



Historic England

# Stakeholder Survey 2017

## Developers



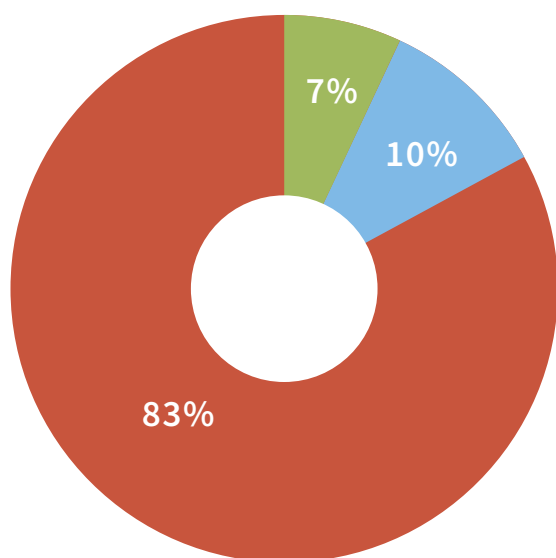
**Marcus Ward**

June 2017

# Background

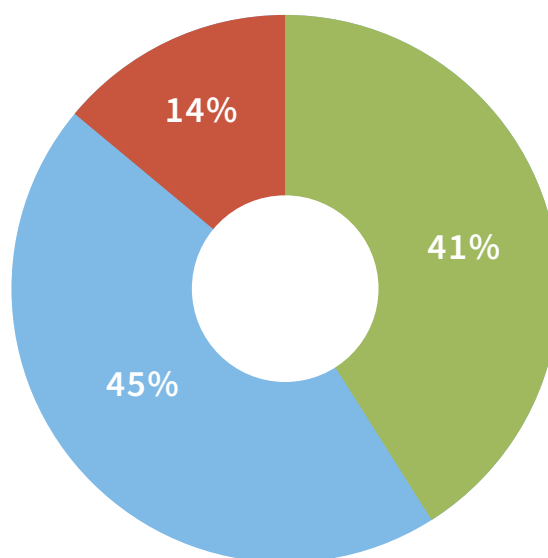
59 respondents completed the entirety of the online Developers Stakeholder Survey from February-March 2017 (a total of 76 started the survey). To qualify for the survey all respondents had to have had experience of working with, or been in contact with either Historic England after 1 April 2015 (7%), or with Historic England when it was part of English Heritage before 1 April 2015 (10%) or both (83%).

Contact with HE, EH or both



- Historic England after 1 April 2015
- English Heritage before 1 April 2015
- Both

Contact frequency with HE



- More than once a month
- More than once a year but less than once a month
- Once a year or less

## Sample

41% of respondents stated that they are in contact with HE on a regular basis (more than once a month), with 45% in contact more than once a year but less than once a month, and 14% of respondents being in contact once a year or less.

Note – only respondents who completed the entirety of the questionnaire (with the exceptions of routed questions) have been included in the analysis.

Note – comparisons with the data collected from the 2012 Developers Stakeholder Survey will be limited owing to low number of respondents who fully completed 2012's survey (14 in total) and the lack thereof of robustness in the conclusions that were able to be drawn. Any comparisons drawn should thus be treated with caution.

## Headline Findings

- Nearly half of the respondents (46%) feel that HE as an organisation is moving forwards.
- HE is viewed positively as an expert in heritage with 96% of respondents either agreeing strongly or agreeing somewhat.
- 76% of respondents regarded HE as the most authoritative organisation on historic environmental planning issues.
- HE is rated highly for the quality of the technical advice it provides with 70% of respondents agreeing with this statement.
- HE is not viewed as being obstructive.
- Marked concern about the staffing levels at HE – only 10% feel that HE is properly resourced, with 65% feeling that it is not.
- HE's performance against its seven aims of the Corporate Plan for 2016-19 revealed that developers feel that HE is performing best against 'Identifying and protecting England's special historic buildings and places' and 'Championing England's historic environment', with 92% and 87% agreeing respectively.
- Respondents were neutral in their attitudes towards the degree to which formation of Historic England (from English Heritage) has helped to protect and enhance the historic environment in England. 68% answered that it had neither improved nor made it worse, with 12% mentioning that it has improved.
- 71% of respondents were aware of HE's Enhanced Advisory Service.

