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The Ninth report on Local Authority Staff Resources

Produced by Historic England, the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation
September 2017

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Figures collected in early 2017¹ show that there were 780.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) historic environment specialists providing advice to local authorities in England. This comprises:
- 517.7 FTEs working on building and area conservation; and
 - 262.8 FTEs providing archaeological advice.
- 1.2 In the past 12 months:
- the number of conservation specialists has fallen by 1% (6.5 FTE); and
 - the number of archaeological specialists advising local authorities in England has decreased by 3% (8.9 FTE).
- 1.3 Since 2006:
- the number of conservation specialists has fallen by 37% (299.1FTE); and
 - the number of archaeological specialists advising local authorities in England has fallen by 35% (144.4 FTE).
- 1.4 In the last 12 months, against a backdrop of a decrease of 2% overall of specialist advisers, the number of planning application decisions and Listed Building Consent decisions (both indicators of workload) has increased by 3.5% and 3.6% respectively (*table 1*).

¹ IHBC data gathered between January and March 2017; ALGAO data gathered April 2017

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This report compares the levels of historic environment staff resources in local authorities in the early months of 2017 with those available since 2003 but collected consistently since 2006.
- 2.2 This report has been produced by Historic England in partnership with the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), the forum representing archaeologists working for local authorities and national parks and advising on all aspects of the historic environment; and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), the professional body for building conservation practitioners and historic environment experts, many of whom work in local government.
- 2.3 The data collected for this report is not limited to those FTEs directly employed by a local authority, but reflects the advice provided via the increasing variety of emerging models of service, for example shared services, Service Level Agreements, Trusts and contractors.
- 2.4 This report updates the position recorded in its predecessor report (published in August 2016) on the changes in levels of expert staffing resources in local authorities and includes data available on the numbers of planning application decisions. The source of that data is the Department for Communities and Local Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics> and it covers the 2016/17 financial year.

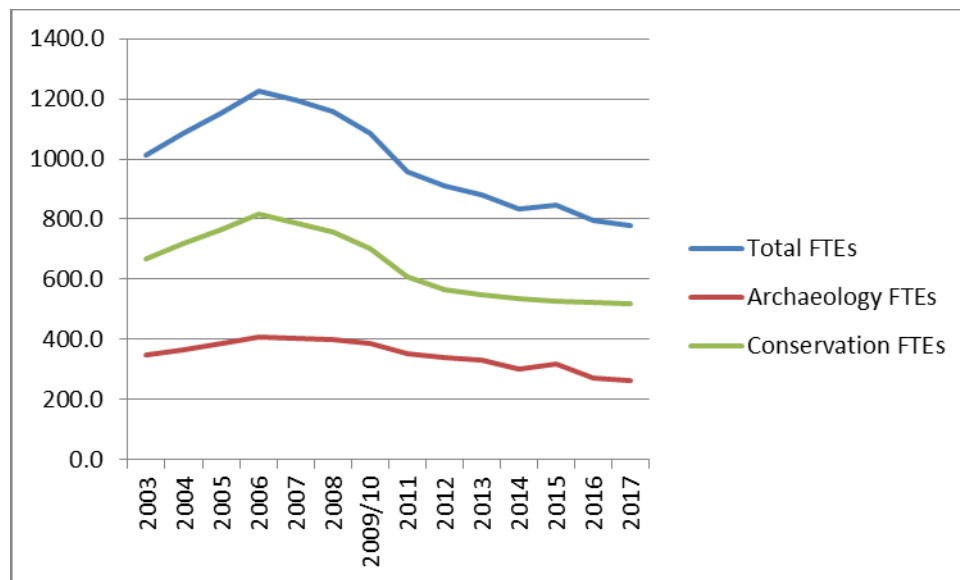
3 Local authority specialist provision

- 3.1 In early 2017 there were 780.5 FTE historic environment specialists providing expert advice to local authorities in England. This was made up of 517.7 providing advice on building and area conservation and 262.8 providing archaeological advice².
- 3.2 These figures are for permanent, temporary, and consultancy full- and part-time staff (shown as FTE). The posts are those for which a related historic environment professional or academic qualification is required and for other staff, not qualified, who are engaged on equivalent work. Administrative staff are not included. Time spent directly managing staff is counted, as it has a direct consequence for the management of the historic environment. The management time of the head of a historic environment team is therefore included, whereas that of the head of a group which includes the historic environment team is not.

