

LOCAL AUTHORITY CONSERVATION PROVISION IN ENGLAND

Research project into staffing, casework and resources

Commissioned by English Heritage and Institute of Historic
Building Conservation

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Preface

This project was commissioned jointly by English Heritage and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). The research is the work of a team at the School of the Built Environment at Oxford Brookes University, and it should be noted that the conclusions and recommendations contained in this summary report are those of the authors rather than a statement of policy by either of the sponsoring organisations. The research was carried out between March and September 2002 and the data collected is intended to provide a baseline for future monitoring and research. The extent of the analysis presented in this report has been defined by currently prevailing time and resource constraints, but there is clearly significant scope for further exploitation of the survey data to extend the investigation into specific areas of local authority conservation provision.

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Executive summary

This report summarises the results of the research conducted on behalf of English Heritage and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) into conservation provision within English local authorities. The research set out, by means of a nationally distributed questionnaire, to collect a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data including information about staffing levels, budgets, skills and salaries, organisational structures, and workloads. In addition, the survey sought to gain an impression of the quality of service offered by local authorities and the internal and external relationships enjoyed by conservation specialists.

The rationale for the survey was that, because of various governmental initiatives (e.g. proposals for streamlining the planning system outlined in the Planning Green Paper and related aspects of *Best Value*), the potential exists for significant changes in the way the historic environment is managed by local authorities. However, prior to this survey, no comprehensive or systematically collected data had been gathered about local authority conservation provision, and so little has been known about how authorities meet their statutory responsibilities with regard to the historic environment. There are no nationally agreed performance indicators for local authority conservation services and there is evidence to suggest that some authorities may not be managing the historic environment effectively due to inadequate resourcing.

The survey targeted all English local authorities, including counties and national parks. In each case the target respondent was the conservation officer or, where none existed, the individual(s) normally responsible for delivering conservation services.

This report provides an overall summary of the findings together with analysis of the key implications of the data collected. It is intended that it will thereby inform a number of current national policy initiatives and also provide the baseline for future research into trends in conservation provision. Additionally the survey data has the potential to provide the basis for a range of further investigations into how local authorities deliver specialist conservation services. In broad terms the key findings are as follows:

The historic resource and its management

Most local authorities have responsibility for managing a substantial resource of historic assets. However, many hold inadequate or incomplete information regarding the character or condition of this resource, reflected in the lack of comprehensive data on listed buildings and buildings at risk and minimal coverage by conservation area character appraisals. Furthermore, over two thirds of 'front-line' planning authorities do not maintain comprehensive integrated information systems to support their statutory duty to manage the historic environment. The lack of sufficiently comprehensive information about the historic resource is likely to limit the ability of authorities to make properly informed decisions about its future both in terms of development control and more strategic actions.

Financial resources for conservation

Conservation spending by local authorities has, on average, remained 'flat' over the past five years, equating to a decline in 'real' terms. Although half of authorities still operate their own grant programmes, budgets for these are usually very modest and there is evidence that they have been falling over the past three years. On the other hand many authorities are involved in partnership grant schemes with English Heritage or Heritage Lottery Fund and there has been a trend for contributions to these types of grant programme to increase over the same period. Nearly two thirds of authorities do not have a budget for conservation area enhancement.

Service provision and organisational structure

The great majority of local authorities (85%) can draw on at least some in-house conservation expertise, albeit that 5% of these authorities only have fractional posts. Those without their own specialists draw mostly on advice from either the county council or external consultants, although a few operate without specialist advice. At an average 1.7 full time equivalent specialists per authority, staffing levels could be regarded as modest in relation to the size of the historic resource to be managed. Generally staffing levels have remained static over the past three years, although an increase in posts sponsored by other organisations, e.g. English Heritage or Heritage Lottery Fund, may mask a possible reduction in commitment by local authorities. Most specialists act as in-house advisors to development control colleagues rather than being responsible for processing listed building consent and other types of application themselves. The lead conservation specialist is normally middle ranking in the local authority hierarchy and the majority do not sit on the departmental management committee.

Skills and pay

Local authority conservation specialists need to be multi-skilled in order to carry out their work effectively. Most are highly qualified with over two thirds holding post-graduate qualifications. There is little consistency in the professional and academic qualifications or experience required by authorities in employing conservation specialists, and they come from a variety of professional backgrounds, the most common of which is town planning followed by architecture. Nearly two thirds of all post holders are members of IHBC. Salaries are generally modest, with many falling below the national average for all employment and there are significant regional variations.

Conservation activities and workloads

The tasks routinely undertaken by local authority conservation specialists are extremely wide ranging and in many cases involve all aspects of the planning function, i.e. policy, implementation and control. However, workloads tend to be dominated by reactive development control casework at the expense of long-term proactive work and there is clear evidence that casework is increasing within most authorities. The output in relation to proactive tasks such as Repairs and Urgent Works Notices and conservation area appraisals is, on average, very low compared with development control activities. Most specialist practitioners feel that they could be more effective if they were to spend a greater proportion of time on proactive work.

Quality of service and internal/external relationships

Well under half of authorities have adopted *Best Value* performance standards specifically for their conservation service and there are no universally recognised indicators.

Specialists in authorities using performance indicators are evenly split about whether or not this has improved the delivery of their conservation service. Whilst two thirds of respondents felt that their authority provided a good conservation service, well over half rated their authority's commitment to conservation as only fair or worse, indicating that in some authorities the commitment to conservation may be superficial. Generally speaking conservation specialists enjoy good relationships with professional colleagues inside and outside their authorities, the best relationships being enjoyed with planning colleagues and English Heritage and the worst with public utilities.

Professional view points

A wide variety of individual viewpoints was expressed by respondents to the survey, but the most common area of concern was in relation to the inadequacy of resources available to provide a satisfactory conservation service. It is very clear from these comments that most specialists are working under considerable pressure, and many believe that they are unable to provide a balanced service.

Conclusions

The overwhelming impression emerging from the survey is of a conservation service that is often stretched, under-resourced and operating without many of the necessary 'building blocks' that would ensure an effective, efficient and balanced service. Too many authorities hold inadequate information about the extent, character and condition of the historic resource to be managed. This is likely to lead to a failure on the part of authorities to match resources with the scale of the challenge they face. Staffing levels are often modest in relation to the size of the resource to be managed and the workloads faced. Whilst it is clear that the majority of conservation specialists would claim to be covering a very wide range of activities, development control tasks invariably predominate at the expense of other important work. Consequently much of what might be regarded as essential best practice, such as buildings at risk work, conservation area appraisals, enforcement, monitoring and other proactive tasks, inevitably receives comparatively low priority in many authorities.

In the context of rising development pressures, it seems unlikely that local authorities will be able to properly address their responsibilities for managing the historic environment without more resources, a national framework of standards and associated performance indicators.

Recommendations

The report makes recommendations covering the following areas:

Defining and monitoring the historic resource:

- Development of integrated historic environment database systems.
- Promotion of systematic monitoring of the historic resource e.g. BAR registers and conservation area character appraisals.
- Publication by local authorities of regular state of the historic environment reports (SHERs).

Delivery of conservation services:

- Dissemination of the findings of the LACP research to assist in the development of consistent national performance standards.
- Development of model standards for local authority conservation service provision.
- Development of national Best Value Performance Indicators for conservation.
- Redefinition of CIPFA data linked to Best Value Performance Indicators.
- Increased resources for specialist conservation services in the context of the review of the planning system and tied to Best Value Performance Indicators.
- Promotion of consistent standards of professional competence for conservation practitioners.

Selected findings

The historic resource and its management:

- Most local authorities have responsibility for protecting a substantial stock of historic buildings and areas (on average 1198 LBs and 28 CAs) as well as safeguarding the setting of many other elements of the historic environment.
- Nearly a third of authorities do not keep registers of Listed Buildings at Risk.
- Over a third of authorities identify locally listed buildings.
- Nearly three quarters of conservation areas in England do not have adopted character appraisals.
- More than two thirds of ‘front-line’ planning authorities do not maintain an integrated historic environment database.

Financial resources for conservation:

- Overall local authority spending on built environment conservation has, on average, remained ‘flat’ over the past 5 years equating to a decline in ‘real’ terms.
- 50% of authorities operate their own historic building grant schemes.
- Spending on local authority grants schemes has tended to fall over the past 3 years.
- There has been a slight increase in partnership grant spending by local authorities.
- 40% of authorities are involved in HERS, 17% in CAPs and 11% in THIs.
- Nearly two thirds of authorities do not allocate budgets for conservation area enhancement.

Service provision and organisational structure:

- 85% of all local authorities are able to draw upon at least some specialist in house advice.
- The average establishment of conservation specialists within authorities is 1.7 FTE.
- Specialist conservation staffing levels have, on average, remained static over the past three years.
- The number of sponsored posts has increased in the last 3 years in 20% of authorities.
- Two thirds of responding authorities have no dedicated technical /administrative support for their conservation services.
- In 55% of local authorities conservation advice is provided by staff within specialist teams as opposed to individual working in general planning teams.
- 83% of LBC/CAC applications are processed by development control officers with conservation specialists acting as advisors.
- The predominant position for lead conservation specialists in authorities is 4th tier.
- 25% of lead conservation specialists sit on departmental management committees.
- 27% of lead conservation specialists routinely attend planning committee or the equivalent decision making body.
- 63% of conservation specialists have regular contact with elected members.
- In 65% of authorities the advice of the conservation specialist is accorded high or very high priority in decision-making.

Skills and pay:

- Conservation specialists are generally well qualified with 67% holding postgraduate qualifications.
- 34% of local authority conservation specialists are RTPI members, 10% RIBA and 4% RICS.
- 62% of conservation specialists are members of IHBC.
- 79% of authorities support professional/academic training for conservation staff and 77% support in-service training/CPD in conservation.
- The predominant salary bracket for conservation specialists is £21-25k (38%).
- 27% of conservation specialists earn £26-30k.
- 13% of conservation specialists earn above £30k.
- There are significant regional variations in salaries with 75% of specialists in London earning £26k or more whilst in the North East only 18% earn £26k or more.

Conservation activities and workloads:

- Conservation specialists are routinely engaged with a very wide range of activities, and on average workloads are increasing in nearly all areas.
- Development control tasks dominate the workload with pre-application advice, provision of advice to development control colleagues and negotiation with applicants undertaken by over 96% of conservation specialists.
- On average 53% of conservation specialists' time is spent on development control but they feel that 39% of time spent would be preferable.
- Giving advice to owners on repairs is undertaken by 98% of specialists.
- Education/outreach work such as councillor training and talks to educational groups are amongst the least commonly undertaken work.
- 20% of conservation specialists are engaged in Annual State of the Environment Reports.
- The strongest increase in workload is under the heading 'developing best practice/performance standards (e.g. *Best Value*).
- 47% of authorities reported no conservation enforcement action and 82% brought no prosecutions in 2001.
- 88% served no Repairs Notices and 82% served no Urgent Works Notices in 2001.
- 61% adopted no character appraisals in 2001.

Quality of service and internal/external relationships:

- Only 38% of authorities have adopted *Best Value* Performance Standards for the conservation service.
- 35% of respondents rated the quality of conservation service offered by their authorities as only 'fair' or worse.
- 57% of respondents rated their authority's commitment to conservation as 'fair' or worse.
- 88% of respondents rated relationships with planning colleagues as 'good' or 'very good'.
- 71% rated relationships with archaeologists as 'good' or 'very good'.
- 84% rated relationships with English Heritage as 'good' or 'very good'.
- The worst relationships reported by conservation specialists were with public utilities (only 7% 'good' or 'very good').

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to study

It is now widely recognised that the historic environment is one of England's most valuable assets. As well as contributing to the quality of life it helps to support the nation's economy through tourism and in encouraging investment and creating jobs. The historic environment also reinforces a sense of local and national identity. There is now widespread public support for conservation as evidenced by the findings of the recent opinion poll carried out by MORI on behalf of English Heritage (English Heritage 2000). This poll showed that 87% of people in England think that the historic environment plays an important part in the cultural life of the country and that there should be public funding to preserve it.