## Implications of the Research

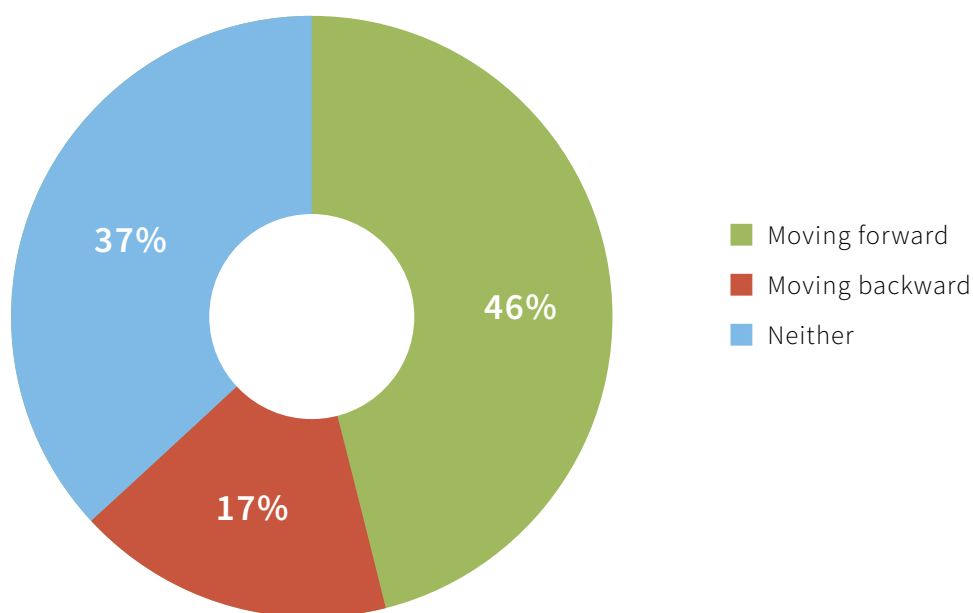
- The survey demonstrates that stakeholders are concerned about HE's under-resourcing and the knock on effects this entails. Further communication on this issue might be beneficial, for example demonstrating clearly what HE continues to do.
- The high number of respondents who felt that the formation of Historic England (from English Heritage) has neither improved nor worsened the protection and enhancement the historic environment in England requires further investigation. Deeper understanding as to the reasons why respondents feel this ways would yield interesting results.
- Work is required to demonstrate how HE has improved the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and importantly illustrate this to developers.
- The results of this investigation do provide an overall picture of how HE is viewed by its stakeholders; however this project could be seen as providing a benchmark from which further regular research could be contrasted against. It would be beneficial to run a repeat of the research after a period of time to illustrate change.

# The Direction of Historic England

Do you think Historic England as an organisation is moving forward, moving backward, or is moving neither forward nor backward?

Almost half of the respondents felt that as an organisation HE is moving forward (46%), with only 17% of respondents stating that they feel HE is moving backwards. 37% of respondents stated that HE was neither moving forward nor backward. A comparison of 2017's results with 2012's shows a marked decline in the per cent of respondents who feel HE is moving forward which previously stood at 67% for developers. Roughly the same number of respondents answered 'Neither' in 2012 (33%), and no respondents felt that HE was 'Moving backward' when previously asked. It must however be remembered that the low number of completes achieved in 2012 necessitates that these comparisons should be treated with caution.

Direction of Historic England



## Moving Forward

The verbatim comments highlight the key themes as to why respondents feel HE is moving forwards, this is predominantly due to the **improved focus** that the organisation now has upon separation with EH, for example:

- “Sharper focus – better organisation”
- “Better focused on policy now it is no longer distracted by having actual assets”
- “The Historic England team have become more pragmatic and forward thinking”

The comments also indicate that changes to **HE's approaches in working with developers** may also have contributed to the positive score:

- “More commercially minded and collaborative in their approach”
- “More involved with partners and proactive”

Perceived changes to the **ways in which HE communicates** can also been identified as possible reasons for the score:

- “Improvements in commutation and ability to contact”
- “The organisation appears to be becoming more accessible”
- “They are more approachable”

## Neither

The majority of respondents who selected ‘Neither’ commented that this was due to a perceived **lack of change/difference** in the organisation from when it was EH, for example:

- “Have not experienced anything different”
- “No change in my perception of service just a name change”
- “I can’t really say I have experienced a difference”

Given that 83% of respondent answered that they have worked with both HE (prior to the EH/HE split) and HE (after the EH/HE split) it implies that the ‘lack of change’ view isn’t held as a result of respondents not having worked with both organisations, which might make it harder for respondents to assess or notice the changes. Indeed respondents appear to be genuinely unable to see any discernible difference. These comments also run counter to the notion that the **improved focus** of HE has resulted in the organisation being seen to be moving forward. However with 45% of respondents being in contact with HE less than once a month it might suggest that they are perhaps less engaged with HE, and thus hold this perception.

## Moving Backward

For the 17% of respondents who felt that HE was moving backwards a key reason for this stance can be identified in part through a perceived **lack of resources** and the subsequent **changes in staffing**, for example:

- “Reduced capacity, un-contactable staff, delayed responses”
- “Loss of personal contacts within the organisation”
- “The organisation now has fewer and less well qualified staff and takes a less well informed and rounded view proposed of changes in the historic environment”

Respondents also noted that they feel HE has become **out of touch** and **less engaged** in contrast to when it was part of EH:

- “The organisation is becoming more divorced from reality and into academic discussions rather than practical solutions”
- “I preferred the EH proactive involvement in heritage projects which appears to have been lost”

## Key Points

- The majority of respondents feel HE is moving forward, although there has been a decline in the per cent of respondents who feel that HE is moving forwards when contrasted with 2012's results.
- There needs to be continued work on raising awareness of the organisational responsibilities of Historic England.
- There is a low number of respondents who feel HE is moving backwards, although this is higher than was the case in 2012.
- The lack of robustness of 2012's results means that any comparisons should be treated with caution.

