

Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS)

Questions and Answers

Last updated: 4th February 2015

For explanation of acronyms see **Glossary** at end of this document.

1. Vision and scope of the strategy

- How does the HIAS relate to the wider issue of Local Authority historic environment advisory service provision?

It is a subset of this important wider issue, which we envisage will be considered in other forums.

We believe that significant progress can be made on the issue of information access in parallel with any discussions on the wider issue and the boundaries of the HIAS programme are appropriate to ensure progress can be made. Nevertheless, the programme will be designed to inform and be informed by any related wider developments.

- Is this strategy user-led?
Yes. The data being drawn into the HIAS needs to be managed on the basis of what people want to see coming out of it. Audience definition will be key part of the programme. The BPM and OASIS user requirements work currently under way are examples of ensuring that this is a reality.
- Will the strategy/how will the strategy respond to cultural differences between built environment/conservation practitioners and investigative/archaeological practitioners?
The programme will recognise and accommodate these cultural differences, building on the experience gained through the HER21 work. The aim of the programme is to ensure the needs of users across the spectrum of the heritage sector are met.

While there are overarching similarities ('investigation' applies in its broadest sense to both a detailed scientific excavation and an evaluation of the significance of a parish church, for example), we envisage optional entry paths for built environment information, through bespoke HERALD forms which cater for user desiderata (eg address/post-code for building, NGR for archaeology). Core data fields will be unified behind the scenes so no loss of integrity will occur.

- Where is the HIAS positioned on the development/planning > community/public spectrum?
HIAS is primarily about helping LA efficiency in terms of land use planning, while building added value. The broader public engagement activities of HERs are not disregarded – the efficiencies revealed if we get this right should provide arguments for enhancing those.

- How does the HIAS link to NPPF (eg significance > proportionality and reasonableness; preserve > sustain)?
More consistency in data; speedier and easier routes to access; increasing built/buried environment balance; far greater access to reports. Thus better applications and better informed responses.
- How does the HIAS link to HER 21?
The strategy is informed by and builds on the work undertaken under HER21 – see both the detailed vision document and the literature review summary.
- How does the HIAS link to the National Importance Project (NIP)?
This needs to be determined as the NIP develops, but the assessment of significance of sites which are of national importance but can't be designated for whatever reason should prove easier as the Strategy's implementation begins to bear fruit.
- How do we future proof HIAS implementation (eg Buildings Information Management directive)
A subject for discussion and to be kept under review during the Work Packages stage. BIM in particular can be seen to be a form of live digital 'archive' for a building – archives are out of scope of HIAS though are key interfaces. One can therefore in future imagine the HER metadata record for an event or monument linking to a BIM as easily as to a pdf report.
- How does HIAS interface with eg Planning Portal?
For further discussion. There are conceptual links between eg a planning application and an event record which might be harnessed to ensure a data link between HER records and planning records. Whether relevant reports submitted via planning applications can be hooked up directly to eg Grey Lit library is not yet clear.

2. Governance, roles and responsibilities

- Should this be an English Heritage/Historic England or sector-led project?
Who could or should be the other owners?
Partnership and consensus is essential if this initiative is to succeed. EH/HE anticipates a role co-ordinating and shaping the programme and investing in change. We anticipate partnership operating both at the Programme level and in relation to more specific Work Packages.
- How will roles and responsibilities for delivery be established and agreed?
A Work Package to explore and agree necessary Roles and Responsibilities is now planned as part of the next phase of the Programme. Models can be explored through the current Advisory Board and then formalised with key stakeholders at appropriate times as the Strategy is implemented.
- *How will joint working work in practice?*

Cross-body partnerships are nothing new. We need terms of reference and clear understanding of roles and responsibilities (see above). Financial support may well be necessary for securing ability to participate.

- Is there a role for HLF in HIAS?
HLF colleagues have been briefed on the strategy but formal HLF involvement in terms of governance and partnership is not envisaged at this stage in the work nor sought by HLF.

HLF's past research into digital technologies and heritage is relevant (see <http://www.hlf.org.uk/mapping-use-digital-technologies-heritage-sector>), and the HERALD component of the proposed strategy will itself be designed to ensure that community projects funded by HLF can link up where necessary. Example projects informing this view include: Heritage Connect (<http://www.heritageconnectlincoln.com/>) and England's Rock Art (<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/era/>)

- How do we ensure clarity between info in HIAS and material or digital archives?
The primary land use planning focus of the HIAS has been noted above but important value will be added by strong links to material and digital archives. We need to be much clearer about the scope of datasets which fall within this strategy, and then build suitable links to holdings of such archives to ensure appropriate cross-referencing. The 'event code' may well be the right approach here.