Much of the responsibility for protecting the historic environment rests with local authorities. The primary responsibility is with 'front-line' planning authorities – that is those authorities with mainstream planning powers, namely district, unitary, metropolitan and London borough councils and national parks. However for historical reasons county councils have had a tradition for being sources of expertise on conservation matters and are, in some cases, able to offer district councils specialist advice. Their role is not statutory and may sometimes overlap with services provided by the district councils.

Planning authorities are charged with safeguarding the future of more than 375,000 Listed Buildings and 9,000 conservation areas in England alone. It has been estimated that up to a third of all planning applications and casework directly concern historic environment conservation matters (Baker & Chitty, 2002). As many as 25% of all planning applications have specific historic environment considerations and about 7% of all planning applications are for works that require listed building consent or conservation area consent (Kindred, 2001). As such conservation of the built environment forms an integral and highly important part of the planning function of most local authorities.

The general responsibilities that local authorities should exercise with regard to listed buildings, conservation areas and the wider historic environment are set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (DOE/DNH 1994). PPG 15 emphasises the vitally important role that local authorities play in protecting the historic environment and urges them to strengthen their commitment to stewardship in terms of policies and allocation of resources. In the context of local authority conservation provision perhaps the most significant reference is to be found in paragraph 1.6 of PPG 15 which states that:

'Above all, local authorities should ensure that they can call on sufficient specialist conservation advice, whether individually or jointly, to inform their decision-making and to assist owners and other members of the public.'

PPG15, Planning and the Historic Environment, DOE/DNH 1994

Whilst PPG 15 provides a very clear definition of the role of local authorities in respect of conserving the historic environment, there has been little published guidance on how authorities should deliver conservation services. Some guidance has been provided by the Royal Town Planning Institute in the form of a good practice guide for conservation and

the historic environment (RTPI, 2000). The guide is aimed at all planners with an involvement with the historic environment and concludes in a summary of what should be included within a good practice strategy to enable an authority to carry out its conservation responsibilities.

The only definition from government as to what a local authority conservation service should comprise was the ‘Guidance to Local Authorities on Conservation of the Historic Environment’ that was issued expressly for the emerging new unitary authorities in 1995 (DNH 1995). Although this document does not have wide currency it is, in effect, the only available government statement on how authorities should organise their services in respect of the historic environment and the range of services they might be expected to deliver. The key statement within the document in terms of conservation provision is in asking authorities to ensure:

‘that they have formalised and effective access to all fields of conservation advice provided by appropriately qualified and experienced staff, supported by reliable and comprehensive inventories and records.’

DNH 1995

As such the DCMS guidance has proved a useful starting point for benchmarking of local authority conservation services as part of the *Best Value* process, and could usefully provide the basis for development of national standards in conservation provision.

A key problem in seeking to define how local authorities should deliver conservation services is the fact that there are currently no dedicated national *Best Value* Performance Indicators for conservation identified by Central Government. Hence there is a failure to provide a framework to ensure that authorities carry out their statutory duties in relation to the historic environment. Local Performance Indicators, devised by individual authorities, may not necessarily take account of the full complexity and interactive nature involved in work relating to the sensitive management of the historic environment. As with many other local authority services, there is potentially a tension between performance based on numbers and cost, and performance based on quality of outcome. The balance between both qualitative and quantitative measures is especially critical for conservation services since the ultimate definition of success in the long term is in the quality, state of survival and integrity of the historic environment.

1.2 The Role of the Local Authority Conservation Specialist

Throughout this report the term ‘conservation specialist’ has been used to describe someone whose primary responsibility is to provide expertise with regard to listed buildings, conservation areas and the historic environment as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and PPG15. The term ‘conservation officer’ has generally been avoided since in many authorities specialists have varied roles and different titles.

There is, at present, no statutory requirement for local authorities to employ their own in house conservation specialists or to routinely seek expert advice externally when considering proposals that affect the historic environment. Accordingly, not all authorities employ such specialists. However, where such officers exist they are

invariably in the frontline of decision-making on planning proposals affecting the historic environment. The potential value of the skilful and knowledgeable local conservation officer has long been recognised – not just in policing changes, but perhaps more importantly in encouraging, educating, enabling, facilitating and inspiring owners and others to make the most of the historic environment.

The job of the effective local authority conservation specialist is a wide-ranging and demanding one, requiring a high level of skill, experience and technical knowledge. The key skill often lies in reconciling the conflict between competing interests, for example in helping to find creative ways of accommodating modern requirements, such as those of the Building Regulations, within historic buildings without compromising their special interest. This requires not only specialist technical knowledge but also problem-solving and interpersonal skills such as persuasion and negotiation.

There is no official definition of the duties of a conservation specialist and there are widely differing interpretations of the role between authorities. All too often the emphasis is purely on the reactive controlling aspects of the work rather than the long-term proactive work. There is a consequent danger that the conservation officer role may become perceived as a negative or stultifying influence, preventing all change. The most effective practitioners are those who succeed in maintaining the highest standards of conservation practice within their authorities whilst portraying conservation as a positive force, thereby earning continued widespread credibility and support.

In recent years there have been various initiatives seeking to define the particular range of skills that a competent conservation practitioner should possess in order to be effective. Chief among these initiatives are the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) Areas of Competence (Grover, 1997) (see Appendix F) and the related Conservation Control NVQ (Preston, 2000). As the professional body representing many local authority conservation specialists the IHBC has been actively involved in developing occupational standards for the sector. The NVQ provides a validated national standard of professional competence for conservation officers, cross referenced to the IHBC Areas of Competence. The NVQ covers the following components:

- Promoting policy through published guidance, advice and grants.
- Development control and enforcement relating to the historic environment.
- Assessing the site and context, and evaluating possible problems and solutions.
- Assessing the brief and making recommendations on proposals and good professional practice including interpersonal skills.
- Developing and implementing conservation policies (e.g. local plans, conservation area appraisals and enhancement)
- Property management (economics of conservation, regeneration etc.)
- Preparing a brief for a conservation project
- Buildings at risk
- Preparing and managing records (measured drawings, listed building records, electronic databases etc).

More recently the Planning Officers Society has drafted a ‘Matrix of Excellence in Urban Design and Conservation’ in collaboration with IHBC (Preston, 2002). All of these definitions emphasise the multi-skilled and interactive nature of the effective local authority conservation specialist’s role.

1.3 Heritage under Pressure

There has been strong anecdotal evidence that local authority conservation services are severely under pressure and that this job of acknowledged importance is not being properly resourced and therefore may not be effectively carried out in some areas. This is supported by the findings of a recent report carried out for English Heritage entitled 'Heritage under Pressure' (Baker & Chitty, 2002).

'Heritage Under Pressure' was commissioned by English Heritage to provide a rapid desk-based survey of existing published information on local authority conservation services in order to feed into research commissioned by central government into resourcing of local planning authorities. The report was also intended to provide a basis for more detailed research into local authority provision. 'Heritage Under Pressure' indicates, amongst a range of findings, that net expenditure on historic environment conservation by local authorities has declined by 8% in real terms over the last five years. Furthermore, the report shows that expenditure on conservation staffing fell in real terms by 10% between 1996 and 2000. It also highlights a decline of 23% in English Heritage's grants to local authorities and others over the same period. This apparent reduction of funding for heritage work by local authorities coincides ironically with an increase in the size of the historic resource in terms of listed buildings, conservation areas, landscapes and monuments, all of which have seen a rise in number over a five year period.

'Heritage under Pressure' indicated that the highest priority for local authority conservation resources tends to be in relation to reactive and demand-led services such as development control, whilst lower priority appears to be given to proactive work such as monitoring the condition of the resource i.e. Buildings at Risk work. This reflects the frequently heard anecdotal view that casework tends to dominate at the expense of long-term strategic tasks, thereby limiting the effectiveness of local authority conservation services.

1.4 Rationale for research into local authority conservation provision

'Heritage under Pressure' (Baker & Chitty, 2002) highlighted the fact that there has been no comprehensive or systematically collected information about local authority conservation provision in England. There has been no systematic data about how local authorities meet the challenges set out in PPG15. Little has been known about how many specialist conservation staff exist or what their workloads are. There has been no trend data to enable analysis of how workloads and resources might be changing over time. Significantly there are no nationally agreed performance indicators or standards for local authority conservation services. The lack of consistent national standards for conservation provision is borne out by anecdotal evidence which suggests that conservation of the built environment is afforded a varying degree of priority by local authorities, with some authorities employing large and well-resourced teams of conservation specialists whilst others make no such provision.

The lack of information on local authority conservation services is in marked contrast with the situation with local authority archaeological services where data about workloads and staffing has been collected over a number of years. For example, the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) conducted surveys of casework for

1997/98 and more recently for 1998/99 (ALGAO 2001). As well as gaining a clearer assessment of the effects of PPG16, the most recent survey aimed to throw light on long term trends in the provision of local government archaeological advisory services, and to assist in monitoring the effects of changes in both casework levels and policy/legislation. In doing so it was the intention of ALGAO to use the results to guide future research into curatorial practice, to assist local government archaeological services in the *Best Value* process and assist ALGAO in the development of national performance indicators.

Now is a time of potentially significant change in the way the historic environment is managed by local authorities. Central government is seeking ways of modernising the planning system and improving performance, and consultation on a new Green Paper on planning entitled 'Planning: delivering a fundamental change' (DTLR, 2002) has resulted in a planning policy statement that sets out radical reforms for the planning system (ODPM 2002). The government has also issued an important statement on the historic environment entitled 'A Force for our Future' (DCMS/DTLR, 2002) which puts forward a comprehensive new vision for the heritage sector. These initiatives will have a major impact on how local authorities perform their duties in respect of the historic environment.

It is essential that, if English Heritage, central government and the conservation profession (as represented by the IHBC) are to have an informed picture about effectiveness of local authority conservation service, clear, accurate and up-to-date base data is available on staffing provision and workloads. This study into local authority conservation provision (LACP) is part of a coordinated approach to research across the historic environment sector. It has been commissioned by English Heritage and IHBC in response to action called for by central government in 'A Force for Our Future' (DCMS/DTLR 2002). As such the study relates closely with the first State of the Historic Environment Report (English Heritage, 2002) which contains information from the LACP survey.

1.5 Form and content of the LACP report

The LACP study has, for the first time, sought to collect comprehensive information about specialist conservation services within English local planning authorities. It has drawn on the work undertaken in 'Heritage under Pressure' (Baker & Chitty, 2002) and other sources of data such as Planning and Development Statistics collected annually by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA, 2002). Data has been collected across a range of indicators in such a way as to facilitate future updating and to provide the opportunity to establish trends both within local planning authorities and externally. In approaching the research a conscious attempt has been made to parallel the surveys being undertaken for local authority archaeological services to enable a picture to be built up of the heritage sector as a whole.

It is intended that the findings of this research will enable a more informed response to emerging initiatives such as *Best Value*, for example in helping to establish an agreed framework of national performance indicators for local authority conservation services. In turn it is intended that the findings will facilitate policy formulation on the part of central government, English Heritage and the IHBC, particularly in the context of 'Power of Place' (English Heritage, 2000), 'A Force for our Future' (DCMS/DTLR, 2001) and the reform of the planning system emerging from the Planning Green Paper (DTLR, 2001).

This report summarises the findings of the national survey of local authority conservation provision and offers a broad analysis of the key implications of the findings.

Section 2 outlines the project brief, research methodology and project design. Section 3 provides a simple statistical summary of the findings. Section 4 offers a discussion of the key implications of the research findings. Section 5 draws conclusions and makes recommendations for future action.

It should be noted that the data collected in the survey was very wide ranging in order to provide a baseline for future monitoring and research. The level of analysis of data contained within this report has been limited by the resources and time available, and clearly there is considerable scope for further and deeper exploration of the data in future focusing on specific areas of conservation provision.

2. Project brief and research methodology

2.1 The project brief

The stated aim of the LACP project as set out in the brief was:

‘... to begin to collect quantitative and qualitative data about conservation provision in local planning authorities in England, including staffing and casework issues. This data will be presented in a form that can be used by IHBC, EH and others to inform policy, and in a way which could be followed up in future years to assess trends. The data will also help inform resourcing priorities as well as policy.’