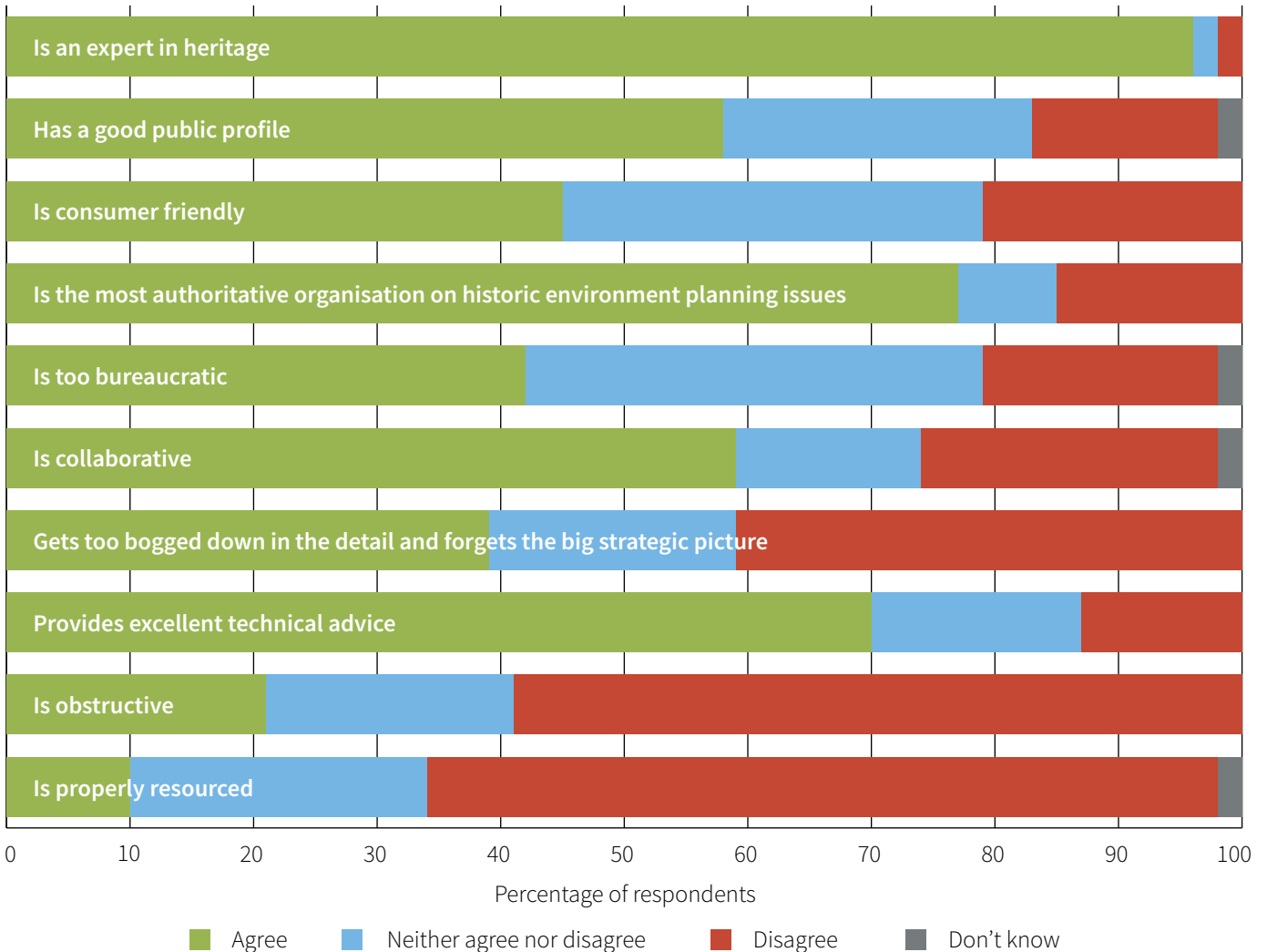
# How Historic England is Viewed

Below are a number of things people have said about Historic England. From your own experience or impression, how much do you agree or disagree with each of these?

Respondents were asked to judge how they view HE against a set of key indicators. The findings illustrate that HE is viewed most positively as an organisation that ‘Is an expert in Heritage’ with 96% of respondents answering that they either strongly agree or somewhat agree with this statement. Other high scores included 76% of respondents either agreeing strongly or agreeing somewhat that HE ‘Is the most authoritative organisation on historic environment planning issues’, and 70% agreeing that HE ‘Provides excellent technical advice’.

However 42% of respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agreed that HE is too bureaucratic, and less than half of respondent (46%) felt that HE is consumer friendly. There is also a concern about the staffing levels at HE with only 10% of respondents expressing the option that HE is properly resourced, a point also expressed in 2012’s survey. This point was also borne out in the verbatim responses on what HE as an organisation does poorly (below).

## How Historic England is viewed against the following statements



Note – only a limited direct comparison between this year’s results and that of 2012 is possible, owing to the differences in criteria assessed.

Note – top two and bottom two results have been combined.

## Key Points

- HE is most positively viewed as an organisation that 'Is an expert in Heritage'
- 42% of respondents feel HE is too bureaucratic
- Only 10% of respondents feel HE is properly resourced
- Less than half of respondents felt that HE is consumer friendly
- Encouragingly only just over 20% of developers feel that HE is obstructive.



