



## Historic Environment Records – Development of an outcomes related framework

**(EH 7206)**

### **End-of-Project Report**

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## Table of Contents

Project name: .....	3
Project Closure date: .....	3
Executive Summary .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Aims and Objectives.....	5
Methodology .....	5
1 Stage 1 Project Design .....	7
2 Stage 2 Project Set up Meeting .....	7
2.1 Group member recruitment.....	7
2.2 Workshop preparation .....	7
2.3 Interfaces.....	8
3 Stage 3 Workshop Preparation .....	8
3.1 Issues.....	9
3.2 Final preparation meeting .....	9
4 Stage 4 Workshop .....	10
4.1 Key points.....	11
4.2 Group members feedback .....	12
5 Stage 5 Draft Outcomes Framework.....	12
5.1 Core Outcomes .....	13
5.2 Limited Consultation .....	14
6 Stage 6 Report .....	15
Lessons learned and project evaluation .....	16
6.1 Lessons learnt .....	16
6.2 Post-Project Evaluation Plan .....	17
Recommendations .....	18
Conclusion .....	20
Bibliography .....	21
Appendix 1 Draft HEROF Toolkit.....	22
Appendices 2 – 13 .....	24

**Project name:**

Historic Environment Records – Development of an outcomes related framework

**Project Closure date:**

29<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**Executive Summary**

In 2015/2016 a project was carried out to produce a draft Historic Environment Record (HER) Outcomes Framework (HEROF). It was managed by ALGAO England and funded by Historic England.

The project aimed to build on and update existing standards and measures for HER's in line with current and emerging best practice, using an Outcomes framework model.

An outcomes framework is a model that shows the logical link between the work you do, and the aims you are trying to achieve. Producing an HEROF will allow services to directly show how their activities are contributing towards corporate objectives, and help make the case for continued support of the service. An HEROF will also be a component of an emerging an emerging wider framework encompassing HER Definition and revised HER Audits, which will demonstrate that HERs are working towards best practice in service delivery, as measured against national standards and guidance.

The project recruited a team of 16 HER officers and other Historic Environment professionals to gather data to feed into a workshop day. The workshop day involved the development and discussion of the different levels identified for the Model, as well as the creation of suggested terms to use.

The project produced a draft HEROF Model and toolkit to go with it, to guide users.

However, the project also identified keys areas that would need further work to finalise the model – mainly relating to the link between the HEROF and standards and guidance for the sector, and also in terms of identifying appropriate measures.

## Introduction

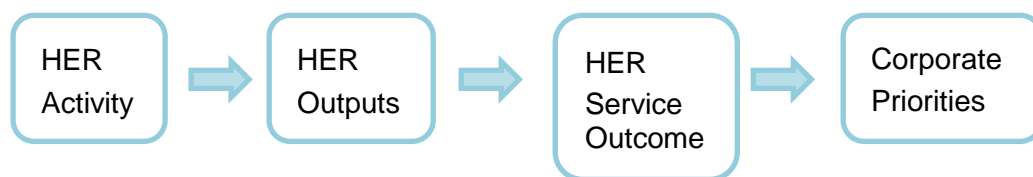
### Background

The Project is the first phase of producing a Historic Environment Record (HER) Outcomes Framework (HEROF). The project aimed to produce a draft HEROF model, demonstrate how it could be used, and identify what further work would be needed to finalise the model.

The project aims to build on work to develop standards and measures for HER Services, which started in 2000 with the production of HER Benchmarks (English Heritage and Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers 2002). The HEROF, together with a revised HER Audit process, will replace the HER benchmarks with a system which is more in line with current best practice (for example, outcomes frameworks are being used by the NHS (Department of Health; 2014) and the Local Government Association (Local Government Association 2013)

At its simplest, “An outcomes framework is a resource to help you link what you do (activities) with what you want to achieve (outcomes)” (Greenspace Scotland 2011). It’s a model that attempts to make clear the link between your daily tasks, the immediate results of these tasks, and how they link to the more strategic goals of your service and/or organization.

The basic model produced for this project shows this below:



However, it is worth noting that this apparent simplicity hides a lot of work to actually develop a user friendly tool kit to enable HERs to develop their own HEROF.

The production of the HEROF will allow HER Services to demonstrate how their activities are contributing to locally defined corporate objectives. The HEROF will also be part of the emerging revised HER Audit programme. As part of this, the HEROF will help demonstrate how far an HER is achieving best practice, as defined in national standards and guidance.

This project was first suggested by (the then) English Heritage, Heritage Information Partnerships (HIPs) team at an Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) HER Committee meeting in Winter 2014. The Durham County Council (DCC) HER Officer, Nick Boldrini, agreed to take the project forward. A Project Proposal was submitted in February 2015 and a full Project Design commissioned on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The Project design was submitted on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015, and the full project was commissioned in June 2015.