The objectives of the project as defined in the brief were:

1. To draw together existing data about local authority conservation provision
2. To design a survey methodology in order to collect quantitative and qualitative data about conservation provision within local authorities in England
3. To undertake the survey
4. To analyse the results of the survey
5. To analyse other relevant sources of data
6. To characterise the casework associated with conservation provision and the methods used to implement PPG 15 and associated work
7. To present a report, setting out the results of the survey to peer groups
8. To incorporate peer group comments into a final report
9. To present the results of the work to a wider audience

A full copy of the project brief is included at Appendix A.

2.2 Research methodology and project design

The brief for the research project determined that all local authorities in England should be surveyed to include unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, non-metropolitan districts, London boroughs, national parks and county councils. It was decided by the Steering Group at an early stage that the survey should be by means of a postal questionnaire directed to the lead officer responsible for conservation via the Director of Planning or equivalent post.

The questionnaire design was based on the range of issues identified within the project brief. This was a lengthy list of questions distilled into as succinct a range as possible. In order to test the appropriateness of the questions in the questionnaire the survey was piloted with representatives of five authorities; one rural district, one city, one unitary, one county and one national park and revised in accordance with comments made. The final version of the questionnaire was divided into seven main sections seeking information under headings; size of resource, spending, staffing profile, activities and workloads, *Best Value* and quality of service and internal/external relationships. At the end of the questionnaire there was space for individual respondents to give general comments. The questionnaire consisted of five double-sided A4 sheets and contained 87 separate questions. A copy is attached at appendix B.

All 396 local authorities were sent questionnaires using the Municipal Year Book database of planning authorities. Named individual directors of planning, or equivalent, were targeted, and stamped addressed reply envelopes were supplied. A letter of support from the President of the IHBC was sent to all IHBC members identified as working in English local planning authorities, urging them to participate in the survey. A reminder letter was sent one month after initial dispatch to those authorities who had not yet replied and after a further two weeks a targeted telephone and email chase-up was initiated using the IHBC membership database in the first instance, and subsequently using telephone numbers from the Municipal Year Book database. A cut-off for responses was imposed at the end of June 2002 to enable initial analysis of data prior to the Steering group meeting in mid July.

As a result of this meeting a decision was made to seek at least some basic data from all local authorities by means of a further telephone follow up. As a result telephone contact was made during August 2002 with all remaining authorities who did not complete a full questionnaire and data was collected against a limited number of key questions in the form of a short questionnaire (see Appendix C).

2.3 Response to survey

A total of 232 returns had been received by the initial June cut-off date, representing 59% of the total number of English local authorities. As a result of the subsequent telephone chase up in July and August a further 33 full returns were submitted giving a final total of 265 (67%) by the commencement of final data analysis in September 2002. Additionally 'short returns' were completed for all remaining 131 authorities so that comprehensive responses were obtained for certain key questions on staffing and resources. A list of authorities returning full responses is given at Appendix D. Some additional late returns were submitted after the completion of the data input and analysis exercise was carried out in September. Unfortunately it was not feasible to include data from these within the statistics, but their content is consistent with general trends observed from the sample overall and they have been helpful in informing the preparation of the final report.

The breakdown of full responses received by September 2002 is as follows:

Type of authority	No. of LAs in category	No. of full returns	Response rate (percentage)
Unitary	47	28	60%
Metropolitan districts	36	28	78%
Non-metropolitan districts	238	161	68%
London boroughs	33	24	73%
National parks (including the Broads)	8	4	50%
County councils	34	20	59%
ALL AUTHORITIES	396	265	67%

For postal surveys of this type and length a 67% response rate can be regarded as very good, and certainly sufficient to give reliable results. There is however the potential in this case for inbuilt bias within the results of some questions due to the possibility of a higher rate of return being received from those authorities with larger, more proactive teams, and those who are members of the IHBC (especially since the latter group received

targeted chase up). This might lead to more favourable conclusions being drawn about workloads and resourcing. It should also be noted that not all returned questionnaires were fully completed and that some may contain inconsistencies. Accordingly, care has been taken in interpreting the results, and the sample size for each question has been acknowledged within the analysis of the statistics.

During the telephone/email chase up a number of individuals gave reasons why returns would not be provided or where these would be delayed. The most common reason was that of overwork and the length and complexity of the questionnaire. One authority responded by saying:

'I won't be replying to this as I don't have the time, even though I recognise the value – symptomatic of the problem under research I'm afraid.'

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Other reasons included vacancy of specialist conservation post, or the need to obtain certain data (especially of a financial nature) from a third party. In one case sensitivity and confidentiality of the data was cited.

3. Analysis of data

This section of the report analyses the results of the survey question by question. It is intended to provide a simple statistical summary of responses to each question. The number of responses and the percentage response rate is given in each case, together with a short commentary on the findings, highlighting any difficulties in interpretation of the data. Whilst data was collected from all authority types, in respect of certain questions county councils and/or national parks have been excluded from the analysis to avoid double counting or where their inclusion is likely to distort figures. Where they have been excluded this is indicated clearly in the commentary. It should be noted that most of the statistics are based on information from ‘full survey returns’, although not all of the questions were answered by all respondents.

Detailed discussion of the key implications of these findings is provided in Chapter 4.

3.1 General profile of local authority and conservation service

Questions 1 to 3 requested general information about each authority, including area, population and authority type. This was used for coding purposes to facilitate analysis.

3.2 Size of resource

Q4. No. of Listed Buildings within authority's area

Analysis excludes county councils and national parks. Not all respondents to this question completed the table fully. The number of respondents to each element varied and is given in brackets after the average number.

	Ave. no. of statutory list entries per authority	Ave. no. of individual buildings per authority
Grade I	26 (112)	46 (75)
Grade II*	64 (209)	148 (76)
Grade II	1069 (205)	1702 (74)
All grades	1198 (246)	1849 (93)

- The number of Grade I list entries ranges up to 192 with an average across the country of 26. The average for individual buildings is 46.
- Grade II* list entries range up to 610 with an average of 64. Grade II* individual buildings averaged 148.
- Grade II list entries range up to 5687 with an average of 1069. Grade II individual buildings averaged 1702.
- The total number of list entries of all grades ranges up to 5803 with an average of 1198. The average number of individual buildings of all grades is 1849.

Q5. Does the authority maintain a register of Listed Buildings at Risk

257 responses (65%). 68.5% of responding authorities stated that they maintained a register of Listed Buildings at Risk.

Q6. If 'yes' is this based on a 100% sample of all buildings in LA's area?

170 responses (43%). 70% of authorities maintaining a register base it on a 100% sample of all buildings.

Q7. Please state frequency of review in years (if applicable)

141 responses (36%). Not all authorities maintaining a register of Listed Buildings at Risk gave details of the frequency of review. Of those who did the interval varied between 1 and 15 years, with the bulk (74%) reviewing every 5 years or more often, and one third doing so every year.

Q8. No. of Listed Buildings at Risk

187 responses out of 354 (53%) (excludes county councils and national parks). Respondents gave a range of figures from 0 to 872, with the average across the country being 48.

Q9. No. of Conservation Areas

267 responses out of 354 (75%) (excludes county councils and national parks). A wide range was reported from 1 in the Isles of Scilly to 144 in Cotswold DC. The average across the country is 28.

Q10. No. of Conservation Area character appraisals adopted to date

230 responses out of 354 (65%) (excludes county councils and national parks). 30.4% of responding authorities stated that they had adopted no character appraisals to date, whereas 9.7% had adopted appraisals for all of their conservation areas. The number of character appraisals adopted by responding authorities ranges from 1-76 with the average number being 8.

Q11. No. of Historic Parks, Gardens & Cemeteries (English Heritage register)

234 responses out of 354 (66%) (excludes county councils and national parks). 93% of respondents indicated that they had parks, gardens or cemeteries. The numbers range from 0-30 with the average number being 4.5.

Q12. No. of Historic Battlefields

228 responses out of 354 (64%) (excludes county councils and national parks). 18% of authorities stated that their area contained historic battlefields. The numbers range from 0-7 with an average of 0.2. (It should be noted that there are only 43 registered historic battlefields nationally).

Q13. No. of Scheduled Ancient Monuments

227 responses out of 354 (64%) excludes county councils and national parks). 5% of responding areas do not contain any SAM's. The range is from 0-2176 but with the majority (91%) having less than 300. The average is 57.5.

Q14. No. of buildings covered by Article 4 directions related to conservation issues

190 responses out of 354 (54%) (excludes county councils and national parks). 60% of respondents stated that their area contained buildings covered by Article 4 directions. The average number of buildings covered is 405 with a range from 0 -10,000. The majority have under 500 buildings covered.

Q15. No. of locally listed buildings, i.e. non-statutory list kept by LA

205 responses out of 354 (58%) (excludes county councils and national parks). 44% of responding authorities keep a non-statutory list. The average number of locally listed buildings is 226 with the range being from 0 to 5000.

Q16. Are local lists backed by specific development plan policies?

216 responses (55%). 46% of responding authorities reported that local lists are backed by development plan policies.

Q17. No. of World Heritage Sites

235 responses out of 354 (66%) (excludes county councils and national parks). 12% of responding authorities have a World Heritage Site within their area. The range is from 0-2. The average number of World Heritage Sites is 0.11. (It should be noted that there are only 14 World Heritage Sites nationally, some of which straddle the boundaries of more than one authority).

Q18. Has the authority established any other forms of non-statutory designation of the historic environment not identified above?

258 responses (65%). 21% of respondents stated that they had other non-statutory designation.

Q19. If 'yes' please specify.

52 gave details. Non-statutory designations and number of authorities included:

- ☐ 32 areas of historic value/local importance
- ☐ 10 areas of archaeological interest
- ☐ 12 gardens and parklands of local importance

Q20. Does the authority maintain an integrated historic environment database/ information system (i.e. records combining archaeology, buildings & sites)?

259 responses (65%). 69% of responding authorities do not maintain a database. There is a wide variation between the different authority types as set out below.

Type of Authority	Historic environment database?	
	Yes	No
Unitary	37.5%	64.3%
Metropolitan	25.0%	75.0%
District	23.7%	76.3%
London Borough	30.4%	69.6%
National Park	75.0%	25.0%
County	80.0%	20.0%
ALL AUTHORITIES	30.9%	69.1%

Q21. Does the authority operate a Conservation Area Advisory Committee?

261 responses (66%). 77% of responding authorities do not operate an advisory committee.

3.3 Spending

Q22. Spending profile of the authority (as returned in CIPFA statistics)

Response rate for each year ranged from 54–104 (average 87) (22%).

Revenue Spending per LA (£)	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Total for LA	134,390,337	128,635,123	119,515,196	125,585,854	128,479,557
Planning Service	1,380,825	1,206,164	1,423,428	1,336,030	1,337,211
Planning spending as % of total rev spend per LA	1.03%	0.94%	1.19%	1.06%	1.04%
Conservation service (ex. archaeology)	162,129	139,125	147,642	136,920	152,652
Conservation spending as % of total rev spend per LA	0.12%	0.11%	0.12%	0.11%	0.12%

Q23. Does the authority operate its own historic building grant programme (i.e. solely funded by the authority under S.57 1990 Act)?

(Response by questionnaire/telephone interview)

389 responses (98%). Exactly half (49.9%) of the respondents reported that they operate their own grant programmes. There are distinct regional variations with 61% of authorities in the South West and South East regions stating that they have a budget compared with 21% in the North East and 25% in London.

Q24. Please state budget 2001/02 for the local authority's historic building grant programme in 2001/2002

275 responses (69%). The budget for local authority historic building grant programmes ranged from £1,000 to £500,000. The average budget was £19,996. Regional variations in provision were reflected in the level of grants with an average of £32,000 in the South East compared with £5,250 in the North East.

Q25. Please indicate how this budget has changed over the last 3 years.

209 responses (53%). 35 % of responding authorities have seen a decrease in resources for S57 grants in the last 3 years, whilst 16% have seen an increase and the remainder (49%) no change.