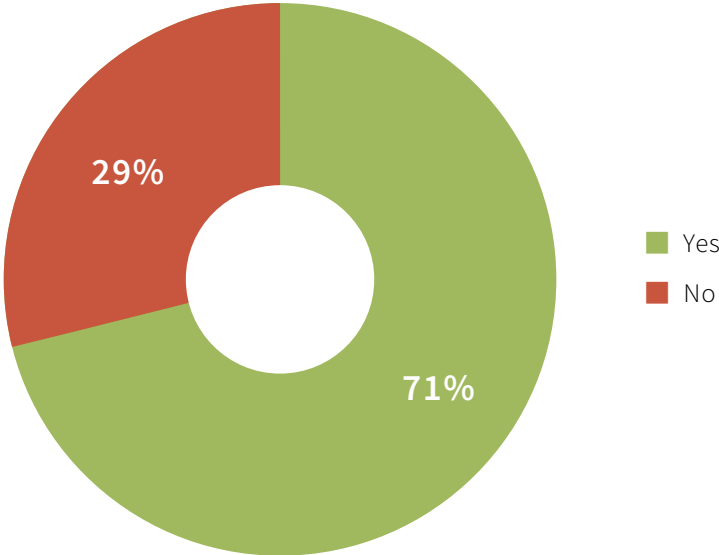


# Enhanced Advisory Services

Are you aware of Historic England’s paid-for Enhanced Advisory Services (EAS)?

Encouragingly 71% of respondents were aware of HE’s Enhanced Advisory Services.

Aware of Enhanced Advisory Services?



**Key Point**

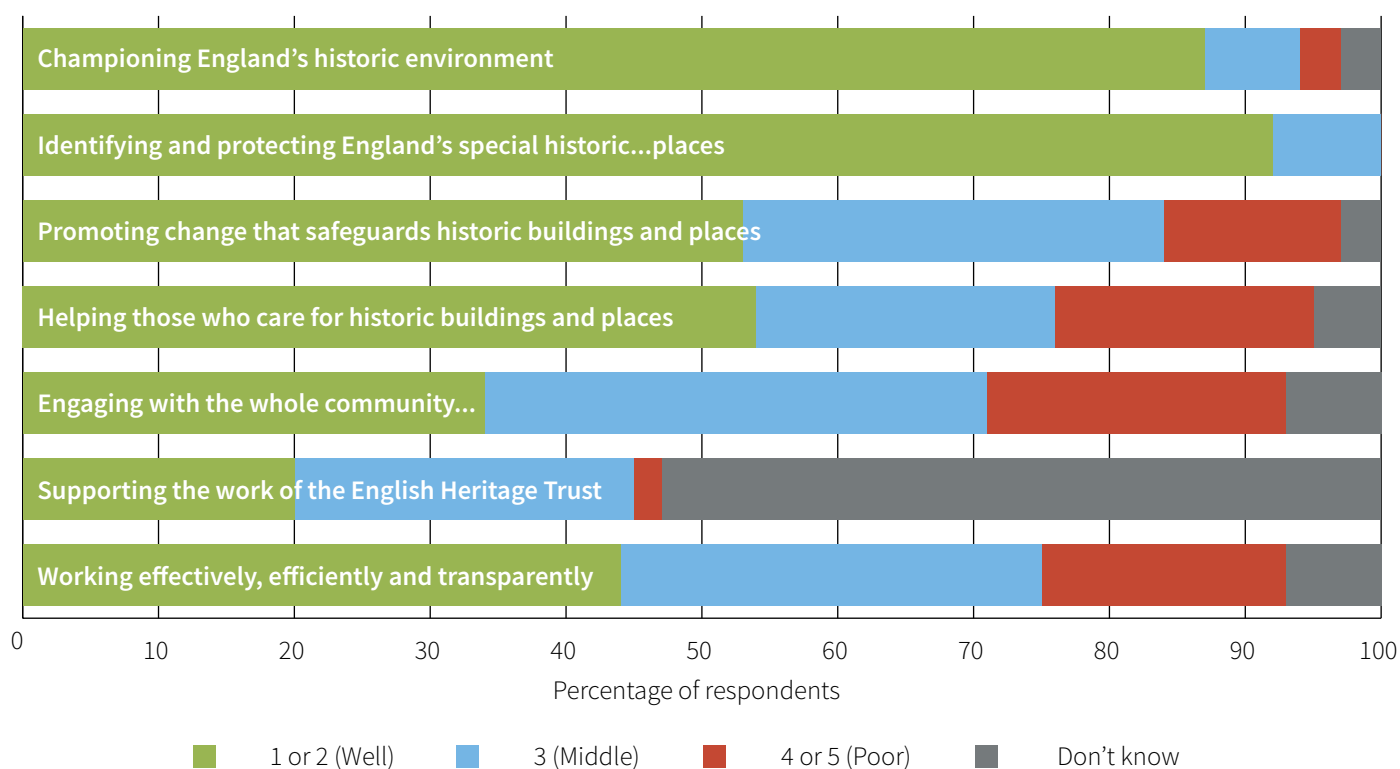
- Almost three-quarters of developers have heard about HE’s EAS

# Historic England – Performance Against the Seven Aims of the Corporate Plan for 2016-19

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very well and 5 being very poor, how well do you feel Historic England is performing against each of its aims?

