured around five key aims

Slide with aims

1. *Delivering Archaeology*[59]: Increasing "the public benefit of Scottish archaeology", whilst amplifying its visibility nationally and abroad. This requires evaluating the frameworks we've constructed to deliver public benefit and examining their effectiveness.
2. *Enhancing Understanding*[60]: Ensuring knowledge is "deliverable, accessible and reusable" to "increase knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past". This entails supporting and implementing research with transparent and suitable objectives.
3. *Caring and Protecting*[61]: Caring for physical evidence with sustainability in mind to ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations. This relates to setting standards for the transfer of archaeological artefacts as well as guidance related to cataloguing.
4. *Encouraging Greater Engagement*[62]: Inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, championing "the role archaeology can play in learning" and exploring "new ways of presenting and interpreting information." A number of projects such as the Heritage Resources Portal, Archaeological Learning Leaflet and Heritage Hero Awards are contributing to progress along this aim.
5. *Innovation and Skills*[63]: Archaeological skill building to improve "innovation in the understanding analysis and interpretation of archaeology."

Overall, how successful do you think Scotland's Archaeology Strategy been in achieving its objectives?

We are going to discuss each of the objectives in turn so we can dive in deeper together. We will use a SWOT technique to help us.

[59] Delivering Archaeology
[60] Enhancing Understanding
[61] Caring and Protecting
[62] Encouraging Greater Engagement
[63] Innovation and Skills

SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)
Slide with SWOT purpose and instructions

Participatory activity
Slide 5 with objectives
Pre-populated objectives and questions

Delivering Archaeology Increasing "the public benefit of Scottish archaeology", whilst amplifying its visibility nationally and abroad. This requires evaluating the frameworks we've constructed to deliver public benefit and examining their effectiveness.

Strengths- in what ways has the public benefit of Scottish archaeology been realised? Any examples?
Weaknesses- what have been any limitations, setbacks to this objective?
Opportunities- what suggestions are there for how to further realise public benefit of Scottish archaeology?
Threats- what threats are there to this objective?

Enhancing Understanding: Ensuring knowledge is "deliverable, accessible and reusable" to "increase knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past". This entails supporting and implementing research with transparent and suitable objectives.

Strengths- in what ways has knowledge been made deliverable, accessible and reusable? Any examples?
Weaknesses- what have been any limitations, setbacks to this objective?
Opportunities- what suggestions are there for how to ensure knowledge is "deliverable, accessible and reusable?
Threats- what threats are there to this objective?

Encouraging Greater Engagement: Inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, championing "the role archaeology can play in learning" and exploring "new ways of presenting and interpreting information." A number of projects such as the Heritage Resources Portal, Archaeological Learning Leaflet and Heritage Hero Awards are contributing to progress along this aim.

Strengths- in what ways has Inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds been realised? Any examples?
Weaknesses- what have been any limitations, setbacks to this objective?
Opportunities- what suggestions are there for how to further inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds?
Threats- what threats are there to this objective?

Innovation and Skills: Archaeological skill building to improve "innovation in the understanding analysis and interpretation of archaeology."

Strengths- in what ways has archaeological skills building been realised? Any examples?
Weaknesses- what have been any limitations, setbacks to this objective?
Opportunities- what suggestions are there for how to further realise archaeological skill building?
Threats- what threats are there to archaeological skills building?

Thanks for taking part in the SWOT

What were your key take aways from the SWOT, any thoughts and observations to share with the whole group?

Follow ups- (checking for agreement/ disagreement from all participants)

- **Were there any objectives you thought had not been delivered at all?**
- **Were there any objectives you thought had not been delivered as much as you would expect?**
- **how so?**
- **how much is this a problem are these omissions?**
- **How so?**

Conclusions and wrap-up c. 5 mins

Thank you very much for the discussion

is there anything not already covered that you would like to mention either of relevance for our review of the current strategy?

Thank and close

Discussion Guide for online Focus Groups with Past SSAC Members v. 12 Dec 2024

Note this Discussion guide is to be used in conjunction to slides and participative exercise materials (shown in green)

Focus Groups with Past SSAC Members: We will conduct **three** online focus groups with former SSAC members to capture their perspectives on the strategy's successes and challenges. These sessions will be guided by a tailored discussion guide and will use SWOT analysis to explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with SAS from a retrospective viewpoint. The focus groups will enable us to gather valuable insights on the strategy's legacy and its influence on both current practices and the new strategic direction under OPOF.

Researcher check who is attending- this online session may also include current committee members who can't make in-person session

2 researchers facilitating

Set up c.5 mins

Starting meeting and letting in from waiting room

Welcome to the Roundtable on the Archaeology Strategy
My name is xxx and I will be your facilitator for up to the next 90 mins, I'm helped today by my colleague xxx

Introduce Diffley Partnership

- Independent researchers
- Commissioned to review the current archaeology strategy
- The Diffley Partnership abide by the Market Research Society Code of Practice and the SRA Ethical Guidelines
- We are contracted to conduct a review and produce a summary report
- We are engaging with yourselves, current SSAC members and wider stakeholders.
- I will share a couple of slides with you now to explain the context of the review and what we will cover in this session with you today.

Slide 0 on context

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS), which was launched in 2015 and is set to conclude in 2025.

The strategy was developed to provide strategic direction for the different groups within the archaeological community in Scotland, following the review of Historic Scotland's archaeology functions, and was intended to support the broader framework of *Our Place in Time*.

We acknowledge that archaeology spans heritage, built environment and construction sectors. Archaeology as a practice and discipline is part of private sector, public sector, third sector and academic sectors. Since its inception, the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) has played a pivotal role in the strategy's implementation and is recognized as a key delivery group for the new historic environment strategy, *Our Past Our Future* (OPOF), launched in June 2023.

Slide 1 on this session

The purpose of today is to understand what has happened in connection to the existing SAS.

The SSAC are working towards the next strategy beyond 2025.
What we find out from today can also be used by SSAC to help inform the next strategy.

There will be plenty of time to get your views across and discuss issues between yourselves, something we encourage; my role is to keep the conversation flowing, ensuring we cover the broad areas we need to and ask any follow-up questions,

Do you have any questions on that before we start?

Fully anonymous and confidential; The Diffley Partnership abide by the Market Research Society Code of Practice and the SRA Ethical Guidelines.
Request permission to record discussion – with your permission I will record the discussion; this is just so we can go back and listen again after the discussion. The recording will not be shared and the recording will be deleted at the end of our contract at the latest.

RECORD

Introductions c. 5 mins

Let's begin by going round the room, please tell me your name, organisation, in what ways you have been involved with Scotland's Archaeology Strategy and for how long?

Looking back c. 20 mins

Let's look back together in the last ten years. What's has happened? We're going to do a fast-paced exercise together in groups.

Slide 2 on PESTLE

Archaeology in Scotland since 2015
What have been the major political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental issues that have affected the different groups within the archaeological community in Scotland**?**

BREAK OUT GROUP STARTS (20 MIN TIMER)

BREAK OUT ROOM CHECKING RECORD

Slide 3 share and prompt discussion

What have been the major political issues that have affected the delivery of **archaeology since 2015?**
What have been the major economic issues that have affected the delivery of **archaeology since 2015?**
What have been the major social issues that have affected the delivery of **archaeology since 2015?**
What have been the major technological issues that have affected the delivery of **archaeology since 2015?**
What have been the major environmental issues that have affected archaeology since 2015?

Prompts, only if needed:

- Strategic Shifts: *Our Place in Time* has been succeeded by *Our Past Our Future* (OPOF), with SSAC continuing to operate as a central work group within this new framework. The alignment with OPOF highlights a continued commitment to key priorities such as achieving net zero, fostering resilient communities, and enhancing economic wellbeing.
- Funding Changes: Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has updated its grant processes, impacting the funding landscape for archaeology and related projects.
- COVID-19 Impact: The pandemic has had a significant effect across various sectors, including archaeology. This has influenced funding, commissioning stability, and the operational capabilities of universities, museums, and third-sector organisations.
- Technological Advancements: Ongoing innovations in archaeological technologies, such as satellite imagery and LIDAR, along with developments in media and social media, have implications for the strategy's focus on innovation and skills.

Stop sharing slides

BREAK OUT GROUP ENDS

Strategy in the round c. 15 mins

Thanks for taking part in that exercise

Do you feel the strategy was a good or bad development for the different groups within the archaeological community in Scotland**?**
How so?