Q26. Does the authority currently contribute to jointly funded/partnership historic building grants programmes under S.80 1990 Act?

***CAPs
HERS,
THIs
Other (specify)***

(Response by questionnaire/telephone interview)

389 responses (98%). 17% of authorities contribute to CAPs, 40% to HERS and 11% to THIs. 24 respondents (6%) contribute to other jointly funded schemes, summarised as follows:

- 5 HLF funded schemes
- 4 market town schemes
- 4 SRB funded schemes
- 3 commercial building improvement schemes
- 2 joint county council projects
- 1 BAR project
- 1 Millennium Trust barn restoration scheme

50.5% of responding authorities contribute to no jointly funded/partnership historic building grant programmes.

Q27. Is the authority currently delegated to manage such programmes on behalf of other partners?

250 responses (63%). Just under a half (49%) of authorities are delegated to manage partnership programmes.

Q28. Please state your authority's contribution to jointly funded/partnership historic building grants programmes in 2001.02.

226 responses (57%). The amounts that authorities contribute to partnership grants programmes range from £200-£2,658,000, but the great majority (90%) contribute less than £50,000 and 25% give under £20,000. The average contribution is £47,519.

Q29. Please indicate how the authority's contribution has changed over the last 3 years

186 responses (47%). The position is unchanged for over half (55%) of the authorities with 25% reporting increases and 20% decreases.

Q30. Does the authority have a budget for conservation area enhancement?

137 responses (35%). 65% of responding authorities stated that they did not have a budget for CA enhancement. There were significant regional variations with 83% in London stating that they did not have a budget and 50% in the East region.

Q31. Please state budget for 2001/02 for enhancement of conservation areas

247 responses (62%). 80 respondents (88% of those who have budgets) gave details of the amounts. These ranged from £800-£3,122,000, but with the great majority (89%) budgeting less than £200,000 and 41% under £20,000. The average conservation area enhancement budget was £32,400.

Q32. Does the authority have a budget for conservation projects other than grants or enhancements (e.g. research)?

261 responses (66%). 76% of responding authorities do not have a budget for other conservation projects.

Q33. Please state budget for 2001/02 for other conservation projects

250 responses (63%). 56 respondents (90% of those who have budgets) gave details of amounts. These ranged from £1000-£300,000, with the majority (86%) budgeting under £75,000 and 53% under £10,000. The average budget was £8,008.

Q34. Please state budget for 2001/02 for specialist conservation staff

114 responses (28%) - only 43% of those returning questionnaires completed this question. Of those who did so, 10% reported that their authority had a zero budget and the remainder gave a range from £1500-£271,000, with the bulk falling between £10,000-£60,000. The average budget for specialist staff was £62,501.

3.4 Staffing Profile of Local Authority and Conservation Service

Q35. *Please give details of the numbers of posts in the planning and conservation service*

	Ave. no. of staff (FTE)	% change over last 3 years		
		Increased	No change	Decreased
Established posts within the planning service overall	38.1	36.5	38.5	25
Established specialist conservation posts (see note 4 for definition)	1.7	18.5	67	14.5
Conservation posts supported by external funding (e.g. English Heritage, HLF)	0.3	19.5	78.5	2
Dedicated administrative/technical support staff for conservation service	0.3	6	86	8
Any other staff who routinely spend time in delivering aspects of the conservation service	0.5	10.5	86	3.5

- ***Overall planning service***

173 responses (44%). The number of posts reported in the planning service ranged from 5-288 with an average of 38. 156 (90% of respondents) gave details of change over the last 3 years, showing a net increase. 38.5% reported no change with 36.5% showing an increase and 25% a decrease.

- ***Established conservation posts***

(Response by questionnaire/telephone)

396 responses (100%). The number of posts ranges from 0 to 14.0 per authority but the overall average is 1.7 FTE. There are significant regional variations with the average number of posts in London being 2.8 FTE compared with just 1 FTE in the North East. Excluding the counties 14% of authorities have no established posts, with another 5% having less than 1.0 FTE. 353 (89% of respondents) gave details of change suggesting a slight rise in numbers. Two thirds (67%) recorded a stable position with 18.5% an increase and 14.5% a decrease.

Type of Authority	No. of authorities		
	0 posts	0.01 to 0.99 posts	1.0 or more posts
Unitary	5 (10.6%)	3 (6.4%)	39 (83%)
Metropolitan	2 (5.6%)	1 (2.8%)	33 (91.6%)
District	39 (16.4%)	15 (6.3%)	184 (77.3%)
London Borough	2 (6.1%)	0 (0%)	31 (93.9%)
National Park	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	7 (87.5%)
County	10 (29.4%)	0 (0%)	24 (70.6%)
ALL AUTHORITIES	59 (14.9%)	19 (4.8%)	318 (80.3%)

• **Conservation posts sponsored by external funding**

247 responses (62%). 25% of responding authorities have externally sponsored posts, e.g. English Heritage or Heritage Lottery Fund. The range is from 0 to 6 with an average of 0.3. 144 (58% of respondents) gave details of change with an indication that total numbers have risen. Although the majority (78%) of authorities have seen no movement over the last 3 years, 19% recorded an increase as opposed to 2% a decrease.

• **Dedicated administrative/technical support**

253 responses (64%). Two thirds of respondents stated that they have no dedicated support. The number of dedicated administrative/technical support posts ranges between 0 and 4 with an average of 0.9. 156 (61% of respondents) gave details of change with a suggestion that total numbers have been static. 86% have seen no movement and 6% show an increase compared with 8% a decrease.

• **Other staff routinely spending time on conservation**

244 responses (62%). 41% of authorities reported that their conservation service has support from other staff. The number of posts ranges from 0 to 5.0 with an average of 0.5. 143 (58% of respondents) gave details of change with an indication that total numbers have risen. 86% have seen no movement with 10.5% recording an increase and 3.5% a decrease.

Q36. Is the conservation service performed by staff within a defined specialist team (i.e. distinct from development control/planning policy)?

(Response by questionnaire/ telephone interview)

396 responses (100%). In 55% of authorities conservation staff are located in a specialist team.

Q37. If 'yes' what specialist functions do the team perform?

1. Conservation advice
2. Archaeology
3. Urban design
4. Environmental enhancement
5. Landscape
6. Trees & woodlands
7. Other (specify)

The responses indicate that specialist conservation teams perform a wide range of differing functions.

Functions included in specialist conservation teams	Archaeology	Urban design	Environmental enhancement	Landscape	Trees and woodlands	Other
No. of authorities	64	132	131	69	61	67

Other specialist functions and number of authorities involved are as follows:

- 21 authorities - ecology/countryside management/footpaths
- 8 authorities - regeneration
- 8 authorities - project management
- 7 authorities - grants and funding
- 4 authorities - architectural advice
- 3 authorities - wastes and minerals/radiation monitoring
- 3 authorities - transport/highway design
- 2 authorities - tourism
- 2 authorities - LA Agenda 21
- 1 authority - mapping/graphics
- 1 authority - crime
- 1 authority - data & analysis

Q38. In which local authority service area does the conservation service sit?

(Response by questionnaire/ telephone interview)

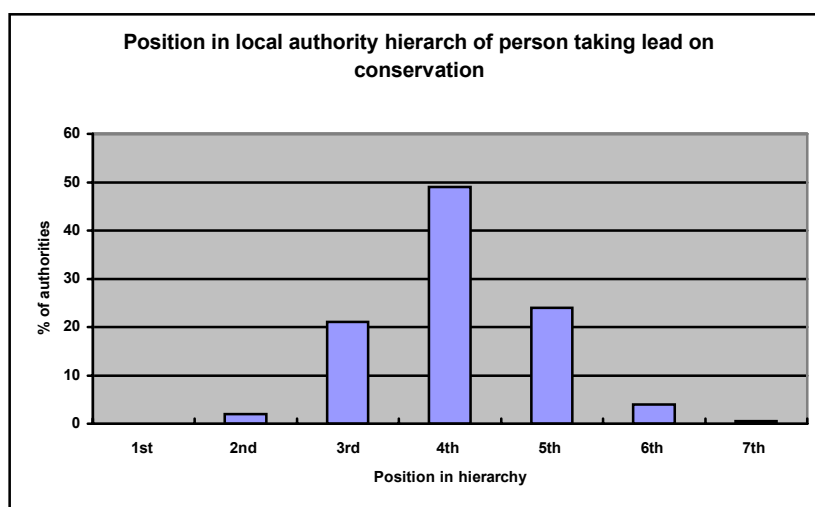
345 responses (87%). 96% are located in service areas whose titles include the words Conservation, Development, Design, Environment, Planning or Regeneration.

The remainder are dispersed as follows:

- 4 authorities - Community/Neighbourhood Services
- 3 authorities - Cultural Services
- 2 authorities - Technical Services
- 1 authorities - Customer Services
- 1 authorities - Economic Development
- 1 authorities - Park Management
- 1 authorities - Trading Standards

Q39. Position in LA hierarchy of person taking lead on conservation

229 responses (58%). 93% of conservation specialists are to be found within the third to fifth tier within authorities, with the most common being fourth tier (49%).



Q40. Does the lead conservation specialist sit on the departmental/service area management committee?

259 responses (65%). Three quarters of respondents reported that the lead specialist did not have a place on the departmental management committee.

Q41. Does the lead conservation specialist routinely attend planning committee or the equivalent decision making body?

258 responses (65%). 73% stated that the lead specialist did not routinely attend planning committee or the equivalent decision making body.

Q42. Is the advice of the conservation specialist separately recorded on reports to Planning Committee?

255 responses (64%). In 51% of cases the advice of the conservation specialists is separately recorded on reports to planning committee.

Q43. Does the lead conservation specialist have regular direct contact with elected members?

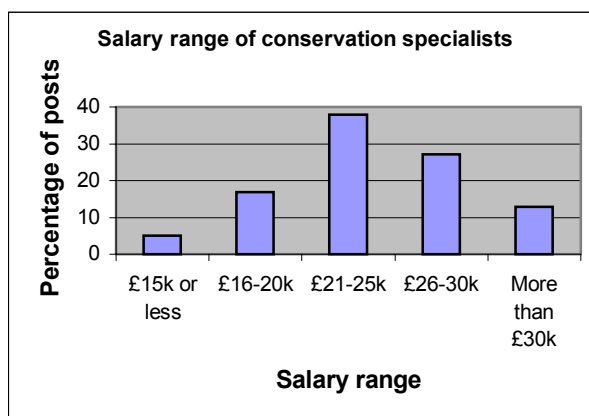
256 responses (65%). In 63% of responding authorities lead specialists have regular direct contact with elected members.

Q44. Please give details of all staff involved in the delivery of the authority's conservation service

248 responses (63%). Respondents completed a table giving details of salary ranges of each specialist staff member, together with information on length of time in post and professional and academic qualifications.

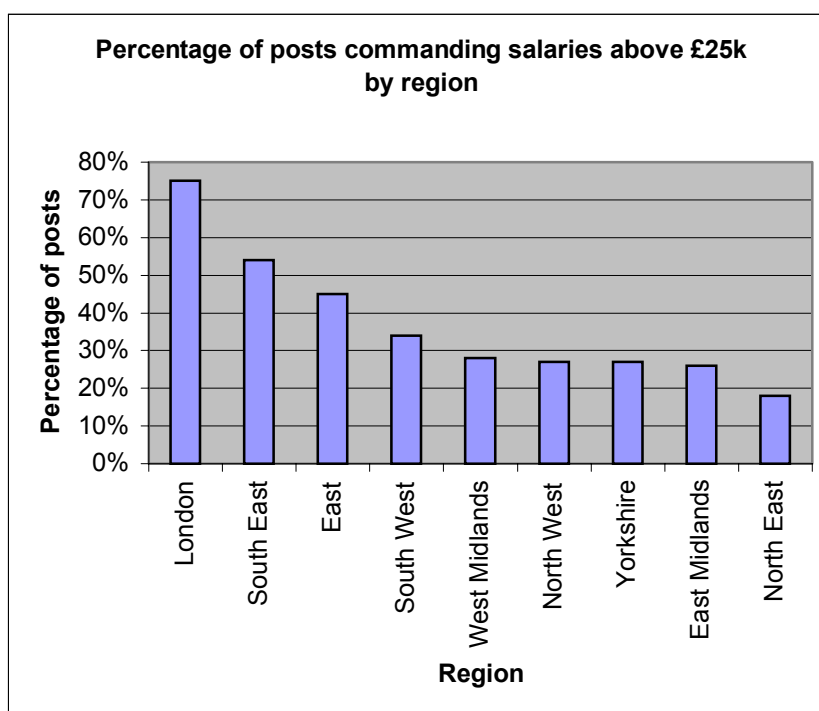
The breakdown of salary ranges for all specialist conservation staff is:

- ☐ Above £30k: 12.9%
- ☐ £26k-£30k : 27.1%
- ☐ £21k-£25k : 38.0%
- ☐ £16k-£20k : 16.9%
- ☐ Below £15k: 5.1%



From the above breakdown it can be seen that most common salary band (mode) is £21k - £25k (38%).