² Figures rounded to one decimal place

- 3.3 The data was collected by ALGAO and IHBC. ALGAO has been collecting figures on local government archaeological staff resources on an annual basis since 1998; IHBC has also produced consistent figures in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 with broadly equivalent figures available from the Local Authority Conservation Provision Survey of 2003. Although there is more data for the archaeological resource, this report looks at the years for which both archaeological and building conservation data is available. These are 2003, 2006, 2008, 2009/10, and then annually from 2011 to 2017.
- 3.4 The data shows that the aggregate decrease in specialist advice is continuing. Over the last year the number of specialist providing archaeological advice dropped by 8.9 FTE and the number of conservation specialists providing advice has fallen by 6.9 FTE (figure 1).

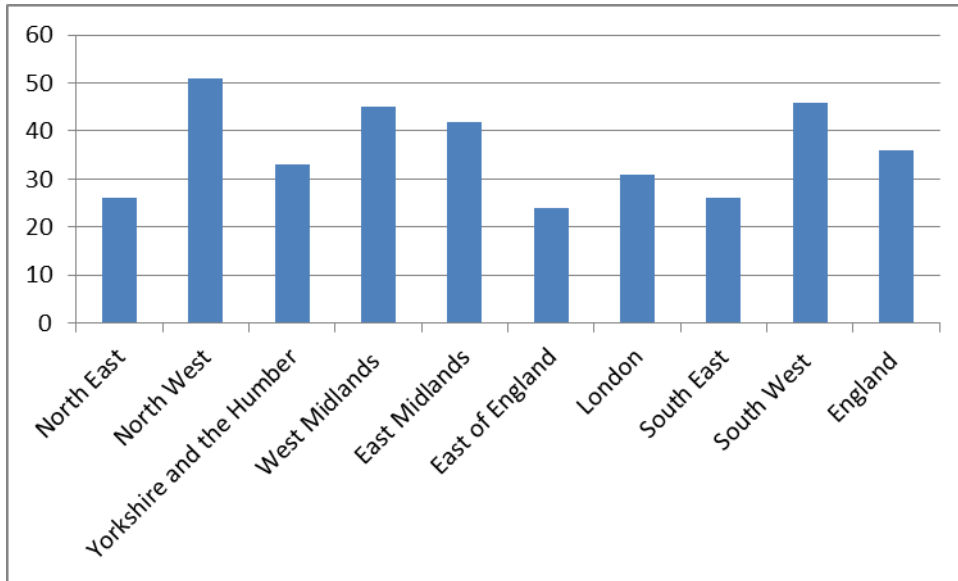
Figure 1, conservation, archaeological and total specialist advice expressed as FTEs (figures for 2004, 2005 and 2007 have been extrapolated).



4 Regional breakdown

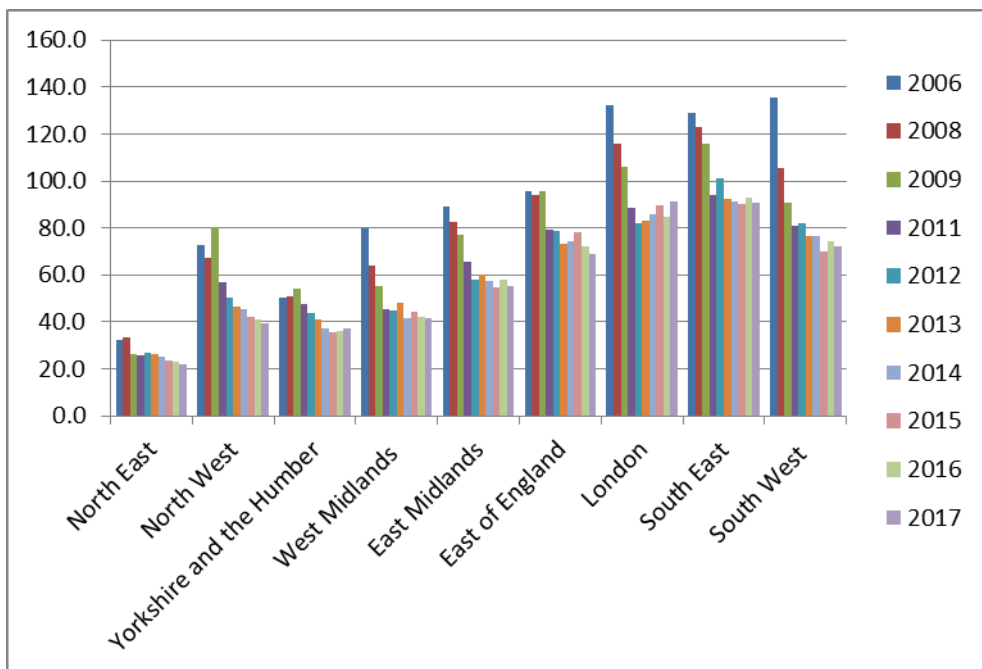
- 4.1 The regional breakdown of the data highlights a major feature of the impact of the recent local authority budgetary cuts. It is clear that their impact and how authorities have responded to them has varied from place to place.
- 4.2 Figure 2 shows the percentage decrease in specialist historic environment advisors since 2006 for each of the Historic England local office areas. This serves to highlight the variation with numbers falling by over 50% in the North West, compared to 24% (which is still significant) in the East of England.