How was the strategy implemented?
Prompts- delivery plan, role of SSAC, role of organisations

How far do you think Scotland's Archaeology Strategy was adopted?
Prompts- types of organisation public/ private/ third, sub-sectors in archaeology, organisations, wider organisations
Prompts- timeframe given launched in 2015
FYI SSAC member groupings

- *Archaeological Science*
- *Commercial Archaeology*
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- *Education and Archaeology*
- *Land Management*
- *Local Authority Archaeology*
- *Marine Archaeology*
- *Museums (including the National Museums Scotland)*
- *The Professional Institution (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists)*
- *University Archaeology*

How effective or ineffective do you think Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has been?

What impacts has Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has had since 2015?
Prompts- individuals, communities society; in Scotland, beyond Scotland; professionals, the archaeology, the public

Strategy aims c. 30 mins

The SAS is structured around five key aims

Share slide 4 with aims

1. *Delivering Archaeology*: Increasing "the public benefit of Scottish archaeology", whilst amplifying its visibility nationally and abroad. This requires evaluating the frameworks we've constructed to deliver public benefit and examining their effectiveness.
2. *Enhancing Understanding*: Ensuring knowledge is "deliverable, accessible and reusable" to "increase knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past". This entails supporting and implementing research with transparent and suitable objectives.
3. *Caring and Protecting*: Caring for physical evidence with sustainability in mind to ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations. This relates to setting standards for the transfer of archaeological artefacts as well as guidance related to cataloguing.
4. *Encouraging Greater Engagement*: Inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, championing "the role archaeology can play in learning" and exploring "new ways of presenting and interpreting information." A number of projects such as the Heritage Resources Portal, Archaeological Learning Leaflet and Heritage Hero Awards are contributing to progress along this aim.
5. *Innovation and Skills*: Archaeological skill building to improve "innovation in the understanding analysis and interpretation of archaeology."

Overall, how successful to you think Scotland's Archaeology Strategy been successful in achieving its objectives?

We are going to split into a couple of groups and discuss each of the objectives in turn so we can dive in deeper together into each objective.

BREAK OUT GROUP STARTS (TIMER SET FOR 30 MINUTES (C.6 MINS EACH AIM))

Share slides 5-9 in turn
Welcome comments- verbal and in chat

- Strengths- in what ways has this been realised? Any examples?

- Weaknesses- what have been any limitations, setbacks to this objective?
- Relevance- how relevant is this for Scottish archaeology 2025 onwards?

BREAK OUT GROUP ENDS

Reflections relevant for the next strategy c.15 mins

Thanks for taking part in your breakout groups. I'll ask you a few more questions now we are back together.

Follow ups- (checking for agreement/ disagreement from all participants)

- **Were there any objectives you thought had not been delivered at all?**
- **Were there any objectives you thought had not been delivered as much as you would expect?**
- **how so?**
- **how much of a problem are these omissions?**
- **How so?**

Do you think the strategy led to any other positive impacts that don't fit within these 5 objectives?

What are your hopes for the next archaeology strategy?

What advice would you give those designing the next strategy?

How do you think engagement from the different groups within the archaeological community in Scotland could be encouraged?

How do you think engagement with wider stakeholders could be encouraged?

Do you have any recommendations on the delivery of the strategy?
Prompts- enthusiasm, ownership, responsibility

Are there any lessons you would hope were learned from this current strategy and its delivery plan?

Thank you very much for the discussion, **is there anything not already covered that you would like to mention either of relevance for our review of the current strategy or for SSAC's work towards the next?**

Thank and close

Discussion Guide for Wider Stakeholders v. 18 Nov 2024

Online- up to 90 minutes

Focus Groups with the Wider Archaeology Sector: online focus groups will be conducted with representatives from the broader archaeology sector, including academic institutions, applied archaeology, museums, and community archaeology groups. These sessions will explore the sector's perception of SAS, its impact on their work, and its alignment with their organisational objectives. The discussion will be guided by a structured SWOT analysis, allowing participants to critically evaluate the strategy's contributions and areas for improvement.

Introductions and opening discussion c.10 mins

Welcome to the focus group on the Archaeology Strategy

My name is xxxx and I will be your facilitator for this session of up to 90 mins

Introduce Diffley Partnership

- Independent researchers
- Commissioned to review the current archaeology strategy
- The Diffley Partnership abide by the Market Research Society Code of Practice and the SRA Ethical Guidelines
- We are contracted to conduct a review and produce a summary report
- I'll just share with you a couple of slides on the context, and what we are covering in this session

Slide 1 on context

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS), which was launched in 2015 and is set to conclude in 2025.

The strategy was developed to provide strategic direction for the different groups within the archaeological community in Scotland, following the review of Historic Scotland's archaeology functions, and was intended to support the broader framework of *Our Place in Time*.

We acknowledge that archaeology spans heritage, built environment and construction sectors. Archaeology as a practice and discipline is part of private sector, public sector, third sector and academic sectors.

Since its inception, the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) has played a pivotal role in the strategy's implementation and is recognized as a key delivery group for the new historic environment strategy, *Our Past Our Future* (OPOF), launched in June 2023.

Slide 2 on this session

The purpose of today is to understand what has happened in connection to the existing SAS.

The SSAC are working towards the next strategy beyond 2025.
What we find out from today can also be used by SSAC to help inform the next strategy.

We'll do some quick introductions.
Next, we'll share and discuss the aims of the current strategy with you.
We'll ask for your reflections relevant for the next strategy period.

There will time to get your views across and discuss issues between yourselves, something we encourage; my role is to keep the conversation flowing, ensuring we cover the broad areas we need to and ask any follow-up questions,

Stop sharing slides

Do you have any questions on that before we start?

Request permission to record discussion – with your permission I will record the all-group discussion; this is just so we can go back and listen again after the discussion and aid our analysis.
We will not share the recordings and we will delete these at close of our contract at the latest.

RECORD

Let's begin by going round the virtual room, please tell me your name, organisation and your involvement with archaeology?

Prompts- Scotland, RUK, internationally? Now/ since 2015

Strategy aims c. 60 mins

The current Archaeology strategy is structured around five key aims
I'll share those with you on a slide

Slide 3 with strategy aims

1. *Delivering Archaeology*[64]: Increasing "the public benefit of Scottish archaeology", whilst amplifying its visibility nationally and abroad. This requires evaluating the frameworks we've constructed to deliver public benefit and examining their effectiveness.
2. *Enhancing Understanding*[65]: Ensuring knowledge is "deliverable, accessible and reusable" to "increase knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past". This entails supporting and implementing research with transparent and suitable objectives.
3. *Caring and Protecting*[66]: Caring for physical evidence with sustainability in mind to ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations. This relates to setting standards for the transfer of archaeological artefacts as well as guidance related to cataloguing.
4. *Encouraging Greater Engagement*[67]: Inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, championing "the role archaeology can play in learning" and exploring "new ways of presenting and interpreting information." A number of projects such as the Heritage Resources Portal, Archaeological Learning Leaflet and Heritage Hero Awards are contributing to progress along this aim.
5. *Innovation and Skills*[68]: Archaeological skill building to improve "innovation in the understanding analysis and interpretation of archaeology."

We are going to spend a bit of time discussing each of its aims in turn and get your thoughts on each.
I'll ask you about- importance, connection, enablers and barriers, and relevance of each.
You are welcome to share your impressions and views and any examples you have.

Slides 3-7 on each aim

Delivering Archaeology Increasing "the public benefit of Scottish archaeology", whilst amplifying its visibility nationally and abroad.

Importance- how important do you think this aim is for archaeology?
Connection- does this aim chime with wider sectors you are involved with? How so/ how not?
Enablers and barriers- what do you feel has helped or hindered its achievement in since 2015?

[64] Delivering Archaeology
[65] Enhancing Understanding
[66] Caring and Protecting
[67] Encouraging Greater Engagement
[68] Innovation and Skills

Relevance- Do you think this aim is still relevant for the next strategy period 2024 onwards? How so/ how not?

Enhancing Understanding: Ensuring knowledge is "deliverable, accessible and reusable" to "increase knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past".

Importance- how important do you think this aim is for archaeology?
Connection- does this aim chime with wider sectors you are involved with? How so/ how not?
Enablers and barriers- what do you imagine has helped or hindered its achievement in since 2015?
Relevance- Do you think this aim is still relevant for the next strategy period 2024 onwards? How so/ how not?

Caring and Protecting: Caring for physical evidence with sustainability in mind to ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations.

Importance- how important do you think this aim is for archaeology?
Connection- does this aim chime with wider sectors you are involved with? How so/ how not?
Enablers and barriers- what do you imagine has helped or hindered its achievement in since 2015?
Relevance- Do you think this aim is still relevant for the next strategy period 2024 onwards? How so/ how not?