This question assessed how respondents regard HE’s performance against the Seven Aims of the Corporate Plan for 2016-19. Respondents rated ‘Identifying and protecting England’s special historic buildings and places’ as the aim HE is performing best against with 92% of respondents answering this way. This was closely followed by ‘Championing England’s historic environment’ with a score of 87%. Notably both of these aims were at least 30% higher than the other five aims.

Performance against the seven aims of the Corporate Plan 2016-19



It is also encouraging to see that the number of ‘Don’t Knows’, with the exception of the aim ‘Supporting the work of the English Heritage Trust’ were low, implying that developers feel that they have a good understanding not only of HE’s aims, but also the performance against them.

## Key Points

- Respondents rate 'Championing England's historic environment' and 'Identifying and protecting England's special historic buildings and places' as by far the most important of HE's aims
- Generally the number of 'Don't Knows' was low, suggesting respondents feel they have a good understanding HE's performance against the aims
- Supporting the work of the English Heritage Trust was rated as the least important or least well known

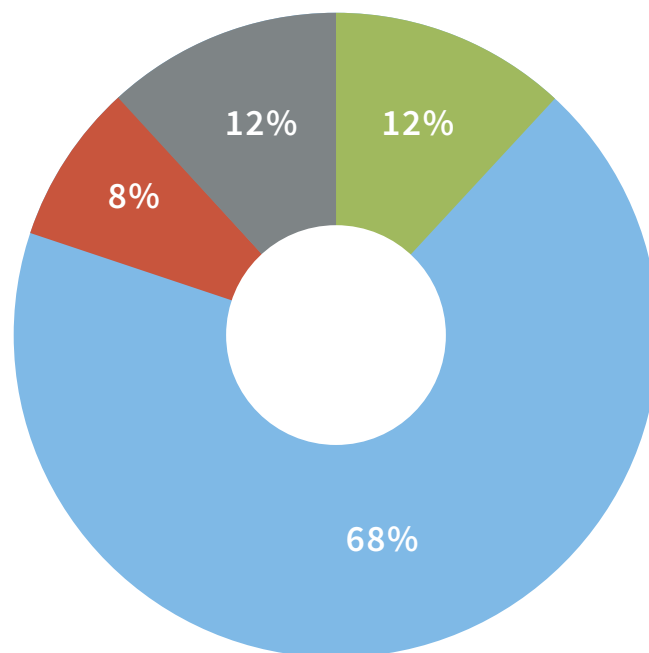
# Historic England vs. English Heritage

To what degree has the formation of Historic England (from English Heritage) helped protect and enhance the historic environment in England?

The results show that 68% of respondents believe that the formation of HE from EH has 'Neither improved nor made worse' the protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

Only 12% believed that it had improved, 8% felt it has worsened, and 12% didn't know.

What effect has the formation of Historic England had on protecting and enhancing the historic environment?



■ Improved ■ Neither improved nor made worse ■ Worsened ■ Don't know

## Key Points

- The majority of respondents feel that the formation of HE has neither improved nor made worse the protection and enhancement of the historic environment
- HE needs to further communicate the work it undertakes in helping to protect and enhance the historic environment in England
- Further investigation into the motivation for people's responses would yield interesting results

# Open Responses – What Historic England Does Well

Is there anything you would consider Historic England does particularly well?  
If so, what?

Respondents were asked to comment on what HE does well in which several respondents mentioned the **quality of the advice** HE provides as being one aspect, for example:

- “Quality of the advice given”
- “Expert advice and common sense solutions”
- “Providing good guidance and technical notes”
- “Provides advice during the planning process”

The **expertise** and the **excellence** of HE’s staff was also identified as an important theme:

- “Every staff member I have met has clearly been interested in and passionate about the historic environment. They are champions of our shared heritage”
- “Some individual inspectors are of the highest calibre, the best in the profession”
- “Local officers know their subject, work well with Local Planning Authorities”

Additionally, HE’s work in **raising the profile of heritage** and **safeguarding heritage assets** were also noted, for example:

- “Being there for heritage buildings...”
- “Safeguard historic buildings of exceptional heritage value”
- “Protection of heritage”
- “Protect the built environment”

## Key Points

- Respondents praised the quality of the advice HE provides to developers
- The expertise and excellence of HE’s staff was also highly rated
- HE’s good work in raising the profile of heritage and safeguarding heritage assets was also a frequently occurring theme

# Open Responses – What Historic England Does Poorly

Is there anything that you would consider Historic England does particularly poorly? If so, what?

Respondents were asked for their views on what HE does poorly.