	No. of posts and percentage within each salary range					
	£15k or less	£16-£20k	£21-25k	£26-30k	More than £30k	Total
London	0 (0%)	4 (6%)	13 (19.4%)	31 (46.3%)	19 (28.4%)	67 (100%)
South East	7 (5.3%)	16 (12.0%)	38 (28.6%)	46 (34.6%)	26 (19.5%)	133 (100%)
South West	6 (6.2%)	19 (19.6%)	39 (40.2%)	23 (23.7%)	10 (10.3%)	97 (100%)
W Midlands	7 (10.3%)	13 (19.1%)	29 (42.6%)	17 (25.0%)	2 (2.9%)	68 (100%)
E Midlands	3 (4.1%)	16 (21.6%)	36 (48.6%)	16 (21.6%)	3 (4.1%)	74 (100%)
East	6 (7.4%)	15 (18.5%)	24 (29.6%)	20 (24.7%)	16 (19.8%)	81 (100%)
Yorkshire	2 (4.5%)	6 (13.6%)	24 (54.5%)	9 (20.5%)	3 (6.8%)	44 (100%)
North East	1 (4.5%)	2 (9.1%)	15 (68.4%)	3 (13.6%)	1 (4.5%)	22 (100%)
North West	2 (2.4%)	22 (26.8%)	36 (43.9%)	16 (19.5%)	6 (7.3%)	82 (100%)
TOTAL	34 (5.1%)	113 (16.9%)	254 (38%)	181 (27.1%)	86 (12.9%)	668 (100%)



The data shows that salaries vary between regions with London commanding the highest salaries (75% over £25k) and the North East the lowest salaries (18% over £25k).

The length of time that conservation specialists occupy their posts ranges from an average of 4 to 5 years in the most junior posts to 9 years for the most senior, with an average

tenure for all posts of 7 years. Membership of Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) is 12% for lead post holders falling to 3% for the most junior, averaging 10.4% for all post holders. Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) membership is 48% for the lead post holder, falling to 19% for the most junior, averaging 33.6% for all post holders. Membership of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) averages 3.6% for all post holders, Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) 2.6% and Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) 1.2%. IHBC membership among the respondents averages 62% overall, although for lead post holders it is higher at 75%.

Three quarters of the post holders at the highest salary scale hold a post-graduate qualification falling to just over half (53%) in the £16k-£20k range. The average percentage with postgraduate qualifications for all post holders is 67%. The distribution of those respondents reporting only an undergraduate degree is broadly similar across the salary ranges with the highest number (27%) at £16k-£20k.

Q45. What (if any) minimum entry requirement does the authority stipulate for employment as a conservation specialist?

224 responses (57%). 182 authorities (81% of respondents) specified particular entry requirements. A large number of combinations of qualification and minimum experience were given, some rather more detailed than others, but with many authorities stating more than one requirement. 19% of authorities stated that the only requirement was for a specialist qualification. 37% mentioned membership of the IHBC. In an additional 42 authorities (19% of respondents) the entry requirements were described as not specific/no minimum.

The overall pattern of replies was as follows

Entry requirement	Number	Percentage
No reply	172	43.4
No requirements, no specific requirements	42	10.6
One requirement	84	21.2
Several requirements	98	24.7
Total authorities	396	100.0

Of the 84 who mentioned one requirement the pattern of replies was as follows

Entry requirement	Number	Percentage
A specialist/professional qualification	35	41.7
An academic qualification (usually a degree)	22	26.2
IHBC	13	15.5
Experience	9	10.7
RTPI	5	6.0
Total authorities	84	100.0

There were 98 authorities who mentioned several (usually two) requirements, producing between them a total of 203 mentions.

Entry requirement	Number of mentions	Percentage of mentions
IHBC	54	26.7
A specialist/professional qualification	45	22.2
Experience	39	19.2
An academic qualification (usually a degree)	29	14.3
RTPI	23	11.3
RIBA	9	4.4
IFA	3	1.5
RICS	1	0.5
Total mentions	203	100.0

Q46. Does the authority provide financial support for membership of relevant professional body, e.g. IHBC?

257 responses (65%). 42% of the authorities provide financial support for professional body membership.

Q47. Does the LA actively support professional/academic training for conservation staff (i.e. day release courses)?

251 responses (63%). 79% actively support professional/academic training.

Q48. Does the LA support/provide in service training/CPD in conservation?

258 responses (65%). 77% provide in service training in conservation.

Q49. If yes, who is training aimed at:

Conservation staff
Other planning staff
Councillors
Others, e.g. owners (specify)

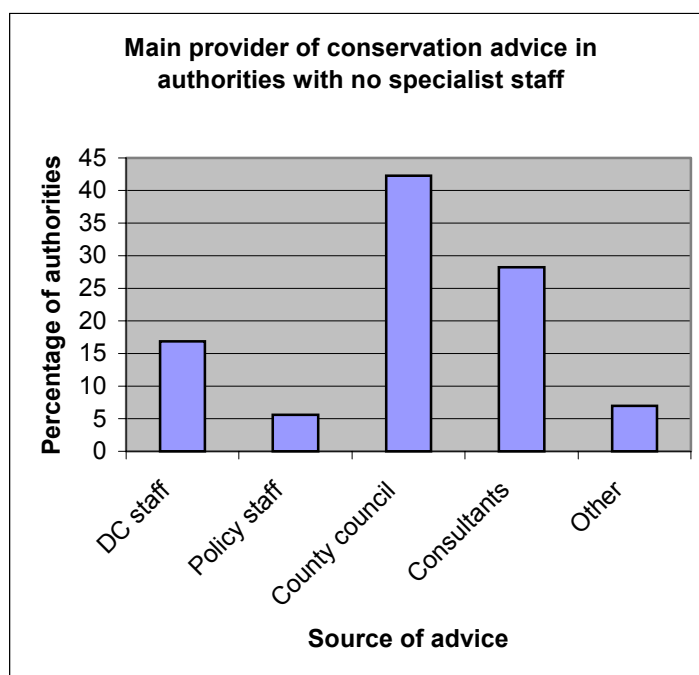
199 responses (50%). 87% of responding authorities identified training aimed at conservation staff, with 73% identifying conservation training for other planning staff. 37% aim conservation training at councillors and 14% reported that it is also directed towards other groups. 20 respondents gave details. Description of group and number of authorities involved:

- ☐ 6 aimed at owners
- ☐ 4 “ civic societies/amenity groups/conservation advisory groups
- ☐ 4 “ agents/ architects
- ☐ 3 “ builders/contractors
- ☐ 3 “ parish councils
- ☐ 2 “ building control staff

- Q50. If no specialist staff, who is the main provider of advice to the LPA on conservation matters?**
1. DC staff
 2. Policy staff
 3. County Council
 4. Consultants
 5. Other (specify)

(Response by questionnaire/ telephone interview)

66 responses (18% excluding county councils). Of those authorities without specialist staff 42% identified the main provider of advice as the county council, 24% use DC or Policy staff, 30% use consultants and 4% depend on other advisers such as building preservation and heritage trusts.



- Q51. Who processes LBC/CAC applications?**
1. Conservation specialists
 2. DC staff with advice from conservation specialists
 3. DC staff

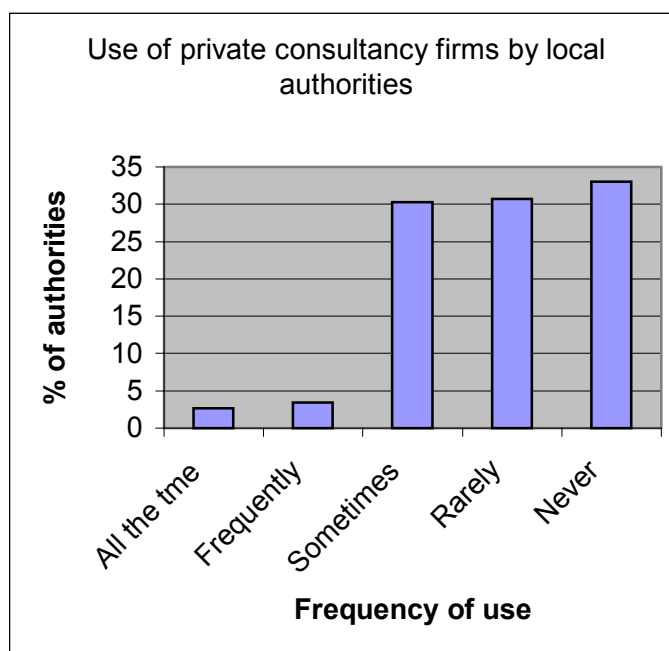
(Response by questionnaire/ telephone interview)

380 responses (96%). 83% of applications are processed by DC staff with advice from specialists and 4.5% by DC staff alone. The remaining 12.5% are handled entirely by conservation specialists.

- Q52. Does your authority use private consultancy firms to provide any aspect of its conservation service?**
1. All the time
 2. Frequently
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

264 responses (67%). 30% of respondents reported that consultancy firms are used sometimes, while 64% stated that they rarely or never used them.

Use of Private Consultants	All the time	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	2.7	3.4	30.3	30.7	33.0



Q53. If 'yes', please specify which aspects this covers

1. *Devt. Control*
2. *Policy formulation*
3. *Buildings at Risk*
4. *CA enhancement*
5. *Funding bids*
6. *Other (specify)*

The aspect covered most often is for funding bids followed by development control, buildings at risk and CA enhancement in fairly equal proportion.

Aspects of conservation work where consultancy firms used	DC	Policy	BAR	CA Enhancement	Funding bids	Other
No. of authorities	36	15	42	38	58	84

84 authorities using consultancy firms specified other aspects that are covered.

Summary of aspects with number of authorities involved:

- 23 CA appraisals/statements/audits
- 15 archaeological/historical surveys
- 12 engineering/structural advice
- 7 design guides/advice
- 4 capital programme schemes/projects

- 4 development/planning briefs
- 4 listings advice
- 3 appeals/compensation claims
- 3 historic building grants/listed building repair
- 2 feasibility studies
- 2 conservation plans
- 2 enforcements
- 1 HERS management

Q54. If used how does the authority vet their competence?

1. Track record
2. Tender submission
3. Recommendation
4. Interview
5. Qualifications
6. Other (specify)

Means of vetting consultants are not mutually exclusive and some authorities indicated that a combination of methods is used. Of those authorities that responded 119 indicated that track record was used as a means of vetting the competence of consultants. Fairly equal numbers indicated they use the other suggested methods with seven indicating other means of selection.