At the point of commissioning the full project, the overall management of the project passed from DCC to ALGAO, with Nick Boldrini still continuing to manage the project on ALGAO’s behalf.

## The HER Outcomes framework project (Summary)

The project proper started in late June 2015.

A Project team was assembled, and met twice to work up the details of the process for generating the draft HEROF Model. The project Team recruited additional Group members, who were asked to gather data on various topics relating to the HEROF Model. This data was used to feed into a workshop day in November 2015, which generated additional information to help finalise the HEROF Model.

Following the workshop, an additional meeting was held by the project team to finalise the HEROF Model. The HEROF Model was then made available for limited discussion and comment through various fora, with the final draft version being submitted with this report.

During the project, various issues were encountered, some of which have been identified as needing to be resolved as part of future work as the draft HEROF Model is finalised.

## Aims and Objectives

The project's aims were to:

1. Produce a draft HER Outcomes framework Model
2. Demonstrate how HERs can use the Outcomes Framework
3. Identify work still needed to move the HER Outcomes framework to a final version

The objectives of the project were to

- identify measures, outcomes and strategic outcomes through activities culminating in a workshop day
- collate the information gathered into a report and draft HER Outcomes Framework
- carry out initial consultation on the draft HER Outcomes Framework and collating responses for future use in progressing the adoption of a Outcomes Framework

## Methodology

The broad methodology for the project was set out in the Project Design (PD). As the project developed, the bare bones of the methodology was fleshed out with additional details.

The **Project team** was identified in the Project Design as

**Project Executive:** Ben Wallace, Historic Environment Record Manager, Warwickshire Historic Environment Record

**Project Manager:** Nick Boldrini, Historic Environment Record officer, Durham County Council

**Group Leaders:**

**Ben Wallace (Local Government group)**

**Tim Grubb**, Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service  
(**Education group**)

**Sheena Payne-Lunn**, Historic Environment Record Officer, Worcester City Council  
(**General Public/Societies group**)

**Rob Edwards**, Historic Environment Records Officer, Cheshire Archaeology  
Planning Advisory Service (**Contractors/Consultants group**)

**Historic England Project Assurance Officer:** Jane Golding, Heritage Information  
Partnerships Manager, Historic England

Additional **Group Members** were recruited as follows:

**Local Government group**

Stuart Cakebread, Historic Environment Record Manager, Greater London Historic  
Environment Record

Jenny Morrison, Archaeology Officer, Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record

Sally Croft, Senior Archaeologist, Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record

**Education group**

Leonora Goldsmith, Historic Environment Record Officer, North Yorkshire County  
Council

Peter Insole, Principal Historic Environment Officer, Bristol City Council

David Petts, Lecturer in Archaeology, Durham University Archaeology Department

**General Public/Societies group**

Claire Pinder, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset Historic Environment Record

Rob Hedge, Community Project Officer, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology  
Service

Rob Lennox, Local Heritage Coordinator, Council for British Archaeology

**Contractors/Consultants group**

Andrew Minting, Conservation officer, Wiltshire Council

Miles Johnson, Countryside Archaeological Adviser, Yorkshire Dales National Park  
Historic Environment Record

Lesley Dunkley, Historic Environment Record Officer, Greater Manchester Historic  
Environment Record

**Scribes**

Additional Historic England staff were recruited to act as Scribes on the day of the  
Workshop. They were:

Sarah MacLean, Heritage Information Partnerships Supervisor

Nick Davis; Heritage Information Partnerships Supervisor

Sarah Reilly; Historic Environment Intelligence Officer (Local Gov)

The broad methodology for the project was set out in the Project Design, with 5 major  
phases of the project being identified, with various sub tasks for each phase. These  
are discussed in detail below.

It is worth noting that thinking on the project developed as we progressed.  
Consequently the discussion below will phrase things in ways that may not have  
been how they were worded at the time. For example, using the term “Model” for the  
draft HEROF didn’t really come about until the final meeting, but it can be usefully

retrospectively applied. Similarly, the idea that the HEROF document is a tool kit, incorporating the Model, helps separate what is being discussed.

## **1 Stage 1 Project Design**

This stage was originally budgeted as 3 days, but took slightly longer than envisaged. This set out the main stages of the Project (Stages 2 – 6), along with a rough timetable. This was agreed without any major changes being requested, just some clarification.

Following the approval of the project design, a small Project summary was requested by HE for the website regarding this project. Whilst not an onerous task, this was one of a number of tasks that had not been mentioned in the development of the Project Proposal and Project design, which involved extra Project Manager time, but were not budgeted for.