3. The deliverables – the practical matters

- What will be created by this strategy - how might it work?
A presentation expanding on the vision 'cartoon' was provided to the HIAS Advisory Board. More details building on the vision will be planned through the agreed Work Packages
- Is HERALD compatible with an HER-led principle?
Yes, HERALD is compatible. It will not serve up any data that should not be served up and will route all data to appropriate HERs.
- Will this result in Historic England managing a centralised virtual national online record?
No, HE will not manage a centralised online record but it will continue, through its partnership with ALGAO and IHBC, to enable cross-searching of records through the Heritage Gateway. HE will hold, under licence or SLA, a regularly updated national security copy. Cross-regional searches may be undertaken on this national version under terms agreed with LA HERs. HE has no interest in or locus for taking over a national service from LA services.
- How does the HIAS influence HER quality/consistency? Does HIAS deal with legacy issues in HERs (incl built environment data)?
The more consistent the data submitted, the greater the consistency of the resulting HER. Selection of records for inclusion on HERs may also evolve.

This will be a long-term outcome of the Strategy and can't be solved overnight. Legacy issues can't be tackled until the comprehensiveness and level of integration of future records has been assured. However, it is quite conceivable that funding currently applied to heritage data could be reworked to mine the backlogs that exist.

- What datasets will fall within scope? [eg Colvin, PAS, SPAB archive, AHP archive, BIAB, Red Boxes, NHLE, Heritage Statements, Conservation Plans, biographical data, estate agent particulars, historic maps, Record Office data, others – eg digital resources [Churchplan.org]?
This is a significant issue which will need to be dealt with as part of the emerging Work Packages.
- Will getting data in and out be easier and/or faster? Can you search by map?
Yes, we hope access for upload will be easier. Heritage Gateway users have indicated that significant improvements need to be made to the search mechanism, including an improved map interface, to make it easier and quicker to find information. Access to detailed records via HERs remains their purview, but Grey Literature reports should be increasingly easy to find. Interoperability of datasets should become more consistent and improve, so working with large, eg national datasets should become much more straightforward.
- What data will be available through HG?
The Heritage Gateway Partnership Board (EH, ALGAO and IHBC) aims to not only increase the number of HERs on HG (53 at present) but also explore opportunities for including more national datasets and other useful resources identified by HG users. It is intended that this area will be developed as a specific work package in liaison with the Partnership Board.
- Can data be served up with 'health warnings' ie at different levels of status/quality? Can others contribute in any way to the dataset (eg Wikipedia style 'unofficial' supplements to 'official records')?
In principle yes. This can be looked at as a work package. There are significant handling issues in relation to the planning process and property/copyright to be considered
- What actually will the proposed national security copy comprise?
A secure backup (and where appropriate an archive) of a comprehensive copy of the HER data. HIAS Principle 7 proposes that the National security copy will be the responsibility of Historic England. It is likely that individual HERs already undertake such security 'backups' as part of internal IT procedures. It may involve establishing a procedure so that such security copies are carried out comprehensively and submitted to a 'national secure digital repository' in a nationally compatible way across all HERs.
- *In addition, for purposes of providing data for the proposed HIAS National Queries Facility (functionality yet to be determined), certain Core fields relating to heritage data which are consistent across HERs will be needed. If appropriate, and if easier for technical purposes, this data for national queries*

could be derived as a subset of the national security copy. Any such arrangement will need to be considered, negotiated and agreed in more detail as part of a specific work package, and possibly an SLA will be needed. All 'added value' records held by HERs would remain their own IPR.

- How will HIAS manage file size issues?
This will depend on what files are being considered. Grey Literature type reports are not an issue (unless files are seriously big data). HER type records will not be large. This will be considered as part of the relevant work package.
- Will the strategy consider the requirements of different users and audiences?
Yes, the strategy is aimed to be as much about the needs of users as it is the producers of data. Work on this has already begun with the initiation of the HERALD user requirements survey project to consider the needs of various individuals/organisations, but more work needs to be done on this as part of developing further work packages.
- What is the remit of the current HERALD project?
HERALD is an EH funded project for gathering the user requirements for changes to the current OASIS online recording system. HERALD is looking at the potential to gather and provide access to a wider range of information from the sector; including community groups; local societies; academic and specialist researchers; and Museums. This requirements gathering will also consider improving access to built environment and maritime information,
- Does the current OASIS system handle built historic environment and maritime records?
Yes, there is already some recording of building surveys and maritime data in OASIS, but that process needs improving. Based on the outcomes of the HERALD user requirements gathering project the system can be adapted to better reflect the cultural differences between archaeological and built environment recording and consider the broader needs for maritime recording.
- Will HIAS cover digitisation of existing paper materials (such as Record Office papers)?
No, large scale digitisation of paper records (such as Record office material) is out of scope of HIAS, unless resources for such work are available from other sources. Consideration of means to enable better linkage of digital indexes to records can be considered by appropriate Working Groups.

4. Financial and staff resource questions

- What impact will LA resource reduction have?
This is linked to the question of the wider LA services discussion. The core principle is that HERs are central to the strategy, so an absence of an HER becomes problematic. However, the strategy should be able to operate at a

variety of scales and data flow/sharing and security issues can be resolved independent of the wider debate.