A key point uncovered through the verbatim responses was the need for a more **balanced and flexible approach** to development issues, with respondents mentioning -

- “[There is] too much emphasis on safeguarding – avoiding harm – and not enough on realising the potential of the historic environment”
- “Consider the balance of the public benefits of a proposal”
- “Adapt to a changing economic environment and adopt flexible approaches to modify historic buildings”
- “HE is increasingly remote from real world practice, which involves reconciling heritage values with use, development and a complex range of other factors”
- “Understanding that the historic environment does and must change and that change is part of its character”

Linked to the above point, respondents also noted a need for HE to take into consideration the **wider picture**, identified through such statements as:

- “[HE needs to] consider the balance of the public benefits of a proposal”
- “Looks at the detail too closely without wider commercial or economic consideration”

The **response times to queries** was also a key point identified, for example:

- “Poor response rate to pre-application engagement due to insufficient staff resources. Staff are often overworked and unable to take on the number of cases assigned to them”
- “Responding to queries in a timely manner, particularly customer services”
- “Very busy staff who have few resources to get everything done. Needs more resources/staff”
- “It can take a while to get a response from someone, usually because they’re very busy, so are perhaps a little understaffed”
- “Takes a long time to answer queries”

Additionally, it was noted that HE needs to **become more forceful** in actions it undertakes:

- “HE has failed to influence the debate around London’s skyline and whilst it is strong on the conservation of buildings, it has been incredibly weak on the protection of historic townscape”
- “It spends too much time on fringe issues and producing guidance literature which is only read by conservation officers and which is then trotted out as policy rather than guidance. HE should concentrate on its core business of advising on change to the statutorily protected historic environment”

### Key Points

- Respondents implied that they feel HE needs to adopt a more balanced and flexible approach to development issues
- According to several respondents HE also needs to take a broader view of development and planning issues than it currently does
- Query response times were also noted as a weaker area of HE, a point also identified in the 2012 survey verbatim. It is important that HE remains a reliable stakeholder in terms of providing advice in a timely fashion
- Query response times might also be in part due to resources

# Open Responses – What Services or Products might Historic England Provide to Support your Work?

Please tell us about any services that we might provide which would support your work?

Respondents provided their views on what services or products HE might provide in order to support their work. Primarily the responses covered the provision of **specific guidance and advice notes**, for example:

- “Pre application advice”
- “Pre-development advice is an on-going support service”
- “Advice on neighbourhood planning”
- “Positive advice on how to manage change and education of local authority conservation officers to understand this”
- “Improved consultancy for specific projects, whether they are being promoted by LAs or private sector”
- “Replacing ‘Conservation Principles’ with a fit-for-purpose professional practice document would be useful”
- “More expert publications / guidance answering specific technical problems, not just generic policy related documents. More focus on the results of projects in the built environment, not just the planning process and policy”

Expanding on the above point, several respondents also mentioned the desire for **further training sessions** –

- “Training session to planning staff on the World Heritage Sites and other historic building issues”
- More training days in aspects of conservation & particularly planning works”

28% of respondents stated that there was **nothing** that HE needed to do to support their work.

## Key Points

- Comments illustrate the requirement for specific guidance and advice notes as being the key service or product that HE could produce in order to support developer’s work
- Training session and workshops were also mentioned
- However, a large number of respondents stated that there was nothing that HE needed to do to support their work



# Open Responses – How Historic England could become a More Effective Organisation

**Do you have any further suggestions for how Historic England could become a more effective organisation?**

Respondents were asked how Historic England could become a more effective organisation with comments suggesting that an **increase in HE's profile** would be an important step, for example:

- “Needs a stronger public profile”
- “It is much less ‘visible’ than pre-2015”
- “I don’t think HE has the profile/weight that it deserves within local authorities”

This point is particularly relevant given the 37% of respondents stated that HE is ‘Neither moving forward or backward’, as well as the follow-on verbatim which alluded to respondents being unable to see a difference in the organisation from when it was part of EH as being a key reason for this view being held.

**Increased collaboration and engagement** with various bodies and organisations was another theme identified, including:

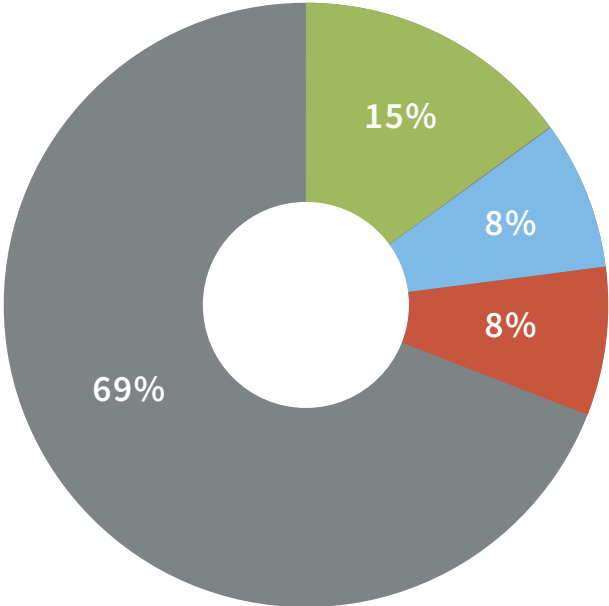
- “Better engagement with specialist designers”
- “Liaise more closely with local councils, engage in workshops with them”
- “Developing closer links with national and regional regeneration bodies. This includes community-led development”
- “Seek to collaborate more often”