## **2 Stage 2 Project Set up Meeting**

The project Set up meeting was held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in Birmingham, and attended by all members of the Project team. The PD identified the following tasks:

- Refine & agree toolkit for workshop
- Training for GLs for their workshop role

The actual discussion concentrated on the first of these, as until this was finalised, training was not really possible. In the end no formal training was given, as the workshop tasks agreed were fairly simple to run. Discussion covered a number of main areas, briefly described below.

### **2.1 Group member recruitment**

Some discussion and thought was given to try and ensure that the Group members covered a number of different groups – HBSMR software users and Bespoke HER users; HERs covering the following areas – rural areas, urban areas, coastal areas; as well as trying to include a geographic spread of membership. Non HER staff were also included where it was thought they could help represent relevant users groups such as the public, historic buildings/conservation specialists and higher education. There was also an attempt to include membership from different HER host types eg two tier authorities, Unitary authorities and National Parks. At the end of this discussion, various people were identified to be invited, along with some reserves in case any couldn't participate.

### **2.2 Workshop preparation**

The date of the workshop was provisionally agreed, as was a venue. It was also decided not to recruit a facilitator for the workshop. The meeting for this was therefore just to be another Project Team meeting, and a date was agreed for this. The various pre-workshop tasks identified in the PD were discussed (see below Stage 3).

A Workbook had been produced by Jane Golding, and this included a Storyboard tool, which was to be used on the day of the workshop. The pre-workshop tasks involved the Group Members gathering data to populate the Story board tool. A timetable for getting this data was also agreed.

There was also discussion about gathering some data from other organisations which was thought may be helpful for identifying Strategic Outcomes, such as the National Trust; Natural England; Forestry Commission; Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers. The organisations identified were based on those who were thought to represent HER Users, rather than trying to look at all sector bodies.

The storyboard tool was also discussed, and some enhancements and updating suggested, including updating some of the definitions relating to the HEROF Model. The Workbook was also updated (Appendix 3)

### **2.3 Interfaces**

There was discussion around the relationship between the HEROF, the old HER Benchmarks, and HER Audits. At this point it was deliberately decided not to look at the Benchmarks in trying to develop the HEROF, so as not to influence the project process, but to try and start from a blank slate. The PAO would provide input from the HER Audit side, as the PAO was involved in their revision.

## **3 Stage 3 Workshop Preparation**

This stage ran from the end of the Set Up meeting until the workshop date. The PD identified the following tasks:

- Audience segmentation: review of user groups identified in March 2014 workshop, including reference to relevant HER21 studies
- Identify Local Authority Strategic Outcomes - Group members to collate information for their LA
- HER activities and outputs Group members to collate information for their Group theme
- Preparation meeting with Workshop Facilitator – to work out plan for day, and any further preparation needed

There were additional administrative tasks that were carried out as part of this Stage, not explicitly mentioned in the PD, but implied.

Firstly, the Group members were recruited. This took longer than anticipated mainly due to leave by recruiters and recruits (it was over the summer period) and then some recruits being unable to take part, and the need to find replacements. A further complication was one of the group Leaders being off sick during this period. This all impacted on timescales for the actual data gathering with the result that the deadline for this was extended, but these Tasks were still largely completed in time for the Pre-Workshop meeting.

Secondly, was the confirmation of dates for the Workshop, and the booking of a venue. The Bond Company in Birmingham was chosen and booked for 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015.



The data gathering itself was left to the Group Leaders to manage, and was approached in different ways by them. The only real guidance given by the PM was that the data needed to be with him by 18<sup>th</sup> September (later extended to 25<sup>th</sup> September) to allow time for collation for the meeting planned on the 9<sup>th</sup> October. This resulted in data in different formats, which made collation a little tricky.

### **3.1 Issues**

It was also at this stage that some of the issues first began to emerge with the project.

The first main issue that emerged was that the definitions for the Levels in the model had been interpreted slightly differently by Group Leaders and members, and there was some confusion about whether some things identified were an Output, or an Outcome, for example.

The second main issue, was that the Audience Segmentation task had essentially just repeated an earlier workshop process, and this had not been sufficiently critically examined to determine if it was fit for purpose. Whilst most of the questions were relevant and helpful, there was a distinct lack of answers regarding what audiences wanted from an HER, other than, broadly, data.

The third main issue that began to emerge related to Performance Indicators and performance measures. Essentially, the HER's involved generally only collected a very limited amount of information relating to HER Activity, mainly in the form of HER user surveys, some of which were only conducted intermittently.

The identification of these issues had some knock on effects for the rest of the project.

