Workshop Report

Implementing Scotland's Historic Environment Data Strategy

Consultation workshop held 26th November 2015,
at the Royal Scots Club, Abercromby Place, Edinburgh

1 Introduction

1.1 The workshop was convened to explore implementation of Scotland's Historic Environment Strategy (SHED) which was published in 2014. The SHED Programme Board wished to share the draft Implementation Plan with stakeholders, to discuss ideas and priorities, and to encourage stakeholders to think about the role that their organisations play (or could play) in delivering the Strategy. Participants are listed at the end of this report.

2 Scene Setting and initial reaction

2.1 In presentations Robin Turner, convenor of the SHED Programme Board, introduced the day; Stephanie Leith and Susan Hamilton spoke about achievements to date; and Bruce Mann gave an overview of the draft Implementation Plan. It was highlighted that information is being lost from local authorities and it is important that everyone think about the relevance of data at the national level.

2.2 A number of questions and comments were made from the floor. These addressed the potential to link archaeology data to planning history; there is considerable material that is generated on multi-disciplinary projects that could be supplied to local authorities or the Archaeology Data Service. Participants sought clarity on the meaning of the Data Seal of Approval and the ambition that Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has to achieve this standard, which ensures that material is preserved in an authentic state. Reference was made to Scotland's Land Information Service (ScotLIS) which is linking land and property data using web services; there is potential to link in historic environment data through the SHED Strategy. It is hoped that the Strategy will help to reduce duplication by clearly setting out responsibilities and that this will help to 'mainstream' this work. Reference to publishing and publications is notably absent – in response it was noted that there opportunities arising for example with the Archaeology Data Service.

2.3   The first set of breakout discussions addressed the content of the draft Implementation Plan, with participants selecting to discuss one of the following sections: Baseline Data, Standards, and Roles and Responsibilities. Participants discussed what works, what doesn't, what is needed? Also to identify priorities for things that will make a difference.

3   Baseline data

3.1   What works: HES, Canmore and DES are valuable resources. It is useful to see different map layers. PastMap has potential to raise data quality.

3.2   What doesn't work:

- Data does not yet reach all potential users
- HER data is out of date (HER managers are under-resourced – is there scope for automated upload mechanism?)
- Duplication in different systems
- Poor mobile access
- Canmore is not good for key word searching
- Discrepancies between HERs and Canmore

3.3   What's needed?

Priorities are marked *.

- **Scotland-wide polygonisation** to same standard, with additional layers including event data, historic maps and aerial photography (recognition that there are potential discrepancies as it is not backdated). *
- **Scotland-wide online HER coverage** (possibly using PastMap as a portal, and scope for automating upload from HERs to PastMap). *
- **Participation and training.** *
- Web services; **fast (mobile) access to linked data.** *
- **Improved functionality** (keyword searching –especially of PastMap). *
- Inclusion of local authority planning data (also promoting data on the planning portal as a tool for research).
- Resourcing.
- Simplify roles and responsibilities to reduce duplication.
- Increasing the usability of data for analytical purposes.
- A better understanding of the potential use of data, in order to be able to target new audiences, possibly in a commercial way (such as ScotLIS).
- Improve ability of the lay user to add data (crowdsourcing – with caveats around quality control).
- Link to online publications from PastMap, ability to upload pdf files.

- Potential to add other historic environment datasets to PastMap such as Buildings at Risk Register data along with the dictionary of Scottish Architects
- Scope to make better use of Scottish Environment Web (SEWeb) as a platform?
- One record with links to other sources (PastMap, Canmore, HERs), one form to input information into multiple records.

4 Standards

4.1 What's needed?

Priorities are marked *.

- 'Data discovery' – focusing on meeting the needs of the audience and standardising the search vocabulary (identify audience and tailor language accordingly). We should aim to **'standardise the audience'** and tailor the way information/data sets are presented accordingly. Achieving best practice in the use and reuse of data (packaging data for multiple audiences). *
- Linked and open data which will help improve **data quality**.
- Evaluating community generated content (possible 'traffic light system' to indicate data quality). *
- HES achieving the Data Seal of Approval. *
- **Standardise polygonisation** across Scotland (including the treatment of curtilage in the transition away from point-based data).
- Create short and succinct 'core standards/technical specifications' that are transparent and accessible for the public. Subsets of standards can go into more technical detail.
- Potential to frame guidance in a European context to add weight. (Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has benefitted from applying European standards).
- Raising the profile of standards through use of examples and case studies
- Expanding the audience for the technology by reaching out to academic colleagues (a larger audience also helps justify data collection).
- The Scottish Government statistical service may be able to provide advice on data quality.
- Work with others such as SEPA who are also ensuring that data is 'open access'.
- Help users by using Plain English and providing a glossary (use of acronyms can be alienating).
- Local authority agreement on data interpretation standards.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 What doesn't work: This group also highlighted that not all HERS are online.

5.2   What's needed?

Priorities are marked *.