Means of selecting consultants	Track record	Tender submission	Recommendation	Interview	Qualifications	Other
No. of authorities	119	87	83	77	73	7

3.5 Conservation activities and workloads

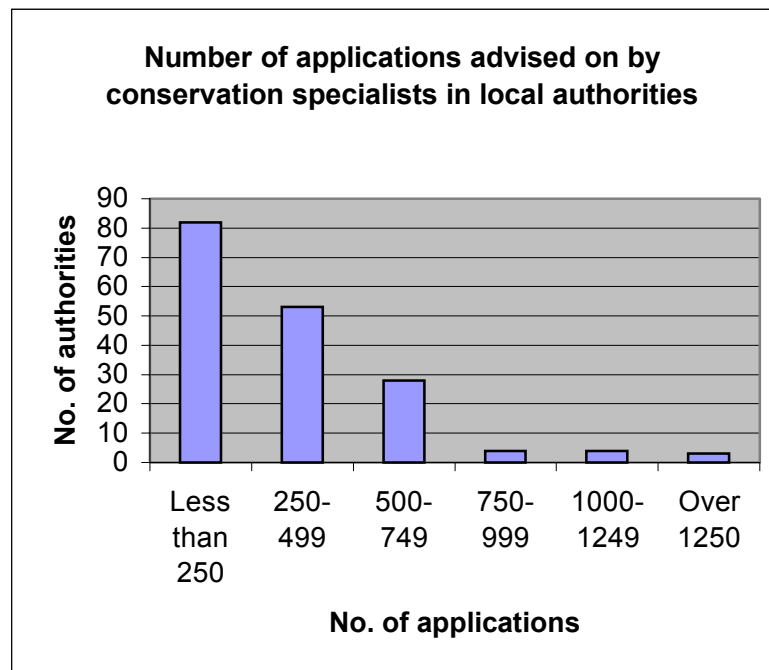
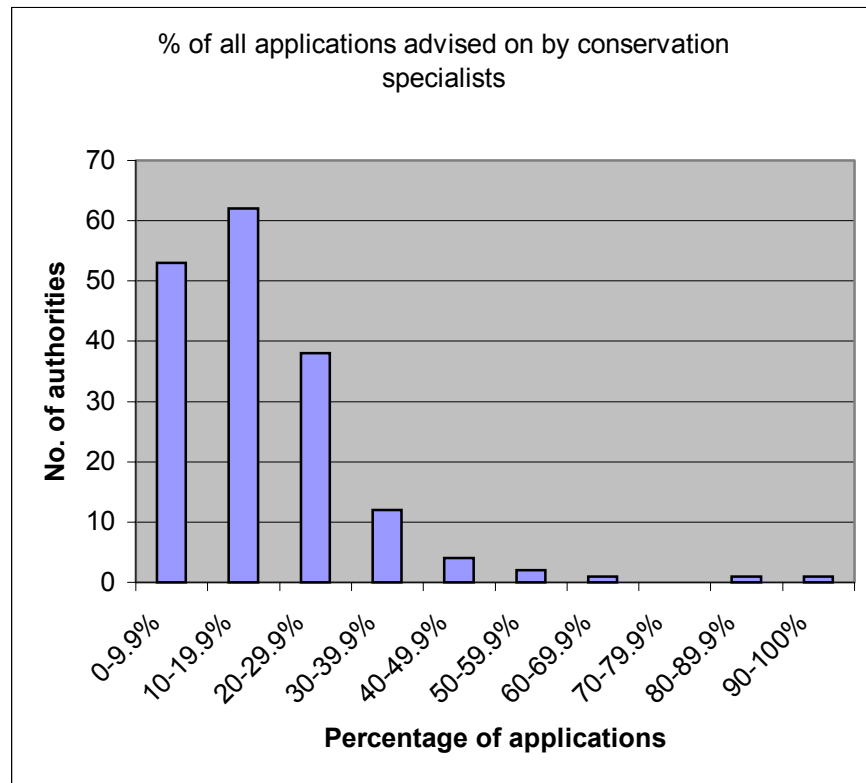
Q55. No. of all applications received by planning authority in 2001

174 responses out of 362 (48%) (excludes county councils). There was a wide range of answers from 103 to 10500 applications. The average number of applications received by planning authorities is 1891. 17% of responding authorities received less than 1000 applications per annum, 41% received between 1000-1999, 30% between 2000-2999 and 12% over 3000.

Q56. No. of applications advised on by conservation specialists in 2001

174 responses out of 362 (48%) (excludes county councils). The number of applications advised on ranged from 1 to 8606. However, the latter figure is exceptionally high (although not considered inaccurate) with the next nearest figure being 1500. In order to avoid a distorted overall picture this top figure was removed when calculating the average number of applications average advised on which is 324. 47% of conservation specialists advised on less than 250 applications, 46% on between 250 and 749 applications and 6% over 750 applications.

Taking the averages for both questions 55 and 56 it was found that, on average, conservation specialists advise on 17% of all applications received by authorities.



Q57. No. of Article 4 directions relating to conservation served in 2001

222 responses out of 362 (61%) (excludes county councils). The range was 0 to 4 with an average of 0.2. A large proportion of respondents (85%) stated that their authorities had made no directions in 2001.

Q58. No. of prosecutions brought in 2001

212 responses out of 362 (59%) (excludes county councils). The range was from 0 to 6 with an average for responding authorities of 0.34. Prosecutions were carried out by 19% of authorities. The number of individual cases was less than 3 in the large majority of responses. There were some regional variations with an average of 0.8 prosecutions being brought in the Yorkshire region compared with zero in the North East.

Q59. No. of enforcement notices served in 2001

193 responses out of 362 (53 %) (excludes county councils). The numbers ranged from 0 to 100 with an average for responding authorities of 5.28 and most authorities serving less than 15. Just over half responding authorities (53%) served notices in 2001. There were distinct regional variations with authorities in London serving an average of 21 enforcement notices compared with 0.4 in the North East.

Q60. No. of Repair Notices served in 2001

220 responses out of 362 (61%) (excludes county councils). The numbers ranged from 0 to 6 with an average of 0.18. Only 12% of authorities served these in the year and in nearly all responses the individual number of notices was either 1 or 2.

Q61. No. of Urgent Works notices served in 2001

220 responses out of 362 (61%) (excludes county councils). The numbers ranged from 0 to 6 with an average for responding authorities of 0.29. Notices were served by 18% of authorities with the individual number being 3 or less in nearly all cases.

Q62. No. of conservation area character appraisals adopted in 2001

230 responses out of 362 (64%) (excludes county councils). 39% of authorities adopted appraisals in 2001. The range was between 0 and 37 with an average for responding authorities of 1.48. The great majority of authorities undertaking adopted less than 10 and 76% 3 or under.

Q63. No of appeal statements prepared/contributed to by conservation specialists in 2001

224 responses (57%). 79% of authorities prepared statements. The actual numbers ranged from 1 to 35 with the majority preparing less than 10 during the year. The average number of statements prepared is 4.7.

Q64. No. of times expert evidence given at public inquiries/informal hearings by conservation specialists in 2001

228 responses (58%). 55% of responding authorities reported that specialists had given evidence in 2001. The number of occasions varied from 1 to 30 but in the great majority of cases it was less than 5 times during the year. The average number of times expert evidence was given is 1.5.

Q65. No. of grant applications processed (offers) in 2001/02

- ***S.57 (Local Authority)***

228 responses (58%). Just over half of authorities processed S.57 grant offers. The number of grants ranged from 1 to 111, with the great majority of respondents handling under 35. The average number of processed grant offers by responding authorities was 8.3.

- ***Conservation Area Partnership Schemes (CAPs)***

233 responses (59%). 18% of authorities processed CAPS. Number of grants ranged from 1 to 30 with most handling less than 20. The average number processed by responding authorities was 1.5.

- ***Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (HERS)***

234 responses (59%). 37% of authorities processed HERS. Numbers of grants ranged from 1 to 128 with most handling less than 25. The average number processed by responding authorities is 4.4.

- ***Townscape Heritage Initiatives (THI)***

233 responses (59%). 8 authorities, 3% of the total responding, stated that they had processed a THI grant in 2001. The number of grants handled by these authorities varied from 2 to 17. The average number of THI grants processed by all responding authorities is 0.2.

- ***Others***

234 responses (59%). 20 authorities (9%) processed other types of grant, with individual numbers handled ranging from 1 to 29.

Specification of type and number of authorities involved:

- 5 Enhancements
- 3 SRB
- 1 Town scheme
- 1 Commercial building improvement
- 1 Building At Risk grant
- 1 Heritage partnership with the county council
- 1 Historic church trust
- 1 Community chest
- 1 Traditional colour scheme
- 1 English Heritage grant

4 respondents omitted to specify the type. The average number of 'other' grants processed by responding authorities is 0.8.

Q.66 No. of bids prepared/contributed to by conservation specialists for external funding in 2001/02

240 responses (61%). (55%) prepared bids for external funding. The number of bids ranged from 1 to 9, with the great majority (94%) of authorities preparing less than 3. The average number of bids made by authorities was 1.1

Specification of type and number of authorities involved:

- 63 HERS
- 36 THIS
- 19 HLF
- 10 SRB
- 9 ERDF
- 5 RDA grants
- 3 Landfill tax credit schemes
- 2 English Heritage
- 1 CAPS
- 1 LSC
- 1 URBS
- 1 Urban parks
- 1 Regeneration of older urban areas grant
- 1 Beacon
- 1 ASIA
- 1 Countryside stewardship
- 1 Market town initiative
- 1 Rural recovery plan
- 1 Local authority geological grant
- 1 Sandwell architecture
- 1 County council grant

29 of the 132 respondents who prepared bids omitted to specify the type.

Q67. Please indicate specific work areas in which conservation staff are involved and whether the amount of time spent has changed over the last three years.

The tables below provide a complete set of results. Table 1 presents the results in the format of the questionnaire, Table 2 presents the results in rank order. The actual percentages attributed to individual tasks need to be treated with caution since not all are consistent with earlier responses, e.g. on Conservation Area Advisory Committees. Nevertheless they do provide a useful indication of the relative priority given to individual tasks.

The number of responses varies considerably across the different sections with up to 249 (63%) answering the questions on what was normally undertaken and up to 219 (55%) on whether there were any changes in the last 3 years. (99%) of respondents state that they give pre-application advice and over 90% advise DC colleagues on LBC/CAC and other applications, negotiate with applicants, provide input into development plans and conservation policy, carry out CA designation, advise on repairs and maintenance, and participate in CPD. 37% process live applications, 31% provide input into CA advisory

committees, 29% give archaeological advice, contribute to training for councillors, are involved in environmental education, career development or management training or hold professional roles. The area given least response is in providing an annual state of the historic environment report, scoring 20%.

At least half of the respondents stated that there had been no change over the last 3 years in 83% of the 53 different areas of work. This rises to more than three quarters of authorities in the cases of input into CA and Diocesan advisory committees, giving archaeological advice, providing a state of the environment report and contributing to environmental education. In general, the responses indicate a trend towards greater workload with 94% of the areas showing more increase than decrease. There was a swing of more than 50% towards increased workload in pre-application advice (51%), advice to DC colleagues (53%), and developing best practise/performance standards (68%). Only in environmental education, CPD and career development is there any suggestion that more authorities have seen a decrease rather than an increase and this is fairly marginal.