### **3.2 Final preparation meeting**

The Pre- Workshop preparation meeting was held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015. At this meeting, the final format and process of the Workshop was agreed. It was agreed that each Group would have a Scribe provided by Historic England, whose main task was to make notes and capture the salient points of the discussion.

The Workshop was divided into 5 Steps, in a logical order. For steps 1, 4 and 5, the process was simple, in that what was carried out was an exercise to examine the submitted terms, and attempting to group them and come up with a generic heading for them.

Step 2 of the workshop was the result of the Audience segregation issue noted above. This was a more focussed User needs session, answering a number of questions which were read out from the prompts below by the Group Leader

- 1) What do you want from the HER service?
- 2) How do you want to interact with the HER service?
  - a. What formats do you want that HER service in? (mainly relating to data, but possibly applying to other issues)

- 3) What problems might you envisage with that HER service at the moment?
  - a. What don't you want from the HER service?
- 4) How do you think the HER service could be improved?

The aim was for the group members to answer these trying to use the mind set of 3 slightly different users within their user Group. These were as agreed below:

Education Group– A level student; Undergraduate student; Teacher (lower than A Level)

Public Group – Casual Interest/member of the public; Local History/Archaeological Society; HER Volunteer

Contractors Group – Archaeological Contractor; Buildings Consultant; Natural England

Local Authority – Conservation Officer; Planning Archaeologist; Strategic Planner

Step 3 of the workshop built on Step 2 to try and identify what Outputs would be needed to meet these user needs.

In an attempt to deal with the Measures issues, it was proposed that following the meeting additional information would be sought from Group Members to see if there were any other data they were gathering, even if it was not directly HER related.

Following the meeting, Task sheets were produced for each Step (see Appendix 4)

Over the course of this entire Stage the Workbook was updated. Following the meeting, however, the Project manager decided that a stripped down version might be more appropriate to send out to workshop attendees, so an “Info Pack” version was developed to send (Appendix 5). This gave details of the venue and the workshop, as well as the final version of the Storyboard tool.

## **4 Stage 4 Workshop**

The HEROF Workshop was held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at the Bond Company in Birmingham. There were no last minute cancellations, so all the Project Team, Group Members and Scribes were in attendance for the majority of the day, though there were a couple of late arrivals/early leavers.

Overall the day went smoothly, with no significant complaints (see 4.2 below).

The PD identified the following tasks:

- Storyboard exercise: HER activities/outputs/performance measures/service outcomes/strategic outcomes
- Using toolkit to work through activities.

However, as noted above, an issue identified with the User needs data gathering meant that a significant portion of the day had to be allocated to rectify that. This meant, that a Draft model was not finalised so attendees were not able to work through it on the day. Similarly, the lack of responses in the data gathering phase regarding measures, meant this area was not covered.

Each task had a small Task pack created which included the instructions, as well as any previously gathered data printed onto cards ready for sorting as appropriate. Additional cards were provided to allow the groups to come up with new options, or summaries of grouped cards. Each Group had a large blank Storyboard, showing the HEROF levels, onto which they attached the relevant cards to populate a model. Attempts at linkages between levels were attempted in some case, but not all groups managed to do this.

The tasks were all completed successfully, and there was some interesting discussion throughout the day regarding the various aspects of an HEROF. Fuller details can be gleaned from the Scribes notes in Appendix 7 and the transcribed Storyboards in Appendix 8.

#### 4.1 Key points

Some key points that emerged are noted below.

**HER Service vs Advice using HER** – some groups included advice giving functions using HER data, which are not strictly HER activities, as part of their responses, both in the data gathering and Workshop. This was also linked to the provision of mediated data (such as SHINE data or Trigger maps) which is an HER function, as opposed to providing advice on that data, which is not. The HEROF is not going to include the advice functions linked to the HER.

**Definitions** – there was still some confusion amongst those involved about the definitions of the different levels of an HEROF, so the need for tighter and clearer definitions was identified.

**Focus on User needs** – this generated some points which may be of interest to HERs to consider in terms of service delivery.

- the complexity of the data sent out by HERs, as well as the variety of formats, creating the need for advice on how to interpret if for some user groups
- clear pathways for inquiries. This was linked to the idea of HERs being the central-node or hub for Historic Environment information, but also included the idea of better integration between HERs, Museums and County Record Offices.
- The concept of implicit and explicit users needs was discussed. For example a user might frame their need as “I want consistent data nationally”, which leads to the implicit need for data standards. This means that user needs cannot often be taken at face value, and may need to be unpacked a bit.
- It was also noted that some user needs might not be achievable at an individual HER level – for example the desire for consistent charging policies.
- It was also identified that not all aspects of the HEROF will be driven solely by user needs, as there may be tasks required of the HER service which are not directly driven by users – for example back office tasks, or income generation.