## Key Points

- There exists a need to raise HE's profile
- Improved collaboration between HE and other bodies and organisations would make HE a more effective organisation according to respondents

# Respondent Information

Job Role



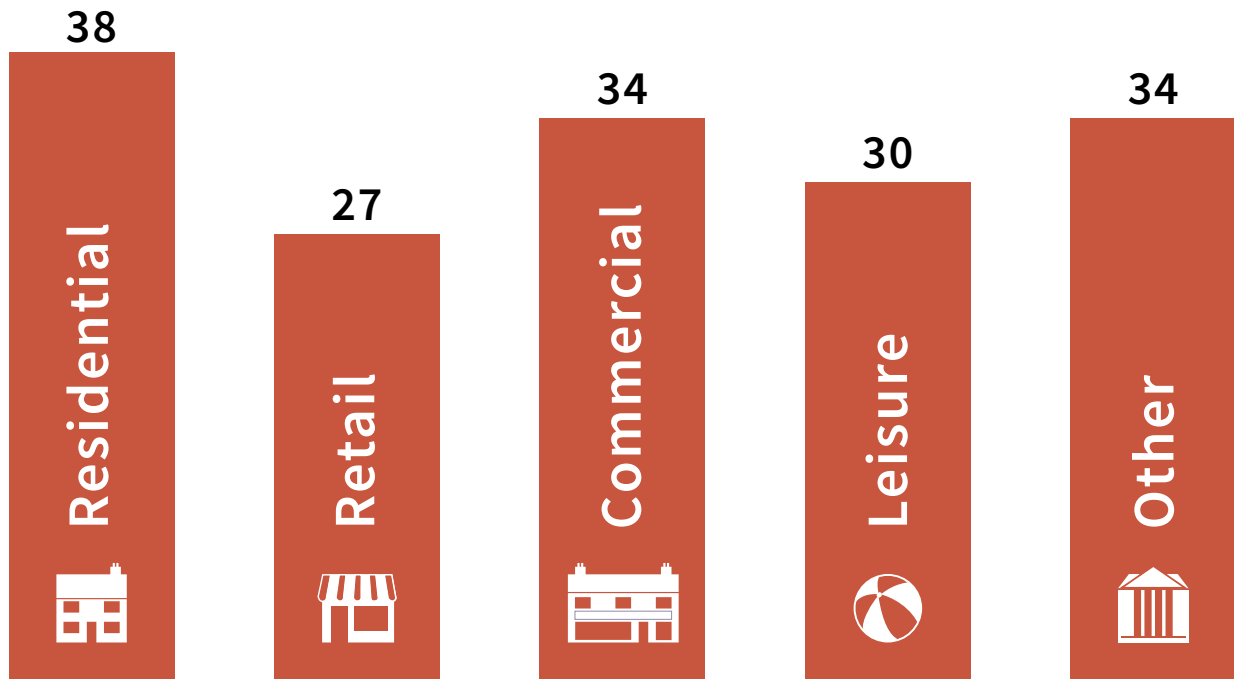
■ Chief Executive or equivalent ■ Development Director ■ Project Manager ■ Other

Other responses included:

- Heritage Consultant
- Conservation Architect
- Planning Consultant (Director)
- Planning Manager
- Architect Director
- Consultant
- Head of Planning
- Head of Portfolio
- Independent Heritage Consultant
- Principal Chartered Town Planner
- Built Environment Manager
- Architect
- Partner

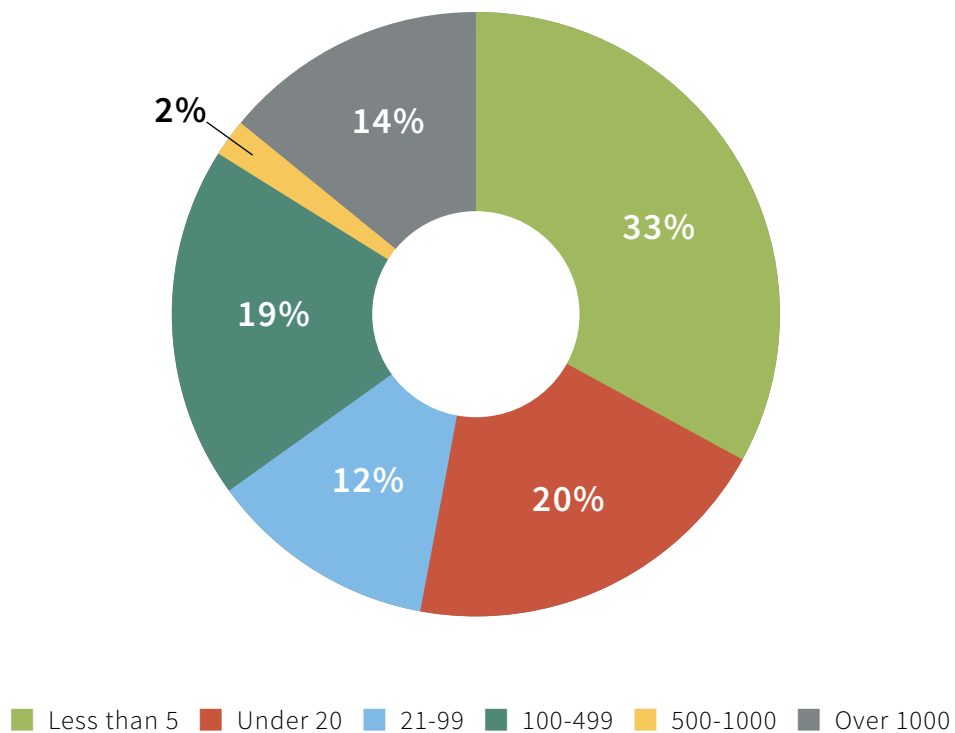
Respondents covered a variety of development sectors.