Encouraging Greater Engagement: Inclusively encouraging engagement with archaeology amongst people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, championing "the role archaeology can play in learning" and exploring "new ways of presenting and interpreting information."

Importance- how important do you think this aim is for archaeology?
Connection- does this aim chime with wider sectors you are involved with? How so/ how not?
Enablers and barriers- what do you imagine has helped or hindered its achievement in since 2015?
Relevance- Do you think this aim is still relevant for the next strategy period 2024 onwards? How so/ how not?

Innovation and Skills: Archaeological skill building to improve "innovation in the understanding analysis and interpretation of archaeology."

Importance- how important do you think this aim is for archaeology?
Connection- does this aim chime with wider sectors you are involved with? How so/ how not?
Enablers and barriers- what do you imagine has helped or hindered its achievement in since 2015?
Relevance- Do you think this aim is still relevant for the next strategy period 2024 onwards? How so/ how not?

Slide 8 with all aims

Overall, how successful to you think Scotland's Archaeology Strategy been successful in achieving its objectives?

Do you think the strategy led to any other positive impacts that don't fit within these 5 objectives?

Stop sharing slides

Reflections relevant for the next strategy c.20 mins

What are your hopes for the next archaeology strategy?
Prompts- focus, aims, delivery

What advice would you give those designing the next strategy?

How do you think engagement with wider stakeholders could be encouraged?

Do you have any recommendations on the delivery of the strategy?
Prompts- enthusiasm, ownership, responsibility

Thank you very much for the discussion

is there anything not already covered that you would like to mention either of relevance for our review of the current archaeology strategy for Scotland?
Thank and close

Appendix B- Public Survey

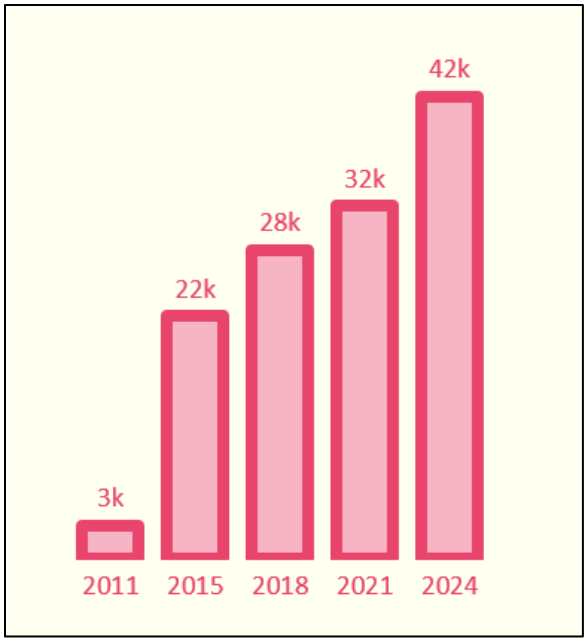
Overview

The survey was administered online through the ScotPulse online panel. With more than 42,000 adults (aged 16+) on the panel from across all areas of Scotland, ScotPulse is Scotland's largest online research panel.

Figure B.1 shows the consistent and organic growth of the ScotPulse panel since its inception in 2011. This growth highlights the success in recruiting a large and representative cross-section of the population to take part in surveys across a range of important issues.

ScotPulse has been used to measure attitudes to significant government policy, attitudes to a range of social issues, and customer behaviours in a range of sectors. ScotPulse has also been used for substantive research projects on behalf of Scottish government, Third Sector organisations, and private sector businesses of all sizes.

Figure B.1: ScotPulse panel membership



The benefits of the panel are not simply a matter of its size but also its quality and representativeness. Figures B.2 below highlights the profile of the panel in terms of a number of

important geographic and demographic considerations, including coverage in remote and rural areas.

Figure B.2: Panel breakdown



The panel is a high-quality tool and offers a range of benefits, including:

- *panel quality and impartiality* – it is not used for surveys on voting and political attitudes, thereby being free from the types of interference which affected other panels,
- all surveys are device-agnostic meaning the respondent can participate in surveys on the device, which is most convenient for them, and with the survey tested on each device type before issue,
- ability to *segment* the panel to focus on particular interest groups,
- *flexibility* in terms of timing (it can take just days to organise) and outputs (from simple toplines, to data tables or raw data).

Panel membership and sampling

Panel members sign up on a voluntary basis. The panel is recruited through a range of advertising; this includes advertising on national television as well as on social media, ensuring that it is available beyond those who have social media profiles. Panelists receive a survey about once a month or more on average.

Participants were chosen at random to participate from the ScotPulse panel and received a link to complete the survey in their email; for this study, simple random sampling was used. Fieldwork was undertaken between 20 and 23 January 2024, and 1,091 completed returns were received. In total, 4,299 invitations were issued to members of the panel, resulting in a 25% response rate. Initially, 1,155 respondents started the survey resulting in a 95% completion rate.

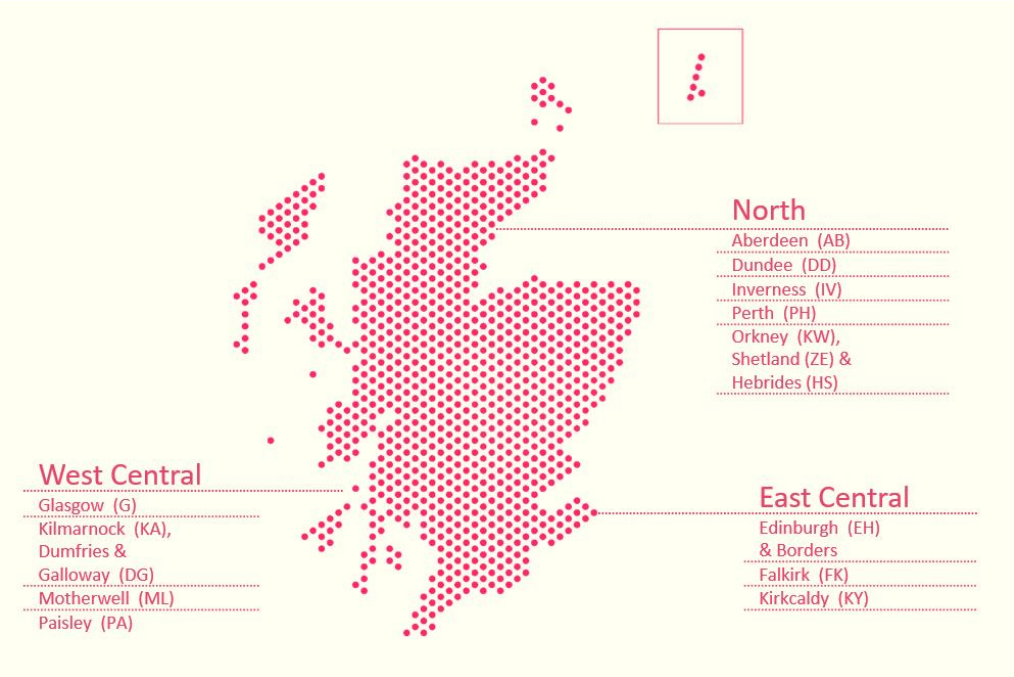
No prior explanation of the topic or content of the survey was included in the email text, although participants were shown a short introduction (see Survey topline findings) before they completed the survey.

While participants were not compensated for completing the survey, the panel uses incentives in the form of a monthly prize draw to increase participation. Email reminders to non-respondents were also used to boost response and enhance the data quality.

Variables

The demographic information available from ScotPulse panel members completing surveys includes age, gender, household size, presence of children in household, a composite variable on social grade, and area (North, West Central, and East Central). The classification of north, west central and east central areas is shown in Figure B.3.

Figure B.3: Classification of North, West Central and East Central areas



Analysis

Survey data were tabulated and weighted to the age and gender profile of the population in Scotland using mid-year population estimates.[69]

To look for relationships or variations between sub-groups, two-sample t tests for difference in means were applied. Statistical differences between groups are reported at the 95% confidence level. Differences between groups are only reported when statistically significant.

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' or 'not applicable' categories, or multiple answers. Aggregate percentages (e.g. 'agree'/'disagree') are calculated from the absolute values. Therefore, aggregate percentages may differ from the sum of the individual scores due to rounding of percentage totals.

Survey topline findings

[69] Scotland population mid-year estimate – Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

The headline survey findings are included below.

Introduction

This survey explores your views on archaeology, support for its preservation, and engagement with archaeological activities.

Question 1

What is your level of interest or disinterest in the following topics?