**HEROF flexibility** – the flexibility of the HEROF model means that there are a number of ways different levels can be linked. This is part of its strength, but does make it more difficult to allow comparison between HERs, as they may not have the same Activity/Output/Outcome mapping, and hence have different measures associated with an Outcome.

## 4.2 Group members feedback

Attendees of the workshop were asked to complete an online survey following the workshop, to gauge how they felt it went, but also how the overall methodology worked for them.

The Survey was sent out to 16 people, the 12 group members and 4 scribes. One of the scribes, and 7 Group members attempted the survey, but only 5 surveys were completed (31%).

The responses were all broadly positive, (see Appendix 9 for full responses).

The respondents generally thought the pre-workshop work process was useful and worked well. The workbook sent out was noted as being very useful. Some comments were made on possible improvements to the process – sharing slightly more information, a bit more guidance on formatting of responses - but there were no negative comments or major criticisms to the process. Another generic point made was that the respondents felt they were already reasonably informed of their place in their host organisation, but still felt it useful to review this.

All respondents liked the venue, though the location (nationally, and within Birmingham) was felt not to be ideal for all respondents.

The actual workshop received positive comments, and was felt to be well organised and run. Respondents all felt that being involved helped them get a better understanding of the HER OF project. A few concerns were raised, regarding how the HER OF will replace benchmarks, but in both cases the point was also made that they felt more confident about this, even if there concerns were not entirely dispelled.

Two key points to draw from the feedback, are that HER's are already broadly aware of their position within their host organisation, suggesting the HER OF will be something that helps formally map that, but will not be an entirely alien process. Secondly, the issue of the underpinning of the HER OF with something akin to benchmarks was desirable, even if the format might be different.

## 5 Stage 5 Draft Outcomes Framework

The PD identified the following tasks:

- Collation of workshop outputs & reflection
- Final meeting to model an Outcomes Framework based on collated outputs
- HER audience 'ground-truthing' of workshop outputs
- Consultation with key partners on Draft outcomes framework

The first two tasks were effectively combined into the Post Workshop meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015. At this meeting the Project Team discussed the issues brought out at the Workshop. Definitions of the various levels were discussed and re-worded and renamed to try and help with understanding.

It was decided that no attempt would be made to include Advice functions as part of the HEROF as that was determined to be outside the scope of this project. However, it was also recognised that these functions made up a core part of Archaeology Service work, and there should be consideration to produce a separate OF for these functions.

Using a similar methodology to the workshop, we also attempted to group the Activities, Outputs and Outcomes of the four groups further, to come up with some generic examples. These generic examples were used to try and create routes through the model to test if it could be used. This was only carried out for a few examples, but was helpful in gaining a better understanding of how the model would work (see appendix 10). It was also agreed that the Project team would use the draft HEROF model to create a HEROF for their HER (where relevant) to make up for the lack of time to carry this out at the workshop.

There was also discussion of issues surrounding performance measures and Performance Indicators, and attempts were made to come up with some of these for the broad Outcomes and Outputs generated in the meeting. However, it rapidly became obvious that this was significant piece of work in itself, which would need to be picked up as part of moving from the draft to the final HEROF.

There was discussion of the interfaces between the HEROF and the main interfaces of HER Audits and Informing the Future of the Past ((IFP) ALGAO et al 2015). The final relationships are beyond the scope of this project, however it was agreed that the underpinning reference framework for the HEROF, in terms of providing the basis for common agreed HER Service Outcomes, would come from IFP. It was also suggested that producing a HEROF might be seen as the first stage of an HER Audit.

Some discussion of defining Core outcomes was carried out, but determining this was left to after the meeting. An issue relating to the definition of Core Outcomes was identified though. Discussion centred around an ALGAO plan to come up with a definition of an HER and service. Once this was done, it would obviously be a useful source of key outcomes to feed into the HEROF, but the timescale for this was not yet clear.

Although a lot of work was carried out at the meeting, a significant amount of work was also carried out post meeting.

The first version of the Draft HEROF Model was produced post meeting. The version included in this report is the most up to date iteration of this.

## **5.1 Core Outcomes**

Whilst producing the model, the issue of identifying Core HER Service Outcomes needed to be addressed in some fashion, notwithstanding the issues noted above. At the workshop ranking of various outcomes by the groups was carried out. However, by the time the Model was produced, the original ranking referred to Outcomes which had since been re-worded or merged with others, so the ranking was less relevant. However it was still used as a basis for identifying Core outcomes using a crude methodology.