- How will the live links be maintained and by whom?
Record upload and maintenance is a distributed responsibility. A consultant should be responsible for the upload related to a specific event; the LA responsible for ensuring it is validated; EH and LA responsible for the security copy upload and so on.
- What effect will HIAS have on charging for access at LA and national levels?
None specifically. Our aim is to develop a process which means that the nation can depend on an accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date record of significant 'monuments', investigative 'events' and accessible 'archives'. Charging policy will remain the purview of the local authorities, although increased consistency in the application of the policies would be welcomed by many.
- What additional burdens will fall on developers and owners and what will the scale be?
There will be some added time to projects to ensure that the appropriate record(s) are uploaded by the contractor/consultant but this should be de minimus. OASIS, for example, takes 20-30mins to upload a record. There may be issues of copyright and clearance to take into account when planning a project. We need to see the completed Business Process Mapping work to see what other potential costs may exist.

5. Training and CPD to support HIAS

- What packages need to be developed (eg contractors, HER staff etc), and who will deliver them?
We do envisage a training need. This will be established as one of the Work Packages and scoped in accordance with the developing Strategy elements. Delivery can be assumed to be a combination of HE (qv our OASIS training role), e-learning (qv Heritage Crime e-module), and local training programmes as part of CPD.

6. Encouragement/enforcement to participate

- How does the lack of requirement for pre-app or statements of significance deposition match HIAS ambitions
The objective is fairly clear. Where relevant documentation is required by an application process and enters the public domain, it is expected that (revised) conditions of application will ensure deposition. Where the process is voluntary, it is hoped that best practice and desire to participate will ensure the greatest uptake possible. We know we can't expect to get everything.
- How will the necessary influence on LA requirements/buy-in be managed?
This will need to be approached collegiately. Agreed forms of words attached to WSIs, briefs and tenders should help LA colleagues get the necessary data from participants. LA agreements enshrined in (eg) professional standards and guidance, job specifications, performance reviews etc, will support LA

staff in their roles. The greatest persuader will be the value of the strategy implementation. If it works, there will be benefits appreciated all round.

7. Property, access and copyright

- Who owns the data that will be transmitted across the HIAS structure?
This will need to be considered as part of the Work Packages. HER data is owned by the relevant LA. The different database rights and copyright in the act of submission by a developer/researcher to a local authority or Museum archive will need to be clarified. However, rights on property can't be forced – eg a photograph may remain IP of the photographer. Forms of words exist to facilitate sharing (Creative Commons, ADS guidance).
- How will confidential or third party ownership of information in some reports be managed?
Confidentiality is a core issue, eg arising from a pre-application assessment where commercial advantage may be surrendered through early publication; sensitive photographs of private interiors published unwittingly online; or inappropriate use of licensed material eg OS mapping. Any upload will need to have checks built into the process, again an issue for a work package.

8. Communication

- What options exist for wider communication and support-building? (eg RIBA article for members, ASCHB, agenda item at forum meetings, JCNAS, Heritagehelp portal)
Advisory Board input here has already been very constructive. Further ideas would be very welcome and a communications strategy for the HIAS is in our sights.

9. The HIAS 8 Principles – Further Questions arising from HER Forum e-conference and elsewhere

- The 8 principles may be interpreted or prioritised in different ways by different people or parts of the sector. What is the role of the 8 Principles in the strategy and how should they be used?
The 8 principles are intended to set out a 'starting position' for the different parties involved in delivering the strategy. They provide 'indicators' of broad areas for consideration by the Strategy. They indicate the general directions the strategy expects to take in reaching the overall destination of its vision. Rather like road signs saying we are going this way; 'We will start with HERs', 'we expect to be using national data standards', 'we want to improve online access to reports of historic environment investigations', etc.
- In Principle 8, what exactly are we talking about in the way of “material archives”? Is this also to be an HER responsibility, at least for “material” that doesn't make it into the English Heritage Archive?
Principle 8 is a general principle intended to cover making or improving linkages between digital data records (e.g. HERs and EH/HE) and digital and physical material archives (e.g. ADS, receiving museums). There is no intention to add to HER responsibility for material holdings.

Glossary

ADS	Archaeological Data Services
BIAB	British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
DCMS	Department for Culture Media and Sport
FAME	Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers
FISH	Forum on Information Standards in Heritage
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists (soon to be ClfA)
IHBC	Institute of Historic Building Construction
HEIRNET	Historic Environment Information Resources Network
HER	Historic Environment Record
HERALD	Historic Environment Records Archives Links and Data
HIAS	Heritage Information Access Strategy
SHED	Scotland's Historic Environment Data (strategy)
H2020	Heritage 2020 (update for NHPP)
NHPP	National Heritage Protection Plan
OASIS	Online AccesS to the Index of InvestigationS
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SMA	Society for Museum Archaeologists
TACOS	Towards A Collaborative Online Strategy (CBA workshop & report)

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