Base: All (1,087)	Very interested %	Somewhat interested %	Net: Interested %	Somewhat disinterested %	Very disinterested %	Net: Disinterested %	Don't know %
How people lived in the past	39	49	88	9	3	11	1
Learning from the past to help inform the future	40	48	88	9	2	11	1
Science and technology	32	48	80	14	4	18	1
Archaeology	22	45	67	20	10	31	3
History	41	48	88	8	3	11	*[70]
Our environment and landscape	38	49	86	10	3	13	1

Question 2

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: All (1,090)	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Net: Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Net: Disagree	DK

[70] NB: Any value of less than 1% is denoted by an asterisk (*) while any value of exactly zero is denoted by a dash (-)

	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
New discoveries about Scotland's past are being made all the time	21	36	57	22	7	*	7	13
Young people should learn about Scotland's history and heritage	63	30	93	6	1	*	1	*
I support efforts to discover more about the past	41	36	77	17	4	1	5	1
I support efforts to care for places and objects from the past	50	37	87	10	2	1	3	1
I would encourage friends or family members to pursue a career in studying the past	14	25	39	42	11	5	16	3
Information about Scotland's past is easily available to me	25	47	72	17	6	1	7	5

Question 3

Do you do any of the following? Please estimate how often.

Base: All (1,085)	More than once a month	Less than once a month but more than once a year	Less than once a year	Net: Any engagement	Never
	%	%	%	%	%
Visit exhibitions about archaeology in museums or archives	3	37	38	78	22
Watch TV shows or movies about archaeology	19	35	24	79	21
Read or listen to newspapers, magazines, journals, books, or podcasts about archaeology	12	24	21	58	42
Engage with social media about archaeology	7	21	18	46	54
Take part in community archaeology projects or digs	1	2	7	10	90

Question 4

Do any of the following apply to you?

Base: All (1,090)	I currently do this	I used to do this	I have never done this
	%	%	%
Member of a heritage group or organisation	14	14	72
Work for a heritage group or organisation	1	3	96
Volunteer for a heritage group or organisation	1	6	93

Appendix C- HES Grants Data

Up until 2016, funding applications were assessed, grants awarded and administered by Archaeology colleagues in the Heritage Directorate of HES. In 2016, HES moved towards the centralisation of most of the external grant funding, including grants for archaeology projects.

From 2018, applicants to the archaeology grants programme were asked to explain how their proposed project would meet the Grants Outcomes in addition to meeting the outcomes of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy. Following on from this, new grants approval and assessment processes were introduced to allow for more transparent and comparable decision making across all grant programmes in HES. For the 2019 archaeology programme application round, all applicants were considered, assessed, and awarded in line with these new processes.

Through grant awards, HES supports archaeology through HES' Open Programme (Historic Environment Grants) rather than a specific themed programme, as was the case prior to 2019. Alongside this, there remain legacy projects from previous grant-funding programmes that retain the potential to deliver significant public benefits upon completion.

The final application round of the Archaeology Programme was held in 2019, while the review and refresh of our grants approach and funding programmes was undertaken. Any enquiries for funding for archaeology projects following this were directed to apply to the Historic Environment Support Fund (HESF) which ran until late 2022.

In 2020-21 HES undertook a review of grants programmes.[71] There were several notes of concern that are highlighted in the report, with the key ones being around impact on the funding available and the need for more detailed guidance. Where appropriate, this feedback was addressed by HES in the final version of the Grants Framework,[72] including the revision of priorities and programme guidance to be more inclusive of archaeology and also the introduction of detailed Guidance for Archaeology Grants.[73]

In the Guidance for Archaeology Grants, HES provide more information on the types of projects they will support and our expectations for these, particularly around the completion of projects which involve excavation work. This is to avoid funding excavation projects from not progressing

[71] Grants and Funding | Grants Refresh | HistEnvScot
[72] HES Grants Framework 2021 Onwards (post consultation)
[73] HEG Guidance for Archaeology Grants

to publication and archiving – an issue previously that resulted in a significant backlog of uncompleted projects.

For one-off archaeology projects, applicants are now directed to apply to the Historic Environment Grants Programme if their Expression of Interest (EOI) is approved. Any EOIs for archaeology projects or activities are sent to the Archaeology Team for early advice before the Grants Team respond.

An internal review of Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) provision of grants for archaeology was requested by the Grants Decision Panel in January 2023. Its purpose was to consider HES' grant support for archaeology and to identify any changes or improvements that could be made. As part of this, HES held conversations with those providing archaeological grant support in Northern Ireland, England, and the Republic of Ireland,[74]

The grants review found:

- Provision for funding of archaeology sector in Scotland is significant in comparison to other UK countries and is vital for it to deliver HES priorities.
- Archaeology projects can demonstrate strong links with national strategies relating to archaeology and the wider historic environment.
- Most of the funding for archaeology contributes to projects and activities which deliver wider benefits for communities throughout Scotland. This is a successful realisation of the sector's Archaeology Strategy.
- Since 2018, the assessment and awarding of grants for archaeology projects is clearer and more transparent although there are opportunities to strengthen the grants team role in administering and reporting on these.
- A strong working relationship between the Grants Team and the Archaeology Team has continued to be developed since 2015. This is particularly in relation to the monthly meetings to discuss current projects and to archaeology providing support with the Grants Refresh work.
- Most of the funding for archaeology projects goes to a relatively small number of organisations. These organisations deliver projects and initiatives in partnership with HES which are fundamental to the management of the archaeological resource in Scotland.

[74] Archaeology Grants Review unpublished, extracts included below.

- As HES resolves its legacy archaeology projects, which is an ongoing process, more funding will become available for archaeology projects with stronger links to the Grant Priorities.

Table C1: HES grant awards to archaeology 1 April 2015- 27 January 2025

No. of individual grants awards	397
No. of grants awarded involving/ including community engagement	152
No. of archaeology projects supported	213
Total value of HES grants awarded	£14,335,415
Total value of grant-aided archaeology projects	£25,681,880
No. of organisations awarded grant	95

Source: HES grants team provided to SAS review 27 January 2025

For their grants review HES considered all grants awarded under any of grant programmes (past and present) for archaeology projects to cover the period 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2023. For this SAS review, HES updated these figures to include period 1 April until 27 January 2025 (see table C1).

The archaeology grants awarded across all funding programmes were categorised by HES into 'project types' (see table C2).

Table C2: HES grant awards to archaeology project types 1 April 2015- 27 January 2025

Project Type	No. of Grants Awarded	Total Amount Awarded	Proportion of Total Investment
Event Support to support the delivery costs of an event or conference relating to archaeology or for individuals to attend these.	40	£94,014	0.66%
Heritage at Risk projects which involve helping to conserve or record an area of archaeology which is at risk.	50	£2,071,317	14.45%
Innovation, Skills and Training any activities which involve any individuals or organisations developing new skills or techniques in the field of archaeology which will advance the sector.	48	£829,644	5.79%
Legacy any archaeology projects funded by HES's predecessor bodies which are still to be completed ten years or more after starting, typically involving incomplete post-excavation analysis and dissemination of results through publication and archiving. Grants retains a yearly publication budget which predominantly relates to these projects with the majority managed through the publications grant.	113	£1,928,047	13.45%
Publications this is to support the cost of a single publication at the end of a HS/HES funded archaeology project, including costs associated with open access funding	7	£47,857	0.33%
Resilience under our previous Organisational Support Fund, we could support third-sector organisations with time-limited funding for specific activities to build their resilience.	6	£206,606	1.44%
Social Benefits projects or activities which deliver wider benefits particularly in relation to local communities whether they are actively involved or will directly benefit from the outputs of the funded project.	95	£7,472,081	52.12%

Strategic projects and activities being delivered which address systemic challenges in the Scottish Archaeology Sector, and which are usually Scotland's Archaeology Strategy deliverables. Based on these figures, most of our funding - almost 50% - helps to support projects which deliver some form of social benefits, which shows good alignment with both our corporate priorities and OPOF. Based on the new Historic Environment Grants and Archaeology Grants guidance, we have been clear to stress the importance of delivering wider benefits as part of any grant aided archaeology project in the future.	38	£1,685,849	11.76%
Total	**397**	**£14,335,415**	**100.00%**

Source: HES grants team provided to SAS review 27 January 2025

In their grants review, HES calculated that the top funded organisations, by grant value, for the period 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2023 were:

- **Archaeology Scotland**- 'leading independent charity working to inspire people to discover, explore, care for and enjoy Scotland's archaeological heritage.[75]
- **Society of Antiquaries of Scotland**- 'membership charity' 'actively supporting the study and enjoyment of Scotland's past'.[76]
- **SCAPE Trust**- managed by a Board of Directors, this Registered Charity and Company works 'with the archaeology, history and past environments of the coastal zone of Scotland'. [77]
- **Glasgow University**
- **AOC Archaeology Group**- Scottish-based heritage company and Registered Archaeological Organisation.[78]
- **Aberdeen University**
- Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre- 'a facility jointly founded by the **Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh** and located in East Kilbride, has a market-leading

[75] Archaeology Scotland | Explore Scotland's Past to Discover Better Futures
[76] Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
[77] Home - The SCAPE Trust
[78] AOC Archaeology Group

reputation in the application of isotopic techniques for the earth, environmental, and life sciences.'[79]

- Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology- part of the **University of Highlands and Islands** Archaeology Institute.[80]
- **Bradford University**
- **Chartered Institute for Archaeologists**-'the leading professional body representing archaeologists working in the UK and overseas'.[81]

[79] University of Glasgow - Connect - Business and innovation - Facilities - Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC)
[80] ORCA - Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology
[81] Welcome | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Appendix D- Performance Information for SAS Aims

Explanation of tables:
The first column is named Vision in the Operation Plan Tracker which corresponds with 'What we would like to achieve in the next 10 years' column within the SAS Delivery Plan.
The second column includes actions relating to each vision statement, in some cases the reviewer has truncated or summarised these actions because as a working document the Operational Plan does contain detailed breakdown of actions and tasks in places.
The third column on measurement includes extracts from the Operational Plan of how SAS planned to establish if actions were delivered. The achievement column includes this review's assessment of whether at the time of February 2025 this action had been not, partially or fully achieved. A Red, Amber, Green colour is added. The reviewer has introduced a category for 'unknown' where the measurement of the action was not conducted (grey coloured).
The last column provides further narrative to contextualise the achievement of actions and signpost key evidence of achievement.

Table D1 – Summary of content relating to Aim 1: Delivering Archaeology

Vision	Actions	Measurement	Achievement	Narrative
Increase number of projects that encourage collaborations with international partners to increase Scotland's global visibility.	Revise HES Archaeology Programme2 guidelines to promote international collaboration	SAS integration into HES Open Programme review and visibility at every stage.	Fully	The HES Archaeology Programme ceased to exist in 20/21, and was subsequently replaced by the HES Historic Environment Grant programme. This programme integrates SAS into the guidance and application process for anyone seeking to undertake an archaeology project. The Partnership Fund, also states that alignment with SAS is a priority for grant funding.
		Record number of projects with international collaboration.	Unknown	International collaboration instances not captured through HES Grants administration and monitoring.
	HES discuss international collaboration with other funders	Record of agreements with other funders on how they will promote international collaboration	Unknown	Discussion and collaboration with other funders is managed by HES' Grants Team.
Make sure Scottish archaeology is protected and recorded	Commission a review of the national approach to archaeological protection and recording to include comparisons to other	Review completed by CIfA and published on the SAS website	Fully	The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) launched the report for 'Re-imagining Scottish

through national legislation, policy and practice effectively	countries and recommendations for improvements			Archaeology: structure, funding and delivery' in August 2020.[82]
	Advocate to incorporate changes	Report recommendations were allocated to specific Aim Leads for actioning	Partially	Some of the actions have been taken forward by CIfA, but others are unactionable either because they require structural change beyond the capabilities of the Aim Leads, or because the economic and social climate has changed so markedly since 2020.
Improve archaeological commissioning and procurement (in order to stimulate project design and encourage innovation)	Review results of Scottish Workshop on Southport Group Archaeology Report	Commission a third party to undertake the workshops and recommendations.	Partially	This was incorporated into the CIfA led workshops, and it is largely agreed now that the recommendations of the Southport Group are out of date given that it was written in 2011.
	Facilitate discussion between archaeological service providers, consultants and those who commission services through workshops		Fully	The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) launched the report for 'Re-imagining Scottish Archaeology: structure, funding and delivery' in August 2020.
	Review archaeological commissioning and procurement models focussing on: supply chain management; bidding; procurement timing and forms of contract		Fully	
	Advocate to incorporate changes	Various indicators relating to committee undertaking recommendations.	Partially	Some of the actions have been taken forward by CIfA, but others are unactionable either because they require structural change beyond the capabilities of the Leads, or because the economic and social climate has changed so markedly since 2020
Promote best practice in the management of archaeological projects	Assess existing standards, guidance and promotion in areas including professional practice, timely reporting against research designs, research framework use, ethics.	Publication and use of various guidance.	Fully	Completed Project Design then creation of the Archaeology Short Guide series. Working with the Managing Change guidance leads. HES has supported CIfA's review of standards and guidance, which is still ongoing at the time of writing as it is a longer-term project.

[82] reimagining-scottish-archaeology-report-recommendations.pdf

				Crossing over with Aim 3, HES and ALGAO have also reviewed and updated the guidance for the management of chance discoveries of archaeological human remains. A panel has also been formed to advise and take forwards the creation of new guidance for the management of human remains collections as part of the Scotland's Archaeological Human Remains Collections project (SAHRC)
Encourage, incentivise or require compliance with existing codes, standards and guidance	Create a working group to review compliance with standards and the use of regulation	Complete a review providing options around compliance	Partially	The CIfA Standards and Guidance is ongoing. CIfA have formed a panel to review existing standards and guidance formed from across the UK. HES launched HEPS – the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland following extensive consultation
	Advocate to incorporate changes	Recommendations agreed by Committee implemented	Fully	HES and CIfA actively promote the use of CIfA Standards and Guidance. HES's Grant programme now mandates CIfA accreditation for archaeological project leads
Make information from incomplete projects publicly available	Produce a source of information to post-graduate students on projects from across the sector that have been left incomplete to encourage them to be written up.	Legacy Portal accessible.	Partially	HES is reviewing and rationalising its legacy list of archaeological projects in collaboration with the Aim 2 regional research framework leads. This is an ongoing process and is about 70% complete. Front facing one-stop access point for all HES services, and its inclusion would mean that the portal would be hosted and maintained by HES.[83]
Support better management of the historic environment including minimising duplication of effort	Joint workshop on advocacy priorities in Scotland to inform CIfA's policy	CIFA Policy Workshop and Report	Fully	CIfA led workshops
	Delivery of Archaeology Strategy through collaboration with existing groups where possible (such as OPiT)	Review of existing collaborative structures	Fully	Existing working groups reviewed during the review of Our Place in Time and recommendations taken forward by the Our Past Our Future project delivery team
		Consultation with key heritage stakeholders	Fully	SSAC a named delivery mechanism for Our Past Our Future and specifically mentioned in OPOF. OPOF project delivery team collaborating with SSAC to ensure alignment with the new historic environment strategy for Scotland

[83] Welcome to trove.scot | The key to Scotland's past

	Promote the Archaeology Strategy for use by everyone	Communication Strategy delivered (including outreach such as Themed edition of The Archaeologist magazine)	Fully	Annual Archaeology Review published every Autumn; publication of 5 Year SAS Review; social media' continual promotion across numerous local, regional, national and international conferences to celebrate the Strategy and genuine sector-wide collaboration across all sectors and interested parties.

Table D2: – Summary of content relating to Aim 2: Enhancing Understanding

Vision	Actions	Measurement	Achievement	Narrative
Create a stronger research ethos in all interested in Scotland's past	Bring together, publish and promote use of national, local and world heritage and thematic research frameworks and strategies	Produce biannual survey of ScARF users to determine how research frameworks are being used.	Fully	Data inputted into HES Annual Review.
		Create new ScARF website to increase engagement and use of RRF – launch May 2020	Fully	ScARF website moved to new website.
		New digital research framework platform to create single access point to frameworks across UK operational by March 2021	Fully	ScARF and Regional Research Framework (RRFs) websites connected to wider Research Framework Digital Platform and OASIS – inter searchability and improved ability to update research questions Research Questions for new RRFs now linked to OASIS. Ongoing improvements planned to make interface easier to use. Bigger project behind ScARF to link all frameworks in the UK.[84] This is led by Historic England and will network all Research frameworks and make them cross-searchable.
	Measure and publish the benefits of having and using research frameworks	Undertake strategic review of ScARF in 2019-20, including survey of use & impact and consideration of ScARF funding.	Fully	External evaluation completed September 2019. Website use (2016-19) survey completed. 4 year funding for ScARF renewed and confirmed in February 2022.
		Increase number of published case studies on websites- 4 case studies a year	Fully	Case studies available on www.scarf.scot
		Promote use & benefits of national, thematic and regional frameworks and Scottish Archaeology Strategy through conferences, lectures etc	Fully	2023-2024 attendance and promo table at ARP, HAF, TAFAC, ELBAC, Scottish Student Archaeology Conference.
	Support regular updating of Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF): providing new information	New digital platform to create automatic updates/links via OASIS/DES operational by March 2021	Partially	All new RRF questions now linked to OASIS and set to be answered as part of OASIS reporting. Continuing to work with ADS and Landward to improve the searchability and ease of use following user feedback. Ongoing training sessions via CIfA and AS planned.
		Potential for automatic update of info from PERDs (Post Excavation Research Designs)	Partially	This will be done after the ScARF digital platform and OASIS project as another output. Work