The methodology involved averaging the scores given to the cards which had been lumped together. Where 'Core' or 'Desirable' was used to rate the cards, Core was given a top score of 1, and Desirable the low score of 10.

The Scores produced were as follows:

Planning Function 1.5

Well Maintained HER 2

Relating to Access to HER 3.8

Outreach work 5

HER Standards 5

Enabling Participation 5.75

This gave an even split if Core was defined as everything with score of 5 or less, and for this arbitrary reason that was how what was Core was identified, so as not simply to call everything Core. Every term in the model that linked to the top 3 terms was defined as Core, everything else was not. Of course this methodology is crude, but an attempt needed to be made, and using the evidence gathered this was felt to be a reasonable attempt.

The reason that Core outcomes are needed is that these will provide the basis for comparison of HEROFs. They will also deal with, to some extent, the issue of multiple routes through the HEROF. Having to achieve certain Core Outcomes will help focus attention on these as people develop their own HEROF.

## 5.2 Limited Consultation

As part of the PD, a limited amount of consultation on the Draft HER OF was built into the project. This was felt to be appropriate given the draft nature of the framework, with fuller consultation being envisaged as part of the production of the final version.

Consultation was planned with the ALGAO England Executive, Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and the HER Forum. These tasks were carried out, more or less successfully.

A presentation on the HER OF was given at the HER Forum on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Time for discussion was given, but no major responses were forthcoming. The presentation given is in Appendix 13.

**ALGAO England** were due to be consulted by attendance at the Executive meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016. To save travel time, this was attempted by SKYPE. Despite trials before the actual meeting date, and whilst the Skype connection worked, it kept failing when attempts were made to run a PowerPoint presentation, or even a word document showing the model. This greatly hampered the quality of the consultation, in that the model and process had to be described rather than demonstrated, and only limited discussion followed – mainly relating to how the HER OF will link to the revised HER audits.

In mitigation to this, however, updates and discussion have taken place at HER Committee meetings whilst the project has been ongoing, (7<sup>th</sup> October 2015; 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016) allowing ideas and comments to be fed into the project. For example,

in the January 2016 meeting, there was discussion of the model with concerns that it duplicated what people were already doing. However, it emerged in discussion, that a significant number of attendees were not actually carrying out some of this work. Similarly, there was concern about the more generic nature of the Service Outcomes compared to the benchmarks (see Recommendations)

**IHBC** were given time to comment on the model and sent in a report (see appendix 12). This report makes reference to the Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) 'Measuring Success' project, an outcomes framework type model. Somewhat reassuringly, the development of the BEFS model encountered similar issues to those encountered in the HEROF Project, suggesting they are common issues with this type of work rather than vagaries relating to their application to HERs. The point is also made in the IHBC response that there is need for a "wider policy infrastructure" – which the project had begun to recognise for itself also – though perhaps not in quite those terms. The IHBC response also notes the potential for tension between a local HEROF and the need for national standards and guidance. The point is further made that training in use of the HEROF will also be needed, and this should be borne in mind for future development of the project. Overall the response seems supportive, but cautious.

The PD Also mentioned HER Audience 'ground truthing' of workshop outcomes. This was felt to be sufficiently covered by this limited consultation, in that all attendees to the workshop were asked to comment.

One significant comment received from a Group member was that the respondent felt that the HEROF was too simplified compared to the benchmarks, which were possibly too complex. The respondent had concerns of the potential for mis-use by hosts to claim compliance with standards, but not really complying, and in particular to justify staff cuts.

This seems like a fair comment, if the HEROF *alone* is viewed as replacing the Benchmarks, and to be fair, that is what the PD suggests.

However, in the PD the interface between the HEROF and the HER Audit Revision is also mentioned. As this project has developed, the HER Audit revision has also gathered pace, and it has become clearer how the two will interact. As a result the HIPs team are proposing some work relating to the HER Service outcomes in particular, which will help define the link between the HEROF, Audits and IFP more concretely. It is anticipated that this work should help significantly, if not completely, to deal with the above concern, by adding more detail to the HEROF model in this respect.

There was originally also provision for circulation to the HER Forum email list and Institute of Historic Building Conservation members. However, emerging time constraints meant it was decided to forego this.

## **6 Stage 6 Report**

The report stage was commenced at the same time as Stage 5 was still ongoing.

The PD identified the following tasks:

- Report to Historic England, ALGAO HER Committee, IHBC
- Collating various responses (HER Forum, IHBC, ALGAO etc.)
- Writing Final report and Final Draft HER OF

Following limited Consultation, comments were received from all the Group leaders, the PAO, IHBC and 2 other Workshop attendees. These have been incorporated into the report above, as well as more informal comments were received during discussion at other meetings.