- **Resourcing** – we need to develop a central business cases for the SHED initiative (and/or define projects) and promote the initiative across the Scottish Government. Focus on easy wins. *
- **Communication** across all levels - recognising different perspectives right across the historic environment sector. We need to promote the value of SHED. *
- To develop links with **intangible heritage** – connecting people's association with places. *
- To develop and mainstream the profile of SHED – develop clear messages about its value.
- **Audience** - we need a clearer understanding of end user requirements; to identify the wide range of user and potential users. We must recognise that the audience is multi-faceted – there is no 'one size fits all'. *
- We need to achieve **consistency in data interpretation services.** (This is a possible 'detailed action' in developing the framework for local authority archaeologists).*
- **Training for communities** (confidence and language – both in regard to using data and inputting data).*
- To target the most easily accessible **historic building data** as a priority.*
- Include 'antiquity models' within SHED.
- Programme Board to look at 'Scotland's Greenspace Map'.
- Potential to engage with Scottish Government's community empowerment and engagement strategy/policy, etc.
- We need to meet the needs of users in the private sector who interpret data.
- We need to understand how up-to-date information is and where any data gaps may be.

6   Implementing the Strategy

6.1   How can you help deliver the plan?

Matt Ritchie (Forestry Enterprise Scotland) and Ellie Graham Allsop (The SCAPE Trust) gave presentations illustrating how the plan is being put into practice. Participants considered how they might contribute to implementing the Strategy, and how they might be supported in doing this.

- One group discussed the value/purpose of polygonisation; specifically how this can help to identify the 'potential' as well as 'known' extent of assets. Another noted that as users ourselves, we can help inform and guide the polygonisation of historic assets (such as listed buildings and listed building curtilage) – we can share knowledge and good practice.

- The group agreed that data needs to be tailored to various user requirements. To achieve this, we need to understand how data is used – such as for monitoring change. The Forestry Commission is tailoring data to meet user needs. There is therefore a role in analysing data and packaging it in appropriate formats according to user needs. The Scottish Government Improvement Service could have a role here.
- There is a role in making data available for re-use (open data). Also a role for everyone in promoting each other's data (data linkage).
- A potential role for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in linking digital publications to site records.
- HES was identified as having a role in facilitating and enabling activity, creating linkages, developing standards and technology.
- Potential linkage with data held by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to help inform integrated land management.

6.2 What do you need help with?

- We need to work together to further develop a national standard/specification for polygonisation.
- We need to be clear about the purpose of the Strategy and Implementation Plan and ultimately who we are trying to reach. We need support with understanding user needs – defining the audience(s) and tailoring data provision accordingly.
- Support with using data as a planning/management tool to manage change in the historic environment.
- Simplified processes for inputting and extracting data (especially for community groups).
- Support with community-generated content.
- Support with linkage to e-planning (including data on historic buildings).
- Support with cataloguing museum finds (including attaching place identification to objects).
- Including pictures in Treasure Trove.
- Copyright issues on use of data held nationally.
- Categorising 'significance'.
- Managing retrospective work/mining data including grey literature (e.g. walkover survey extents and survey data input – forestry and coastal), excavation extents and footprints (capturing 'preservation *in situ'* spatially).
- Planning for the long term (20-30 years) within the context of an ever changing external landscape (Brexit, Scottish independence, how will/might things change?) and within the European context so that our data can be useable on a Europe-wide level.

- Improving cross-sector communication and partnership working – reducing duplication by sharing information on projects; work with other data managers such as the Ordnance Survey, SEPA and SNH and piggy back onto existing initiatives such as land registry expansion.
- Some practical steps which could be taken include: integrating event records into PastMap, standardising the use of the OASIS number and planning reference (i.e. use these as identifying numbers to accompany paperwork and archive from the start to the end of the process).
- Support with aligning our products/outputs with the national curriculum (SEPA can provide examples).
- Skills development in working with volunteers (to increase volunteering capacity in data collation).
- Concerns expressed around funding and variable capacity across local authorities.
- Recognition that there will always be bits missing – we will not know everything!

7 Summary

During the discussions a number of key themes emerged. The need for fast mobile access to linked data – to avoid having to search multiple sources is widely recognised. The need to standardise polygonisation across Scotland is also a priority. At a time of increasing financial constraint, concerns over funding were expressed, particularly around local authority capacity to support historic environment record services. Participants called for Scotland-wide online coverage of HERs. With resourcing being squeezed, the need for better communication, partnership working and supporting community engagement was identified. The sector should make the most of opportunities to integrate historic environment data with other environment and property data 'platforms'. A key strand running throughout the workshop was the need for the sector to understand the audience for historic environment data, and package data more effectively to meet the needs of both existing and potential users.

8 Participants and Acknowledgements

8.1 The event was organised by Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) with support from Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Thanks go to everyone who participated in the workshop, and in particular to Robin Turner and Susan Hamilton (Historic Environment Scotland), Stephanie Leith (East Lothian Council), Bruce Mann (Aberdeenshire Council), Matt Ritchie (Forestry Enterprise Scotland) and Ellie Graham Allsop (The SCAPE Trust) for the presentations; Robin Turner and Bruce Mann for chairing; and to Bruce Mann, Susan Hamilton, Beccy Jones, Kirsty Lingstadt, Karen Robertson, Robin Turner, Matt Ritchie, Alan Leslie (Northlight), Fiona Hutchison (Museums Galleries Scotland), Jo Robertson, Saskia Smellie (BEFS); and Jo

Robertson and Anne Wilkinson (BEFS) for administration of the event. Individuals from the following organisations participated in the event:

Aberdeenshire Council
Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands
Archaeology Scotland
Architectural Heritage Fund
East Lothian Council
Forest Enterprise Scotland
GUARD Archaeology
Headland Archaeology
Historic England
Historic Environment Scotland
Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Museums Galleries Scotland
National Trust for Scotland
Northlight Heritage
Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage
Scottish Canals
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Scottish Government Improvement Service
Scottish Natural Heritage
Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
The SCAPE Trust
WA Coastal & Marine