[84] See The Research Frameworks Network – Research Frameworks

	and considering new research priorities	and WSI (Written Schemes of Investigation)		currently planned and following meeting with ADS and Landward, HE and HES in May 2024.
		Archaeological Science review	Fully	Rolling update – with chapter updates released as completed.
		Marine and Maritime Review	Partially	The National Reports being reviewed by ongoing Regional Research Frameworks. The agreed priority is to concentrate on the Regional Frameworks aside from the Science Framework and the Marine and Maritime
		Dendrochronology Framework	Fully	All published on ScARF website.[85]
		Antonine Wall Research Framework published	Fully	
		Contemporary Archaeology 'Research Framework'	Fully	
		Archaeological Science database hosted on ScARF website by March 2022	Fully	
		Rock Art Research Framework	Partially	HES grant application unsuccessful. Royal Society of Edinburgh funded workshops will go ahead in 2025 and outputs will be incorporated into ongoing regional research frameworks.[86]
Ensure research frameworks encompass all aspects of archaeology (including collections, thematic and theoretical research for example) and use them to explain and promote the multiple stories	Bring together creators/ users/ managers of research frameworks of all types in workshops to highlight issues and develop greater collaboration and remove duplication of effort	Assess use by using source references to record number of collaborative projects and duplication of research	Unknown	
		Collaboration across sector in Scotland, sharing best practice	Fully	Meetings with Regional Framework Leads to Share Practice and remove duplication of effort scheduled for three times a year

[85] The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework | The go-to research resource for Scottish Archaeology
[86] For more information see: Take part in our Rock Art Survey! | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework

the evidence can be used to tell.		Collaboration with non-Scottish partners at HE and Europe with best practice	Fully	Attendance on OASIS Management Board,[87] Attends Forum on Information Standards in Heritage (FISH) Meetings, Working with Historic England to develop digital platform and discuss best practice.
	Support creation of local/regional and thematic research frameworks	Publication of Regional Research Framework (RRFs)	Partially	There are currently seven regional research frameworks either completed or ongoing.[88] These have been part-funded by Historic Environment Scotland and are being co-ordinated through ScARF. When complete they will all be available and searchable as part of the ScARF website and will tie directly into the national framework. Discussions with local archaeologists in areas without RRF coverage ongoing.
Encourage the creation of 'big picture' stories based on bringing together research results	Encourage collaboration to create projects that look at 'big picture' stories for a wider audience. Measure impact of creating big picture stories.	Record collaboration/ projects	Partially	Ongoing - Plan for review of the next steps for ScARF in 2025 as RRF project are complete/all funded. Prioritisation and sector discussion required on gaps and need for thematic frameworks that can be developed in a more strategic fashion. Until then small updates and case studies can be incorporated into existing resource.
	Create media strategies for sharing results for different audiences	Recorded increase in media stories broken down by media type (social media, Journals etc)	Not met	This has not been discussed at SSAC meetings
Support effective methods of sharing research results, through collaboration with a range of	Support projects or organisations that actively support collaboration between museums, archives and	Better understanding how Open Access is used and what barriers there are to accessing and publishing open access research. Summarising number of Open Access titles funded through the strategy.	Partially	Ongoing. Annual count of Open Access publications/papers (available for HES funded but not for Open Accss papers funded from other sources)
		Three Skills Workshops - to be delivered in the Perth and Kinross region in by March 2022	Fully	Complete[89]

[87] OASIS: OASIS Management Board
[88] See Regional | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework
[89] See Perth and Kinross Archaeological Research Framework | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework

partners, including museums, archives and the education sector	education with the aim of open access to research	Three Skills Workshops – to be delivered in the Perth and Kinross region in by March	Fully	Complete
	Research relevant projects to measure impact of collaboration	Case study reports	Partially	Case studies created as part of the ScARF reviews in 2019 and more recently for the regional research framework review.
Ensure knowledge is increasingly discoverable, accessible, referable and reusable now and for future generations by 2025	Support the delivery of the Scottish Historic Environment Data (SHED) Strategy (especially linking existing registers and records such as Canmore and HERs)	List/number of data improvement projects delivered, Number of automatic updates/links as project progresses	Unknown	Unknown
	Support development and delivery of Open Access strategies. Support the online accessibility of online research databases and tools via the ScARF website.	Number of resources hosted on ScARF website.	Fully	Society of Antiquaries of Scotland open access publication of books on its own platform and pushing fpr open access publication of Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries. Already hosts Scottish Archaeology Internet Reports and ScARF is open and free. HES also ran an open access survey on X/Twitter to gauge sector opinions on this.

Table D3 - Summary of content relating to Aim 3: Caring and Protecting

Vision	Actions	Measurement	Achievement	Narrative
Provide access to suitably qualified expert advice in decision making	Advocate the benefits of maintaining skills and applied expertise through publishing an annual audit (linked to SHEA) designed to promote and measure the provision of expert advice in Scotland and its impact	Increase in awareness in public bodies of importance of expert advice and availability across the public sector.	Fully	Annual ALGAO Survey reports completed. Fame publications completed. Attendance at SHEA, HER Forum (Scotland); HER Forum (Scotland) Technical Working Group etc contributes to biennial Scotland's Historic Environment Audit. Contributions made to annual OPiT Performance Report and OPOF review Day-to-day decision making as part of National and Local Government and ALGAO reports is ongoing.
	Identify gaps in expert advice and provide recommendations to minimise them.	Complete staged mapping of expert advice, roles and functions across sector.	Partially	Workshops held; New Protocol/Guidance documents agreed and launched
Help those providing expert advice and managing change keep abreast of new knowledge and innovations	Promote the sharing of information about new research activities and innovations using existing newsletters, training and conferences	Record instances of events and outputs.	Fully	ALGAO Scotland Discussion Forum; Annual Highland Archaeology Festival; Annual P&K Archaeology Month; Annual Edinburgh/Lothians & Borders Archaeology Conference; Lectures; Events; Scottish CIfA Group. ALGAO:UK and ALGAO:Scot run and promote various training workshops and discussions on various areas of specialised training. ALGAO also partners with others in the sector to deliver training and workshops. This included areas such as dendrochronology, renewable energy, geophysical survey. These are free to ALGAO member councils' members and at times open to non-members. ALGAO Members also deliver training and guidance to other specialists within planning regarding the Historic Environment e.g. HOPS, Planning committees, planning officers
	Encourage access for expert advisors to specialised training and conferences by helping financially or through publicising events and administering attendance			
Improve how we manage change in the historic environment, including assessing where change is not	Critically consider current processes following recent planning review	Complete a review providing recommendations on managing change	Fully	Reviews continually undertaken following each change in national policy or guidance e.g. Updated PD rights meant a change in how rural buildings were assessed; the latest iteration of the planning Regs (NPF4) saw an assessment of processes and requirements including the introduction of Public Benefit across the board

being actively managed (with an emphasis on new and creative ways of providing incentives including policy drivers)	Generate innovative ideas for encouraging management with positive heritage impacts	Named policy or guidance document and/or process which has been reviewed and updated or introduced as a result	Fully	Scottish Planning Policy (NPPF4); Battlefields Inventory; OPIT/OPOF; Managing Change - Underwater Heritage; Treasure Trove Consultation; Agricultural Bill; Consultation on the Burials Act. Commissioned an update on the Archaeology in Development Management report compiled in 2019. ALGAO will be responding to the consultation on the Scottish National Adaption Plan. Roles and Responsibilities on Chance Finds etc; Transport Scotland Guidance Archaeology in Major Infrastructure Projects; ALGAO Peatland Restoration Project; Social Benefit; Scottish Heritage Crime Group with Police Scotland; Peatland Restoration
	Advocate to incorporate changes from reviews			
Develop a clear, properly resourced, co-ordinated approach to chance discoveries and archaeological emergencies	Review current approach to chance discoveries and archaeological emergencies (including reporting) to allow information to be accessible	Complete a review providing a recommended approach: human remains and significant chance finds and other archaeological emergencies.	Fully	Draft procedures have been agreed between Police Scotland. HES and ALGAO: Scotland for human remains. Revised HES call-off contract for human remains and significant archaeological artefacts and other archaeological emergencies.
		Consistent procedures for dealing with chance finds of human remains in all LEAs	Partially	
		System for allocation of human remains to museums / repositories willing to take them	Partially	
Review the current provision for national and local archaeological collections in museums and archives (in line with reports undertaken in England and Wales)	Create working groups to review: Storage (including digital) Capacity (including staff skills) Conservation Dissemination	Working group established and producing recommendations.	Fully	Scottish Archaeology Museums Working Group established (SAMWG). Elements covered as part of its remit.
	Create a working group to review: Accessioning and Cataloguing	Feasibility study into implementation of a 'processing fee' by museums	Partially	SAMWG established. Before The Museum project ongoing. Project due for completion in 2025.
		Review of Post Excavation Research Designs used in Planning Process to	Partially	