The report stage culminated in three main products

- The Final project report (this document)
- the HER OF Toolkit
- the project Archive

These were all submitted to Historic England for comment on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

The HER OF toolkit is the document which includes the HEROF model itself, as well as some suggested guidance on how it should be used. It comes in two documents – the main toolkit and the Example pack, which shows a number of examples of how the HEROF can be used.

The archive is the supporting documentation used throughout the project, and is also the appendices to the main report. It consists of a number of different file formats, with an explanation of how the archive is structured within the document 7206\_Archive\_Main.docx

## **Lessons learned and project evaluation**

The lessons learnt for this project mainly relate to the HEROF itself, though they perhaps also contain some points to consider for other projects. The lessons are listed below.

### **6.1 Lessons learnt**

- 1) With hindsight, a huge blind spot in the development of this project was that the project team had no training in the development or use of Outcomes Frameworks. Furthermore, no time was built into the project for even a literature review relating to Outcomes Frameworks. For both these points, the Project manager takes full responsibility.
- 2) It is suggested that the reason for Point 1 is that Outcomes Frameworks appear simple when looking at the finished product. However, the process of carrying out this project has revealed this simplicity is deceptive, and only comes about from some very hard work behind the scenes.
- 3) It is recommended that any future work to develop the HEROF should address points 1 and 2 as their first action, by a literature review and/or the engagement of a professional with expertise in developing OFs.
- 4) It is likely that points 1 and 2 contributed to at least some of the other issues encountered in this project, for example issues with definitions being unclear,



and difficulties with identifying Performance Measures and Performance Indicators.

- 5) With regard to Measures and indicators, it became clear that HERs generically seem to gather very little data about their work. As such developing measures will need to be a significant aspect of later work, However, to avoid having to gather additional data, consideration should be given to the suitability of using information gathered for other purposes eg the HIPs Computing Survey data, ALGAO planning statistics. Consideration should also be given to liaison with other Heritage organisations to see if lessons can be learnt with regard to ways of measuring user satisfaction in particular eg from County Record Offices of Museums.
- 6) When looking at User needs from a Public perspective, it was noted that this actually represents a large number of audiences with varying needs, meaning any assessment is invariably quite crude. This is perhaps inevitable, but perhaps suggests there is some work to be done actually trying to look into the varieties of HER audience to help with further works along these lines.
- 7) Whilst the workshop day was generally a success, it involved a number of different tasks, and a note of caution should be rang about trying to fit too much into a workshop.
- 8) The issue about determining Core HER Service Outcomes was revealed to be too big for this project. There is already a proposal by the HIPs team to do more work on this, as it also dovetails with their work on the HER Audit revision.
- 9) Some HERs do not have any Historic Environment specific policies as part of their host organisations policy framework. It may be worth considering generating some Generic corporate priorities based on National guidance Host organisations will be bound by (eg NPPF) to help fill this gap.

## **6.2 Post-Project Evaluation Plan**

There are a number of questions for this suggested in the MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide, and these will be addressed below, though some of these also been addressed elsewhere in this report.

Did the project achieve the stated Aims and Objectives? – Not completely. The objective to identify measures was not successfully achieved, however reasons for this have been identified.

Which project processes worked successfully and why? – Project participant feedback suggested that the overall process of information sharing to prompt data gathering in preparation for the workshop day was felt to be popular, useful and helped to stimulate thinking. Why this is so is not entirely clear, though my suggestion is that it means the issues surrounding the workshop questions are engaged with early enough to allow participants to mull them over somewhat more than if they are merely presented with them on the day. Some tweaks to this process were suggested, and it is worth noting that some survey respondents requested more information, the Project team deliberately tried to limit the information sent out so as not to overwhelm participants. Obviously, there is a fine balance to be struck here.

Which project processes encountered problems and why? – The data gathering phase relating to the User Needs analysis did not work well. As already noted, this is because the questions used were not critically enough examined to ensure they garnered the appropriate responses.

Did quality-assurance procedures work well? This is perhaps more of a question for the PAO, but from the Project Managers point of view they did.

Was the Project Team sufficiently skilled, trained and empowered? – No. As already identified, there was a lack of knowledge and experience regarding Outcomes frameworks. Whilst this did not derail the project, it does mean that issues were encountered which more training/experience may have avoided.

Were sufficient Risk strategies in place and managed? – Yes. No major issues were encountered in the Risk Log. One point to note here, though, is the mixed blessing of SKYPE which was only introduced late into the project, and did not work well. Whilst this has the potential to save much time and money in travel, it needs to be robustly tested before being used. The limitations on it may have just been local (i.e. from Durham County Councils end), and may have just been a bad day, rather than systemic. So whilst its use should be encouraged, it introduces an element of risk to a project which needs to be managed.

