

## **Consultation draft, Scotland's Historic Environment Data (SHED) Strategy (2013):**

### **Summary of Consultation Responses**

#### **Background**

The strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment Data (SHED) was developed in 2012-13, and a consultation draft was open for comments between 7<sup>th</sup> May and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013 – LINK. The 23 subsequent responses were collated and considered by a small group of representatives of the SMR Forum, ALGAO: Scotland, Historic Scotland and RCAHMS. The revised, final version was circulated to the SMR Forum in advance of their meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013, with a view to a launch early in 2014 and a formal launch at the IfA Conference in April 2014.

#### **Main responses**

##### ***Overall supportive***

While many detailed comments were made, the responses overall were very supportive of the Strategy, and showed considerable enthusiasm for action.

##### ***Need for more detail***

Several respondents would have like to see more detail than was available in the draft Strategy. However, a decision had previously been made for the document to be very strategic, with some ideas for actions and activities, but without fleshing these out. The detail will be developed by the SHED Programme Board and its workstreams.

##### ***Clarity over roles***

Some respondents felt that there should be more clarity over roles. The roles and responsibilities tables within the draft did not provoke significant response, and will be tested and adapted as the Strategy is taken forward. This will include being more specific about membership of the various groups involved in governance.

##### ***Links to Government strategic outcomes***

Comments were made about the use of the document at the level of Scottish Government, and the need for clearer or stronger links to the Government's Purpose, Outcomes, etc. On reflection, it was felt that the Strategy was an underpinning document, which would be referred to in separate advocacy documents, tailored for particular audiences. The section on benefits was, however, revised and enhanced.

##### ***Role of PastMap***

While PastMap is the closest thing we have at present to a hub for SHED, it was accepted that this may turn out not to be the best or most appropriate portal in the future, where technology or changing relationships may take the portal concept in new directions. References to PastMap have therefore been adapted to reflect this.

##### ***Spread of datasets***

The fact that at present the SHED does not yet cover all historic environment data was raised. Given the long time-frame for the delivery of the Strategy – a reflection of the human and financial resources that are likely to be available – it has been accepted that the work will have to progress from core SMR/HER-type data, working out to accommodate other relevant information that may not yet be part of the SHED, e.g. data arising from threatened building

survey; information about finds and artefacts related to places; archival information; etc. Broadening out the extent of SHED is a significant challenge, but also a priority of the Strategy.

***Local authority historic environment services***

The need for expert advisors to use the data in the local authority planning context was brought up. While there is an obvious need for local authorities to provide for this, it was felt to be beyond the scope of the SHED Strategy as such, and relates more clearly to the overarching Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland – where the issue is already being explored.

***Content enhancement***

Many comments arose during the workshops and the subsequent consultation relating to the content and quality of the records of Scotland’s historic environment, such as empty records; the need for more images; the benefit of digitising documents and making them available on line. These ideas have not been lost, but will not be taken forward specifically within the SHED Strategy as such, which is more to do with metadata, standards, facilitation, efficiency and effectiveness. It is expected, as a result of implementing the SHED Strategy, that content will consequently be improved.

***Duplication of data***

Comments were made about the need to *eradicate* rather than *minimise* duplication of data. The preferred line is to ‘minimise’ duplication, recognising that some metadata will inevitably need to be duplicated in order for appropriate linkages to be made between datasets.

***Carter Report***

More information was requested about why some aspects of the Carter Report were not promoted within the draft Strategy. More detailed information about the discussions that led to the conclusion that, owing to the complexity of the sector and the datasets held across it, the key proposal – for centralisation of the data – was “not workable”, is contained in the discussions of the SMR Forum from 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (the Curator’s Workshop’ (Mann 2012a)).

The SHED Strategy can only operate effectively by consensus, recognising that this will take time and effort, and will require a willingness to compromise – working within the principles set out in the Strategy.

*SHED Strategy Group  
February 2014*