		Implement Recommendations		
		Review existing standards and produce Guidelines for Making Finds and Assemblages Museum Ready	Partially	
	Create a working group to review: Collection Processes – selection, retention and disposal processes	Survey sent out and results obtained	Partially	SAMWG established and survey conducted. At the Museum project ongoing. SAMWG Formed and aspects covered in Sector Survey. Archaeology Collections review not featured here but a key priority of At the Museum.
		Survey report; summary of issue for stakeholders to identify issues	Partially	
		Action plan from survey report	Partially	
	Create a working group to review Treasure Trove processes	Working group established and producing recommendations.	Not met	Superseded by Treasure Trove Review published August 2024.[90]
	Create a working group to review under-reporting of finds			Superseded. Considered as part of 2024 Treasure Trove Review
Improve collection and archiving practices	Museums & archives working group to consider working of Treasure Trove process, and revisit Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) advice paper as required	Working group established and producing recommendations.	Not met	Superseded. Considered as part of 2024 TT Review

[90] Treasure Trove Review Report

Table D4 – Summary of content relating to Aim 4: Encouraging Greater Engagement

Vision	Actions	Measurement	Achievement	Narrative
Support collaborative partnerships within and beyond the archaeological community to: enable wider public engagement; reach broad and diverse audiences; maximise resources; promote information exchange	Organise collaborative workshop(s) to share knowledge and skills in regard to wider public engagement and help produce best practice guidance	Review of Dig It 2015	Fully	Review completed and used to inform next phase of project.
		Organise workshop with Scottish Archaeology Month/Highland Archaeology Festival /Dig it! etc to coordinate target areas/audiences/share plans and best practice guidance	Fully	
		Produce Best Practice Guidance	Fully	Intergenerational Toolkit and case study shared; Archaeology resources and activities for people living with dementia created.
	Implement best practice in existing initiatives such as Year of Archaeology 2017, Dig It! 2015, Scottish Archaeology Month, Perthshire Archaeology Month and Highland Archaeology Festival	Collate List of Public Engagement Events such as talks/workshops/events; Scottish Archaeology Month / Archaeology Research Facility / CHC Archaeology and Heritage[91]	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting
		Number of Scottish Heritage Social Media Group Meetings	Fully	Subjects include 'Developing Anti-Racist Messaging'; 'When Your News Story Goes Global'; 'Using Social Media to Diversify Archaeology in Scotland '; 'Making the Most of Social Media When Working Part-time'
		Number of Young Archaeologist Clubs in Scotland	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting.
		Produce Best Practice Guidance and review best practice guidance	Partially	HES produced Sharing Our Stories[92] Archaeology Scotland's Heritage Resources Portal[93] Review of best practice guidance not completed.

[91] CHC – Archaeology and Heritage – Archaeology for you
[92] Archaeology Programme Guidance- Sharing our Stories
[93] Heritage Resources Portal

	Review strategic opportunities to widen audiences through policy, legislation and strategies (for example, Community Empowerment Bill, tourism initiatives, historic environment data, local government)	Advocacy - Continue to engage with and support relevant fora including BEFS Historic Environment Working Group; Scottish Environment LINK; The Archaeology Forum etc to identify opportunities to influence policy	Fully	Attendance includes: Archaeology Forum, OPIT; OPOF; LINK Woodland Group; Archaeology 2030 - Working Group 6: Engagement and Heritage Outreach; Attracting Future Talent Group.
		Review existing strategic opportunities to widen audiences through policy and then provide recommendations and advocate to incorporate changes.	Fully	Continued dialogue with key policy and decision makers including OPIT/OPOF, Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS), HEWG. Commented on numerous policy changes including NPPF4 and OPF
	Develop common evaluation methods to measure project success and enable increased participation (including tourism impact)	Produce 'Measuring Participatory Success in Archaeology' framework and guidance	Not met	Expression of Interest approved for funding application to HES for 'Measuring Participatory Success in Archaeology' framework. Intention is once this is produced to record the access metrics.
	Review success of common evaluation methods and widen to include all wider public participation in archaeological projects and initiatives			
	Encourage the use of archaeological results and information in other sectors (such as use of information on coastal archaeological sites to understand	Case Study Report with number of known cases of re-use	Unknown	Not currently able to capture re-use data.
		Updates made	Fully	Ongoing Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES); OASIS; Canmore[94] updates

[94] Welcome to Canmore | Canmore

	and predict impacts of climate change)	Meetings and Advocacy	Fully	Working with Creative Carbon Scotland's Springboard Assembly to support a Heritage Cohort to explore opportunities for future climate action. Plans for a Scottish Archaeology Climate Action Forum event with HES climate team. Attended CIfA's Climate Change Working Group. 'Strengthening Culture's Role in Climate Action '; 'BEFS National Parks Workshop'; 'HES / CIfA Delivering our Vision for Scottish Agriculture'; 'Managing Continuity and Change in Scotland's Landscapes' etc
Develop and promote best practice around integrating archaeology within the wider learning framework (promoting it as a key learning tool in the Curriculum for Excellence and helping teachers be better prepared to engage with archaeology and incorporate it into their teaching)	Create an 'Archaeology and Learning' Working Group (ALWG) which aims to work with a wide range of stakeholders	Remit and Action Plan for Working Group	Fully	
		Hold 3 meetings per year to review developments and suggest further actions	Fully	
		Archaeological Learning Training and Networking Day	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting. Planning underway for the 2024-25 ALWG event on Archaeology and the Climate Emergency – Protecting Scotland's Heritage Resource & Introduction to Archaeological Lifelong Learning.
	Resources: Review existing educational resources and supporting advice and grants	Review online portal through receiving feedback from users: both teachers and those in the sector who use the Portal to display their own resources	Fully	This will be ongoing as part of the maintenance of the online Heritage Resources Portal
	Resources: Develop and moderate an online portal allowing the exchange of ideas and best practice amongst the archaeological and teaching communities, listing educational resources and loan kits together with information about their	Number of new resources on the Heritage Resources Portal	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting.
		Monitor the number of Archaeology Scotland loan kits borrowed	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting.
		Continue to monitor the number of Heritage Hero Certificates Issued	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting.24000 since the project began

	distribution and collection and the availability of supporting advice and grants	Further develop the learning network to allow the exchange of ideas and best practice amongst the archaeological and teaching communities and signpost to guidance and blogs.	Fully	215 teachers/educators have signed up to the e-newsletter
	Links between archaeology professionals and teachers: Develop guidance in relation to incorporating 'Archaeological Education' into current undergraduate Archaeology courses in Scotland.	Develop Guidance Package	Partially	In discussion through the Archaeology and Learning Working Group
	Links between archaeology professionals and teachers: Promote the concept of 'Archaeological Educator' (archaeologists trained to integrate with the national curricula)	Archaeological Ambassadors Scheme established	Partially	Continues to pilot, planning for promotion to schools and supporting workshop development. Ambassadors include: AOC (3); Headland (1); GUARD (1); HES (2); Orkney Museum (1); Dundonald Castle (1) and Glasgow Uni (1).
		Record awareness of the role of Archaeological Educator	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting.
	Importance of archaeology in learning: Develop guidance package in 'Archaeology in Schools and Lifelong Learning' with a view to incorporate into current teacher	Develop Guidance Package	Fully	Guidance and support for adult learners is now available through the Heritage Resources Panel. Archaeology and Learning report from Northlight Heritage demonstrates how archaeology can deliver the Curriculum for Excellence.[95]