Were allocated time and resources sufficient? – Just. Timings on some activities took longer than expected, however, on current projections this has been offset by underspending in other areas.

## Recommendations

To finalise the HEROF, a number of actions will need to be carried out. These are detailed below.

1. Work will be needed to deal with the Performance management issues identified – namely Performance Measures and Performance Indicators. This work is essential as these measures will provide the evidence of the contribution to national and corporate objectives and standards. It is envisaged that initiatives identified under points 4 and 5 will carry this requirement forward but it may need to be picked up again by work to finalise the HEROF identified under point 6.
2. Similarly, work will need to be completed to identify and finalise the Core HER Service Outcomes for the model. Again this is vital to identify those areas which all HERs should be carrying out and enable comparison between HERs. It is recommended that the HIPs team lead on this work as part of revision to HER audits via a process of co-creation with the HER community (see point 5).
3. Any funded project to finalise the HEROF needs to be adequately resourced. Lessons learnt from this project, in terms of time for tasks, should be taken into account when trying to determine costs.
4. Points 1 and 2 above are linked to the emerging need for a formal definition of a HER, in simple layman's terms for general consumption, but also in a more detailed way to support effective delivery of an HER service. ALGAO should take the lead in work to develop this definition as a matter of urgency.
5. The links between the HEROF, IFP, an HER Definition and HER Audits will have to be clarified, as taken together, these will form the basis for measuring HER standards and delivery on outcomes. The interdependency of these elements mean it is difficult to know which should happen first. However, the HIPs team are proposing to do some work around the HER Service

Outcomes to enable them to revise the HER Audit, that can usefully run concurrently with, and feed into, work to develop a formal definition of an HER. The HIPs Project should be supported by ALGAO, Historic England and IHBC.

6. The HEROF project should be revisited once the HIPs project is completed, with the objective of producing a final HEROF version. The Project design for this re-visit should consider the need for additional training/support as noted in 6.1.3 above
7. In the interim, the model should be considered a working draft, and HER's encouraged to use it as is, with the recognition that it needs finalising. Feedback from use in this way should be gathered by ALGAO to inform the final project. It would be desirable for members of the project team to give informal training and guidance to anyone using the HEROF, where possible.
8. Use of the HEROF Model by a Team member has shown that it is possible to use varying software to develop an HEROF. Ideally, a document template should be produced, as part of the final HEROF toolkit, to simplify this process.
9. Once the HEROF is finalised, it should be formally approved by Historic England, ALGAO and IHBC. This would show sectoral support for the approach taken, and help to imbed the process as part of HER best practice. At the stage of approval, guidance on when a HEROF should be produced should also be set out. It has been suggested that producing a HEROF will become a requirement of the HER Audit, and if this is the case, that should be supported.

## Conclusion

Despite the project being more complex than at first envisioned in the PD phase Project 7206 has successfully completed all bar one of its main Objectives and aims. It also added in some extra work en-route (i.e. developing the Model into a toolkit) and delivered this.

The methodology employed was found to be popular and successful, and potentially re-useable for other projects.

The draft model has been demonstrated to be useable and work, and will form a key component of the future standards used by HER services.

It is the authors view, that as the project has developed, the identification of the various components parts needed to fully replace the Benchmarks have been better understood (IFP, HER Audits, HEROF, a national definition of an HER) as has their interconnectedness. Whilst the HEROF project might have originally set out to solve all these issues, and fallen short, it is now better understood the scope of work needed to actually achieve that overarching aim of replacing the HER Benchmarks, and significant progress towards that aim has been made, with continuing work identified.

Already, plans are being developed to build on the work of this project and develop key areas which interface with other projects (i.e. the HIPs proposal to look at HER Service Outcomes as part of the HER Audit revision project), which in turn, will help move us nearer the goal of a final HEROF.

So, whilst this building block is not finished (and the PD stated this iteration of the HEROF was only going to be a draft), it has sufficient shape to let us know what shape the associated building blocks will need to be in order for the overall structure to fit together.

The author believes that this is another successful outcome for the project, even if it was not explicated as an aim.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Project participants, whether formally on the team, or through informal communication, for their help in all aspects of this project, and helping it to be a success.

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## **Appendix 1 Draft HEROF Toolkit**

See separate documents - HEROF\_Toolkit\_Part\_1\_Model.docx and HEROF\_Toolkit\_Part\_2\_Examples.docx



## **Appendices 2 – 13**

For details see document 7206\_Appendices2+\_START\_HERE.docx