Figure 2, all specialist advisers, combining conservation and archaeological FTE, percentage fall since 2006.



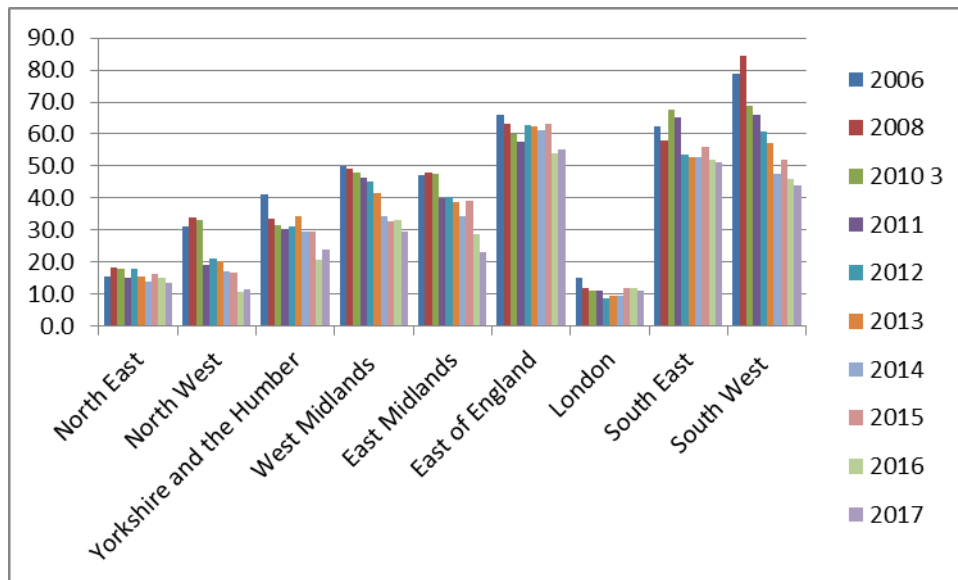
4.3 Figure 3 shows the variation of cuts to expert conservation advisers across the different Historic England local office areas. For example, the North East saw a 6% (1.5FTEs) decrease in FTEs over the last year, whilst London witnessed an increase of 7% (6.1FTEs) over the same period. Of particular note is the sharp fall in capacity in the East of England over the last 3 years (12% or 9.4FTEs).

Figure 3, total FTE conservation advisers broken down by Historic England local office area.



4.4 The picture for archaeological provision remains less uniform than that for conservation (this is likely to be because of the higher proportion of temporary, project based, staff captured by the data). The East Midlands saw a fall of 19% (5.3FTEs) over the last year, which the North West saw an increase of over 9% (1FTE).

Figure 4, total FTE archaeological advisors broken down by Historic England local office area.



5 Planning data 2016/17

5.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)³ planning data shows that the number of planning application decisions and Listed Building Consent application decisions have both risen since 2016.