Local Authority Conservation Provision in England

Area of Work	Normally undertaken?		Change over the last three years		
	Yes %	No %	Decreased %	No change %	Increased %
Development Control					
• Pre-application advice	98.8	1.2	5.5	43.8	50.7
• Vetting of incoming applications	40.1	39.9	5.0	68.9	26.1
• Advice to DC colleagues on live LBC/CAC applications	96.8	3.2	4.7	41.8	53.5
• Conservation advice on other applications (i.e. planning/ adverts)	91.5	8.5	7.2	56.7	36.1
• Processing of live LBC/CAC applications	37.2	62.8	5.6	68.9	25.5
• Negotiation with applicants	96.0	4.0	5.1	46.5	48.4
• Post-decision – discharge of conditions/S.106 agreements	70.9	29.1	4.9	66.8	28.3
• Post-decision – follow up monitoring – prosecution/enforcement	65.9	34.1	6.4	64.2	29.5
• Input into CA advisory committees	31.4	68.6	7.8	78.7	13.5
• Urban design/architectural design advice	85.2	14.8	9.2	43.1	47.7
• Writing briefs for building recording	40.2	59.8	9.1	69.5	21.4
• Archaeological advice	29.4	70.6	2.7	77.2	20.1
• Parks and Gardens advice	55.5	44.5	6.3	75.0	18.8
• Appeals/public inquiries (preparing/giving evidence)	88.7	11.3	9.9	64.5	25.6
• Input into Diocesan Advisory Committees	42.9	57.1	4.4	80.0	15.6
• Responses to ecclesiastical exemption notifications	67.2	32.8	4.5	72.6	22.9
Policy/Strategic					
• Input into statutory development plans	92.7	7.3	8.0	60.2	31.8
• Conservation policy/SPG, e.g.barn conversions, shopfronts	93.6	6.4	11.7	50.5	37.9
• Conservation Plans	51.3	48.7	6.1	68.7	25.2
• Development briefs for historic areas	68.8	31.2	7.9	67.4	24.7
• Conservation area appraisals	88.3	11.7	10.4	41.1	48.5
• Conservation area designation	91.0	9.0	21.6	50.5	27.9
• Conservation area regeneration strategies	58.6	41.4	5.7	56.3	38.1
• Input into cultural strategies	52.2	47.8	3.8	51.9	44.4
• Input into community strategies	39.3	60.7	4.4	56.3	39.4
• Developing best practice/performance standards (e.g. <i>Best Value</i>)	77.2	22.8	2.6	29.3	68.1
• Responding to government consultation on emerging legislation	85.0	15.0	6.0	58.8	35.2
• Management/business planning	53.7	46.3	8.9	50.3	40.8
Care of the resource					
• Annual 'State of the historic environment' report	20.1	79.9	4.5	85.7	9.8
• Buildings at risk surveys & updates	73.8	26.2	12.7	55.0	32.3
• Follow up on BAR action (advice to owners/enabling)	77.8	22.2	8.4	53.9	37.7
• Repairs/urgent works action (including CPO & direct works)	79.8	20.2	12.3	63.1	24.6
• Supporting work of building preservation trusts	55.8	44.2	8.3	73.8	17.9
• Advice to owners on repairs & maintenance	97.6	2.4	4.2	51.2	44.6
• Grant aid	79.2	20.8	19.5	48.7	31.8
• Preparing bids for external funding (e.g. HERS, THI)	71.2	28.8	15.4	45.6	39.0
• Conservation area enhancement	76.4	23.6	21.2	54.9	23.8
• Building recording/analysis/research	58.8	41.2	14.2	69.9	15.9
• Maintaining historic environment records (e.g. database, photos)	89.8	10.2	9.9	46.0	44.1
• Advice on care of LA owned buildings (asset management)	85.0	15.0	4.0	70.9	25.1
• Dealing with spot listing cases	87.0	13.0	12.0	71.5	16.5
• Establishing Article 4 directions in historic areas	60.2	39.8	17.4	59.6	23.0
Education/Promotion/Outreach					
• Talks to local groups/amenity societies	87.3	12.7	12.3	67.0	20.7
• Promotional leaflets/newsletters	79.5	20.5	14.1	57.8	28.1
• Award schemes	53.5	46.5	12.2	68.9	18.9
• Exhibitions/events	59.3	40.7	12.9	67.8	19.3
• Councillor training	33.3	66.7	10.5	73.9	15.7
• Officer training (colleagues)	49.6	50.4	10.9	71.5	17.6
• Environmental education (talks & information for schools/colleges)	44.7	55.3	13.9	77.0	9.1
Personal & Professional Development					
• CPD (attendance at conferences and short courses)	97.2	2.8	16.6	69.8	13.6
• Career development (leading to recognised qualification)	44.7	55.3	14.2	73.0	12.8
• Management training	46.2	53.8	10.5	62.5	27.0
• Professional roles, e.g. IHBC committee	45.0	55.0	10.8	67.5	21.7

Local Authority Conservation Provision in England

Area of Work	Normally undertaken?	Change over the last three years		
	Yes %	Decreased %	No change %	Increased %
Pre-application advice	98.8	5.5	43.8	50.7
Advice to owners on repairs & maintenance	97.6	4.2	51.2	44.6
CPD (attendance at conferences and short courses)	97.2	16.6	69.8	13.6
Advice to DC colleagues on live LBC/CAC applications	96.8	4.7	41.8	53.5
Negotiation with applicants	96.0	5.1	46.5	48.4
Conservation policy/SPG, e.g. barn conversions, shopfronts	93.6	11.7	50.5	37.9
Input into statutory development plans	92.7	8.0	60.2	31.8
Conservation advice on other applications (i.e. planning/ adverts)	91.5	7.2	56.7	36.1
Conservation area designation	91.0	21.6	50.5	27.9
Maintaining historic environment records (e.g. database, photos)	89.8	9.9	46.0	44.1
Appeals/public inquiries (preparing/giving evidence)	88.7	9.9	64.5	25.6
Conservation area appraisals	88.3	10.4	41.1	48.5
Talks to local groups/amenity societies	87.3	12.3	67.0	20.7
Dealing with spot listing cases	87.0	12.0	71.5	16.5
Urban design/architectural design advice	85.2	9.2	43.1	47.7
Responding to government consultation on emerging legislation	85.0	6.0	58.8	35.2
Advice on care of LA owned buildings (asset management)	85.0	4.0	70.9	25.1
Repairs/urgent works action (including CPO & direct works)	79.8	12.3	63.1	24.6
Promotional leaflets/newsletters	79.5	14.1	57.8	28.1
Grant aid	79.2	19.5	48.7	31.8
Follow up on BAR action (advice to owners/enabling)	77.8	8.4	53.9	37.7
Developing best practice/performance standards (e.g. <i>Best Value</i>)	77.2	2.6	29.3	68.1
Conservation area enhancement	76.4	21.2	54.9	23.8
Buildings at risk surveys & updates	73.8	12.7	55.0	32.3
Preparing bids for external funding (e.g. HERS, THI)	71.2	15.4	45.6	39.0
Post-decision – discharge of conditions/S.106 agreements	70.9	4.9	66.8	28.3
Development briefs for historic areas	68.8	7.9	67.4	24.7
Responses to ecclesiastical exemption notifications	67.2	4.5	72.6	22.9
Post-decision – follow up monitoring – prosecution/enforcement	65.9	6.4	64.2	29.5
Establishing Article 4 directions in historic areas	60.2	17.4	59.6	23.0
Exhibitions/events	59.3	12.9	67.8	19.3
Building recording/analysis/research	58.8	14.2	69.9	15.9
Conservation area regeneration strategies	58.6	5.7	56.3	38.1
Supporting work of building preservation trusts	55.8	8.3	73.8	17.9
Parks and Gardens advice	55.5	6.3	75.0	18.8
Management/business planning	53.7	8.9	50.3	40.8
Award schemes	53.5	12.2	68.9	18.9
Input into cultural strategies	52.2	3.8	51.9	44.4
Conservation Plans	51.3	6.1	68.7	25.2
Officer training (colleagues)	49.6	10.9	71.5	17.6
Management training	46.2	10.5	62.5	27.0
Professional roles, e.g. IHBC committee	45.0	10.8	67.5	21.7
Environmental education (talks & information for schools/colleges)	44.7	13.9	77.0	9.1
Career development (leading to recognised qualification)	44.7	14.2	73.0	12.8
Input into Diocesan Advisory Committees	42.9	4.4	80.0	15.6
Writing briefs for building recording	40.2	9.1	69.5	21.4
Vetting of incoming applications	40.1	5.0	68.9	26.1
Input into community strategies	39.3	4.4	56.3	39.4
Processing of live LBC/CAC applications	37.2	5.6	68.9	25.5
Councillor training	33.3	10.5	73.9	15.7
Input into CA advisory committees	31.4	7.8	78.7	13.5
Archaeological advice	29.4	2.7	77.2	20.1
Annual 'State of the historic environment' report	20.1	4.5	85.7	9.8

Q68. Please indicate the approximate proportion of time conservation staff currently spend on each of the following broad work areas and how this has changed over time.

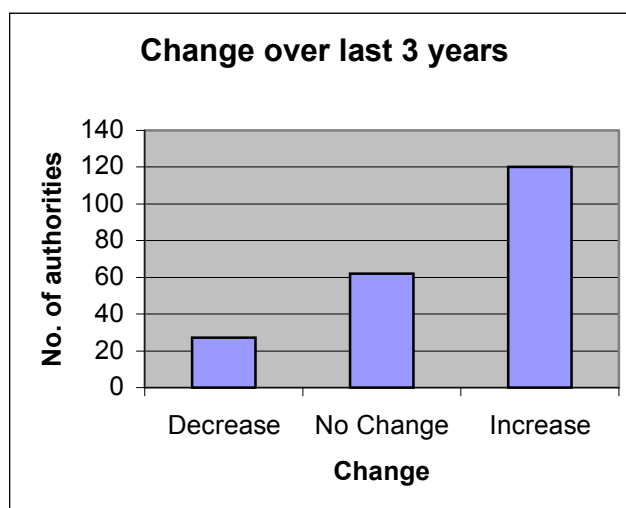
Please also indicate the proportion of time you feel that should be spent on these work areas if different

Key Work Areas	Approx. % time spent (Ave)		How has time spent changed over the past three years? (Ave)		
	Actual	Ideal	Decreased	No change	Increased
Development Control	53.0%	39.4%	13.0%	29.8%	57.2%
Policy/strategic	15.5%	20.0%	30.5%	44.8%	24.6%
Care of Resource	22.4%	25.3%	28.9%	47.3%	23.9%
Education/Promotion	5.1%	9.1%	27.1%	61.8%	11.1%
Personal & Professional Development	4.0%	6.2%	27.8%	67.2%	5.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%			

The number of responses to this question varied from section to section. More respondents gave information on actual time spent 223 – 228 (average 57%) than on the ideal time spent 183-187 (average 47%). Between 198 –208 (average 51%) authorities responded to the sections relating to changes over the last 3 years.

- ***Development control***

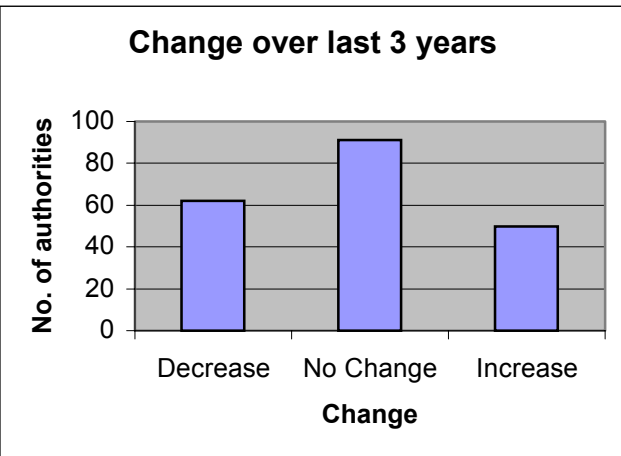
There was a wide range in the allocation of time to development control. In 4 authorities conservation staff spend less than 5% of their time on development control and in 6 cases they spent more than 95%. On average they were spending 13% more time than in an ideal situation. (30%) had experienced no change in the last 3 years, with (57%) spending more time than before.



- ***Policy/Strategy***

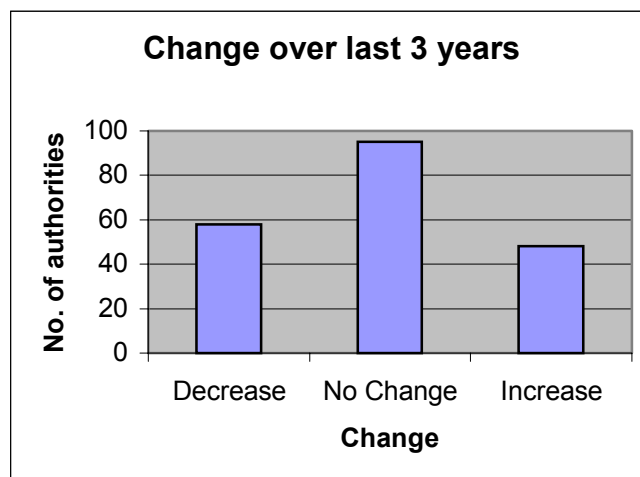
Although the allocation of time to Policy and Strategy covered a wide range, the majority of respondents spend between 10 and 30% on this aspect of their work. They felt on average that in an ideal situation they should be devoting 5% more time on this type of work than they were doing in practice. Slightly more authorities have seen a decrease as

opposed to an increase in the last 3 years with about half experiencing no change in the proportion of time spent.