## Types of development carried out by the Respondents



Note – this question was a multiple choice, with some developers covering several sectors.

## How many employees does your company have?



# Appendix 1 – Developers Questionnaire

Historic England is keen to improve the quality of our services. Please help us by completing this short survey.

This survey concerns your interactions with Historic England.

Historic England is the public body that looks after England's historic environment. We champion historic places, helping people understand, value and care for them. We provide expert advice about it, help people protect and care for it, and help the public to understand and enjoy it.

Historic England (formerly known as English Heritage) was rebranded two years ago. In April 2015, English Heritage separated into two organisations – Historic England and the English Heritage Trust, a new independent charity that looks after the National Heritage Collection.

The results from this research will help inform our priorities and how we work with you in the future.

This survey does not collect personal information. All responses will be analysed in an aggregated and anonymous format.

It should not take more than 10 minutes to complete and will be open until **6 March 2017**.

If you have any further questions please contact Marcus Ward, Project Manager for Social and Economic Research ([Marcus.Ward@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:Marcus.Ward@HistoricEngland.org.uk)).

Regards

**Deborah Lamb**

Deputy Chief Executive  
Historic England

### Q1

On 1 April 2015 English Heritage separated into two organisations – Historic England and the English Heritage Trust, a new independent charity that looks after the National Heritage Collection.

Have you personally had any contact with Historic England or English Heritage?

1. Yes
2. No **CLOSE**

### Q2

Was this contact...

1. with Historic England (after 1 April 2015)
2. with Historic England, when it was English Heritage (before 1 April 2015)
3. with both
4. None of the above **CLOSE**

#### IF CODE 2 SELECTED

INFO – Thank you for your answers, we will refer to your contact as contact with ‘Historic England’

### Q3

How frequently are you in contact with Historic England?

1. Frequently (more than once a month)
2. Occasionally (more than once a year but less than once a month)
3. Rarely (once a year or less)
4. Never **CLOSE**

### Q4

Do you have a main point of contact at Historic England?

1. Yes, one individual
2. Yes, several individuals
3. No
4. Don't know

### Q5

Do you think Historic England as an organisation is moving forward, moving backward or is moving neither forwards nor backwards?

1. Moving forwards
2. Moving backward
3. Neither moving forward nor backward

### Q6

Please explain the reasons for your answer

### Q7

Below are a number of things people have said about Historic England. From your own experience or impression, how much do you agree or disagree with each of these? Historic England...

1. Is an expert in heritage
2. Has a good public profile
3. Is consumer friendly
4. Is the most authoritative organisation on historic environment planning issues
5. Is too bureaucratic
6. Is collaborative
7. Gets too bogged down in the detail and forgets the big strategic picture
8. Provides excellent technical advice
9. Is obstructive
10. Is properly resourced

### Q8

Are you aware of Historic England's paid-for Enhanced Advisory Services (EAS)?

1. Yes
2. No

**Q9**

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very well and 5 being very poor, how well you feel Historic England is performing against each of its aims?

1. Championing England's historic environment
2. Identifying and protecting England's special historic buildings and places
3. Promoting change that safeguards historic buildings and places
4. Helping those who care for historic buildings and places
5. Engaging with the whole community to foster a sense of ownership of buildings and places
6. Supporting the work of the English Heritage Trust
7. Working effectively, efficiently and transparently

**Q10**

To what degree has the formation of Historic England (from English Heritage) helped protect and enhance the historic environment in England?

1. Improved
2. Neither improved nor made worse
3. Worsened
4. Don't know

**Q11**

Is there anything you would consider Historic England does particularly well? If so, what?

**Q12**

Is there anything that you would consider Historic England does particularly poorly? If so, what?

**Q13**

Please tell us about any services that we might provide which would support your work?

**Q14**

Do you have any further suggestions for how Historic England could become a more effective organisation?

**Q15**

What term best describes your job role?

1. Chief Executive or equivalent
2. Development Director
3. Project Manager
4. Other (please specify)

**Q16**

What type of development does your company carry out? Please tick all that apply.

1. Residential
2. Retail
3. Commercial
4. Leisure
5. Other (please specify)

**Q17**

How many employees does your company have?

1. Less than 5
2. 5 to 20
3. 21 to 99
4. 100 to 499
5. 500 to 1000
6. Over 1000

**END.** Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey. Your input is very much valued.



# Historic England

We are the public body that looks after England's historic environment. We champion historic places, helping people understand, value and care for them.

Please contact [guidance@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:guidance@HistoricEngland.org.uk) with any questions about this document.

[HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)

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