Table 1, Planning and LBC decisions 2015/16 and 2016/17

	2015/16	2016/17	% change
Planning Application decisions	424,707	439,612	+3.5%
Listed Building Consents decisions	30,193	31,285	+3.6%

Figure 5 shows an overall decline between 2003/4 and 2009/10 followed by a relative plateau with small fluctuations year on year, followed by a steady increase in recent years.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics>

Figure 5, number of planning decisions

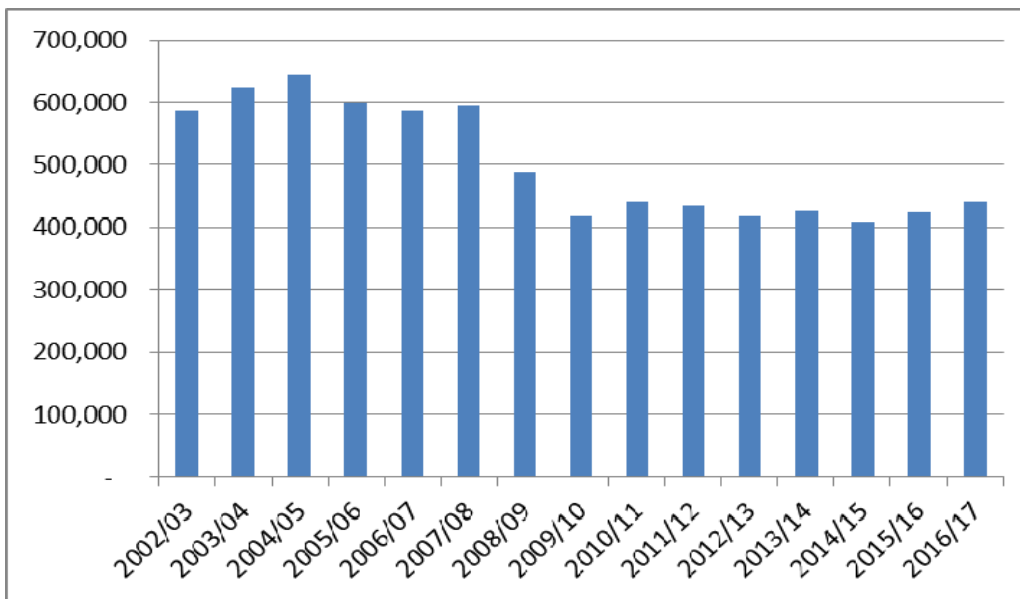
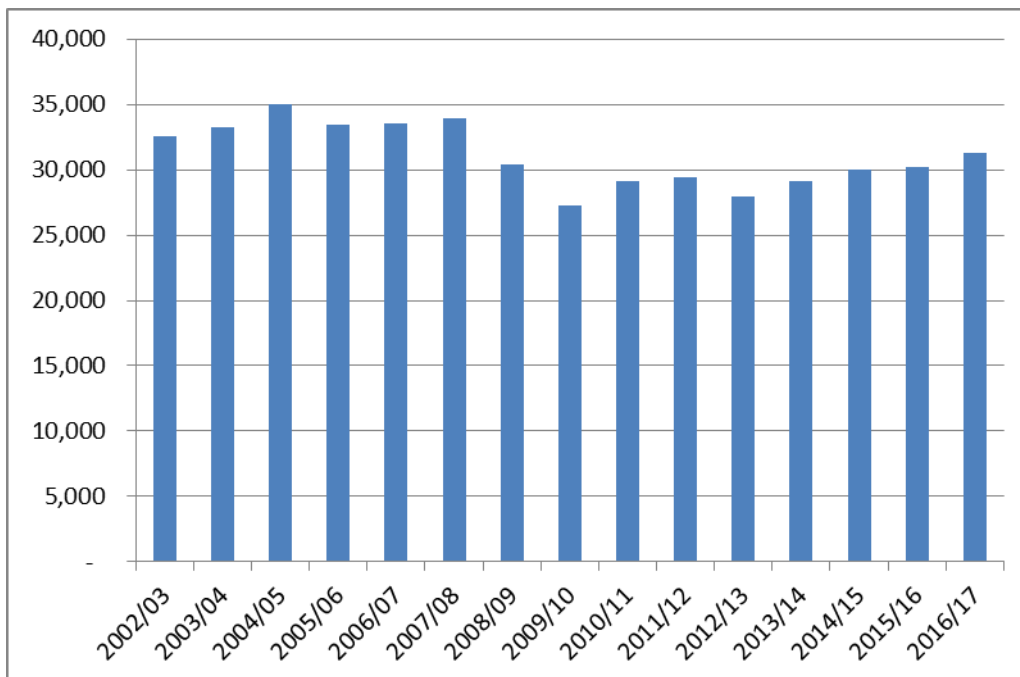


Figure 6 shows the number of listed building consent decisions between 2003/04 and 2016/17. There was a discernible fall between 2003/04 and 2009/10 and a gradual overall increase over the period 2009/10 to 2016/17.

Figure 6, number of Listed Buildings Consents decisions



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