[95] See 1517_ArchaeologicalLearning_Report-FINAL.pdf

	training courses in Scotland, contributing to teacher training / CPD and teaching college programmes in order to increase the engagement of archaeology in schools.			Forestry and Land Scotland outdoor learning resources published.[96]
	Importance of archaeology in learning: Engage with the teaching community via workshop(s) (including the Heritage Education Forum)	Record number of training, workshop and networking events per year	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting. Events include: Edinburgh Outdoor Learning Network; Museums and Galleries Scotland Strategic Learning Forum; Intergenerational National Network (INN) hybrid meeting; Teaching Slavery in Scotland; Lifelong Learning in Lockdown; Scottish Parliament: Colonial History in Scotland's Primary & Secondary Schools Archaeology Project at CIfA's online Innovation Festival
		Record number of CPD sessions for teachers that include archaeology	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting.
	Promote Lifelong Learning initiatives and the potential for links between primary, secondary and tertiary education	Record number of lifelong learning initiatives focussing on archaeology; monitoring and evaluating them when possible.	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting. Projects include: Canal College; Craigmillar Castle; Lammermuir Care Home; Kelso Intergenerational Archaeology Project; Falkirk Canal's Festival; Cathkin Park; Summerlee Science Festival;
		Record number of lectures/seminars delivered to undergraduate archaeology students	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting
		Record use of archaeology in schools and evaluate its success	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting
		Number of Attainment through Archaeology session delivered	Fully	Figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting. Workshops taken place include: East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire; Scottish Borders.

[96] Archaeology and Outdoor Learning – Heritage Resources Portal

Enable and promote opportunities for wider public engagement through interpretation and presentation of archaeological projects (such as museum displays, travelling displays and onsite interpretation)	Promote building capacity within all archaeological funding for projects that provide interpretation that includes wider engagement with, and long-term benefits for, the public	Production of Best Practice Guidelines	Fully	Revision of HES archaeology grant guidance to include more guidance on project legacies. Forestry and Land Scotland guidance for outdoor learning. Increasing support for social prescribing, including reference to guidance in HES archaeology grant guidance.
		Review whether Guidance is Being Used	Not met	
	Produce best practice guidelines on 'popular presentation' with exemplar case studies	Production of Best Practice Guidelines	Fully	Sharing Our Stories gives examples of popular presentation.
		Review whether Guidance is Being Used	Not met	
	Training Workshops on fundraising for 'popular presentation' and good practice delivered	Training Workshops	Fully	Focus groups held during research for the Archaeology and Learning report published.[97]
		Good Practice Delivered	Fully	

[97] Archaeological Learning – the benefit and impact of archaeology – Heritage Resources Portal

Table D5 – Summary of content relating to Aim 5: Innovation and Skills

Vision	Actions	Measurement	Achievement	Narrative
Assess the current skills, knowledge and capacity to develop and evidence base	Commission a sector-wide skills, knowledge, and capacity audit within Scotland	Audit completed	Fully	The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) launched the report for 'Re-imagining Scottish Archaeology: structure, funding and delivery' in August 2020.
Use the skills audit to define gaps in learning opportunities needed to supply suitably skilled archaeologists	Disseminate the skills audit through means appropriate to our diverse audiences	End of Year Report to Funding and SSAC updates	Fully	Dissemination routes include: HES Annual Funding Report; SSAC updates; EAA conference sessions; CIFA conference sessions; Historic Environment Skills Forum; Northern Ireland Archaeology 2030 (archaeology) strategy; 21st-Century Challenges for Archaeology Programme, Programme Advisory Board
	Conduct a survey of training provision across the sector and provide recommendations for future delivery of training/ learning	Survey and report complete	Fully	Report produced. Skills Investment Plan refresh in 2023/2024 provided an up-to-date baseline of skill gaps and skills needs for the sector
	Define a career structure with defined pathways	Career Models and skills	Partially	This is an action point from the (UK wide) skills roundtable. One defined career pathway was completed as part of the Apprenticeship development work.
Foster a demand for skills from archaeologists, employers and those who commission services to encourage provision of training and development opportunities	Promote a greater understanding within clients and employers of accredited skills and competence necessary in archaeology	Record demand for accredited skills in advertised posts	Fully	Part of CIfA's wider professional development and practice remit. UK wide data is collected for the requirement of professional accreditation in recruitment and is published in the CIfA annual review. CIfA also contributed to the Historic England recruitment analysis project which collated data on skill demand and professional accreditation requirements.
	Promote a greater understanding within clients and employers of accredited skills and competence necessary in archaeology including: Using the proposed career structure defined above.	Record demand for proof of accreditation in procurement	Partially	Part of CIfA's wider professional development and practice remit. See comment on career structure above.

Develop and support a sustainable learning infrastructure to satisfy sector-wide needs, including the development of amateur archaeologists	Promote and support Continuing Professional Development (CPD) including seeking sources of financial support	40 heritage practitioners will attend one of four CPD workshops within 2021-2022 financial year.	Fully	Workshops include: NPF4; Active Bystander Training; Introduction to ethics in archaeology and professional accreditation applications; Transforming archaeological reporting for the benefit of all: Introduction to OASIS V, Scottish Research Frameworks and DES; Plain English' communication etc. Between April 2015 and March 2023, 452 Scotland based heritage practitioners attended a CPD workshop.
		Report on progress of CPD produced.	Fully	An evaluation report for HES was completed and submitted in April 2024 by CIfA- including evaluation data from workshops.
	Promote and support accredited training for example: professional accreditation; the NVQ in Archaeological Practice at Levels 2-4; the BAJR Skills Passport; and develop Professional Development Awards	Professionalism Workshop for all archaeologists.	Partially	CIfA support BAJR skills, NVQ. CIfA concentrating on Professional Development Award (PDA) for SQA. A consultant will be recruited to develop the formal content of the qualification, utilising the existing outline developed with key stakeholders.
		Develop promotional material aimed at non-graduate career entrants	Fully	Career pack has been completed and was published. new 'Career in Archaeology' leaflet has been produced by CIfA (as part of wider UK work).
		Report on progress	Fully	An evaluation report for HES funding received was submitted April 2024.
	Promote and support current and developing apprenticeship programmes	Develop the CIFA Scotland Apprenticeship Scheme	Partially	Ongoing- the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board formally approved the project; scheme to be finalised and rolled out by 2027.
		Support at least one registered Scottish organisation to develop a non-graduate career entry training programme	Partially	AOC will host 2 apprenticeships in 2025
		Report on progress	Fully	An evaluation report for HES funding received was submitted April 2024.
	Promote, support and seek funding for CPD initiatives, such as work-based placement schemes and internships	Record number of opportunities	Unknown	Will be reported on in April 2026 to HES when current funding grant ends.

	Promote and support partnerships between universities and employers including field schools and other skills-focussed training programmes	Record number of partnerships around training	Fully	Ongoing; figures included in HES Annual Funding Review reporting. Outcomes include: Aiding Edi Uni to get CIFA accreditation; various Careers' Fairs and Conference attendance. CIfA also attended the Scottish Student Society Archaeology Committee, hosted by Aberdeen University and attended by 70 students from St Andrews University, Glasgow University, Aberdeen University and Edinburgh University. CIfA took part in a panel discussion sharing career journeys and thoughts on the sector. Two Scottish Universities now hold accredited degree status.
	Develop a central online portal for all of the above archaeology skills and training resources	Review use of online portal	Not met	Currently unfunded however this is an action point from the (UK wide) skills roundtable.
Take strategic steps to mitigate current and future skills shortages	Through various means promote archaeology as a career	Record number of archaeologists in work annually	Fully	Data used from other sources such as Landward and FAME reports
		Communications campaign delivered	Fully	Ongoing as part of wider CIFA workstreams
		Four career events	Partially	Ongoing as part of wider CIFA workstreams
Support science development in Scottish archaeology	Support and promote science-themed workshops aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge	Workshop numbers and statistics	Partially	Following a meeting in November 2023 with the Technical Education and Training development team, pulling together a project brief to gain approval for full development of an openly accessible, interactive e-learning course in radiocarbon dating. It is hoped that these will sit complementary to the guidance documents being produced under aim 1. If successful, the platform can be adapted for other archaeology modules.
	Prioritise science research ideas to students when providing project information (including assemblages) where they have been left incomplete or need further analysis	Reduction in number of projects left incomplete Identification and addition of science projects into the Legacy Portal	Unknown	Identification and addition of science projects into the Legacy Portal (see table for Aim 1)
	Explore mechanisms for providing Scotland-wide science advice	Proposal produced	Fully	Proposal led to creation of the Archaeological Science Manager post in HES.

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From many voices to smart choices

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