- ***Care of the Resource***

Conservation staff, on average, currently spend (22%) of their time on care of the Resource, with only 10% spending more than half. They felt that ideally the allocation should be slightly higher than it is at the moment. However 22 (10%) respondents also stated that they are devoting less than 3% of their time to this aspect. Over the last 3 years nearly half the authorities have seen no change in this proportion, with little indication of a trend either towards an increase or decrease in time spent.



3.6 Best Value/performance monitoring

Q69. Does the authority collect data against performance indicators for its conservation service?

245 responses (62%). 52% of responding authorities collect data against performance indicators.

Q70. If 'yes' state frequency of collection

121 responses (31%) gave details of the frequency of collection. 14% do so monthly, 33% quarterly and 33% annually with the remainder collecting less frequently.

Q71. Does the authority undertake surveys of customer satisfaction for its conservation service?

243 responses (61%). 63% of responding authorities reported that they do not undertake surveys of customer satisfaction for their conservation service.

Q72. If 'yes' state frequency of surveys

72 responses (18%). Of the 90 authorities that conducted surveys 72 gave details of the frequency. Frequency of review ranged from more than once a year to once every six years. 61% of authorities carry out a survey annually and 22% biannually.

Q 73. Has the authority adopted Best Value Performance Standards for its conservation service?

235 responses (59%). 62% stated that they had not adopted *Best Value* Performance Standards for conservation.

Q74. If 'yes' please specify what these are for:

- ***DC casework***
- ***Policy***
- ***Grants***
- ***Buildings at risk***
- ***Others (specify)***

87 responses (22%). Only 2 of the 89 authorities using *Best Value* did not respond to this question. 82% of respondents have adopted BV for DC casework, 49% for Grants, 49% for Buildings at Risk, 44% for Policy and 19% for other activities. 14 respondents gave details of other aspects of their conservation service that were covered by *Best Value*. In 1 case this included three different areas of work.

Other types of performance standards adopted and number of authorities:

- ☐ 4 Providing advice/promoting educational events
- ☐ 3 Conservation Area appraisals
- ☐ 2 Public response times
- ☐ 2 Design quality and project working
- ☐ 2 Property management
- ☐ 1 Training
- ☐ 1 Tree and hedgerow surgery

Q75. What is the date of the first review?

90 responses (23%). The table below gives details of the date of the first *Best Value* review for responding authorities.

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Percentage	1.1	1.1	10.0	33.3	35.6	35.6	13.3	1.1	1.1

Q76. Has Best Value improved the way in which your authority delivers its conservation service?

215 responses (54%). 61% indicated that this was ‘not applicable’. The remaining respondents were evenly split, with 20% stating that BV had improved the delivery of their conservation service and 19% to the contrary.

Q77. If the authority has unitary status did it prepare a management plan for conservation services as specified in the DNH 1995 guidance?

60 responses (15%). 75% of responding unitary authorities had not prepared a management plan for conservation services as specified in the DNH Guidance.

3.7 Quality of conservation service and internal/external relationships

Qs78 - 84. Internal/external relationships

An average of 243 responses (61%). The level of response to these questions was high amongst those returning full questionnaires (92%) with some slight variation in numbers against each heading. The table below summarises the responses.

Question	Rating (%)					
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	N/A
Q.78 Relationships with planning colleagues	44	44	11	1	0	0
Q.79 Relationships with other local authority departments with statutory responsibilities:						
Building Control	19	49	24	3	2	3
Environmental Health	6	39	29	8	0	18
Fire Officer	4	27	26	5	1	36
Highways	6	32	37	15	4	6
Q.80 Relationships with other local authority services:						
Archaeologists	35	36	12	3	1	14
Economic Development	13	25	30	11	2	21
Housing	4	19	33	17	0	26
Estates	6	27	30	12	4	21
Access (disabled)	14	33	25	6	1	22
Q.81 Relationships with elected members	14	45	29	5	3	6
Q.82 Relationships with external bodies:						
English Heritage	36	48	11	3	0	2
CABE	4	20	14	5	1	57
Regional Govt	3	15	26	5	3	48
Parish/Town Councils	6	28	35	2	0	29
Heritage Lottery Fund	4	27	23	5	3	38
Diocesan Advisory Committees	13	26	26	7	3	24
Public utilities (gas, water, electricity)	1	6	25	19	6	43
Q.83 Relationships with voluntary sector:						
National Amenity Societies	10	39	33	3	0	15
Local Amenity Societies	14	52	25	3	0	6
Building preservation trusts	21	28	20	2	1	30
Local residents groups	5	28	38	4	0	26
Q.84 Relationships with owners	9	54	35	1	1	1

Q.78 Relationships with planning colleagues

The great majority of respondents (88%) reported that these relationships are either very good or good in equal proportion.

Q79. Relationships with other local authority departments with statutory responsibilities

Respondents reported that relationships with Building Control are largely very good (19%) or good (49%). Relationships with Environmental Health are rated generally as good (38%) or fair (29%). In the case of the fire officer, over a third had no significant relationship and the remainder were mostly split between good (27%) and fair (26%). Estates received very similar support but also with 16% reporting poor or very poor. Highways received the lowest scoring with 37% stating relationships to be only fair, 15% to be poor and 4% very poor. 36 authorities also commented on other departments, principally Legal, Leisure/Cultural, Countryside and Education, with relationships largely being good (36%) or fair (30%).

Q80. Relationships with other local authority services

The relationships with archaeologists are highly rated with just over a third of respondents reporting both very good and good. Economic Development and Estates received lower support both with 30%, the largest proportion, reporting fair. Housing gained the lowest rating with a third stating relationships to be fair and 16% to be poor. Access was rated principally as good (33%). 22 authorities listed relationships with other services such as social services, police, tourism, engineers, finance, and tourism with a majority reporting either very good (36%) or good (27%).

Q81. Relationships with elected members

More than half the respondents rated their relationship with elected members as either very good (14%) or good (44%), although another 8% also reported poor or very poor.

Q82. Relationships with external bodies

Relationships with English Heritage received strong support with 85% indicating very good or good. More than half of authorities (57%) have no significant relationship with CABI and of the remainder the largest proportion (20%) rated the relationship as good. A large proportion of respondents (48%) also have no contact with regional government, but of those who do the most popular rating (26%) was only fair. Relationships with parish councils are generally either good (28%) or fair (35%). 62% of authorities reported contact with the HLF, with the most popular rating being good (27%). Three quarters of respondents related to the Diocesan Advisory Committees which received 26% equally for good and fair. Public Utilities received the lowest rating with 25% for fair, another 25% for either poor or very poor and 43% having no significant relationship. 14 authorities reported on their relationships with other bodies such as funding agencies and county councils and generally rated them as good (43%).

Q83. Relationships with voluntary sector

Relationships with local amenity societies are rated highest in this group with respondents reporting 66% very good or good. National amenities are rated as principally good (52%). Where there is contact with building preservation trusts relationships were reported to be largely very good or good (49%). Local residents groups received lower marks at 40% for fair. Six authorities reported on relationships with other groups such as

local history societies, wildlife trusts and regeneration partnerships with a rating generally good (50%).

Q84. Relationships with owners

Respondents have a mixture of good (54%) and fair (35%) relationships with owners.

Qs85 - 87. Quality of Service, status and commitment of authorities

An average of 248 respondents (63%). The level of response to these questions was also high amongst those returning full questionnaires (94%) again with some slight variation in numbers against each heading. The table below summarises the responses.

Question	Rating (%)					
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	N/A
Q.85 How would you rate the quality of conservation service offered by your authority?	17	48	31	3	1	0
Q.86 How would you rate the status accorded to specialist conservation advice, ie is the advice from conservation specialists given a high priority in determining applications?	19	46	27	6	1	0
Q.87 How would you rate your own authority's commitment to conservation of the historic environment?	7	36	39	15	3	0

Q85. How would you rate the quality of conservation service offered by your authority?

The largest proportion (47%) of respondents rate their conservation service as good with 17% opting for very good and 31% for only fair.

Q86. How would you rate the status accorded to specialist conservation advice, ie is the advice from conservation specialists given a high priority in determining applications?

46% of respondents rate the status accorded to their advice as good with 19% very good, 27% fair and 6% poor.

Q87. How would you rate your own authority's commitment to conservation of the historic environment?

The highest proportion of respondents (39%) rate their authority's commitment as just fair, with only 7% giving very good, 36% good, 15% poor and 3% very poor.

3.8 General comments

Respondents were invited to make any additional comments on matters not included in the questionnaire. 175 out of 397 returns provided comments (44%)

Comments relating specifically to the questionnaire

- 6 requested a copy of results or feedback – 1 (of the 6) considers it an aid to any future *Best Value* Review.
- 2 were concerned about confidentiality.
- 2 were complimentary about its format.
- 7 were uncomplimentary or had reservations – 1 suggested some results would be unreliable.
- 14 expressed some difficulties in answering some of the questions, notably Q22 on spending.
- 26 provided additional information to supplement the specific answers in the survey such as ‘additional duties’ etc. or enlarged on the conservation provision.
- 1 referring to the question on specific work areas commented that he does not carry out all the tasks in his job description or they had a very low priority.
- 7 commented on the role of English Heritage – 4 gave additional information on the EH input through funded posts, HERS schemes and policy support; 2 regretted that their areas were considered too affluent to qualify for funding.

Comments about the role of conservation

- 13 expressed views on the aims of conservation and the ability of the conservation officer to facilitate improvement, with 7 referring to the reactive/proactive division of work
- 5 commented on the uneasy relationship between economic development and conservation, with 1 mentioning particular local problems and 3 referring to the influence of tourism.

Comments about staffing and resources

- 7 mentioned the difficulty of filling vacant posts and inadequate salaries.
- 4 described the problems of supporting conservation without allocated specialist posts or sufficient consultant advice.
- 45 stated that resources were inadequate to provide a satisfactory level of provision, mentioning the complexity of bid preparations, increase in number of LB/CA applications and problems of BAR as contributory factors. 3 cited the *Best Value* Reviews as identifying a need for improved service. 1 commented on the disparity between the expectations of the conservation service by their local authority and what was possible with the available resources
- 20 described a reduction in staff or financial resources for 2001/02 or 2002/03.
- 3 mentioned that although they had a historic building grant programme in name, there was actually no available money in the fund.

- 2 made positive comments, 1 stating that their system was working satisfactorily and 1 describing an expansion in their service.

Comments about the structure of conservation teams

- 21 provided additional details/comments on structure in their own LA. 7 LA's have recently undergone re-organisation; 3 have located the conservation service in a Regeneration team, 1 has moved it into a Historic Environment team, 2 have split the conservation service and 1 is still under review. 2 commented on the advantages of being part of a multi-faceted regeneration team. 3 described the problems of being split between 2 different teams such as DC and Policy. 1 described the advantage of being a specialist team within Development Services. 3 described the role of consultants.
- 3 mentioned poor relationships within their LA – one expressing deep concern about a disillusioned department only operating in a reactive way.
- 1 mentioned that the Conservation Officer had been made redundant and re-employed as a consultant on a part-time basis
- 1 commented that all conservation work was handled by Development Control without specialist advice.

4. **Discussion of key findings**

This section of the report offers a broad discussion of the key implications of the research findings, drawing on statistics from the preceding section. Where appropriate it makes reference to related or complementary research such as CIPFA data. Quotes from written responses to the survey and other sources are given in boxes within the text where they reinforce points made in the discussion.

4.1 **The historic resource and its management**

'The part played by local authorities in the stewardship of the historic environment is of fundamental importance. ... The Government looks to local authorities to adopt a positive approach to the management of the historic environment within their area and the monitoring of its condition.'

The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future (DCMS/DTLR 2001)

The survey sought to establish the scale, nature and breadth of the historic resource that planning authorities have to manage, and the degree to which they monitor its character and condition. It was clear from the survey findings that authorities typically have responsibility for protecting the fabric and setting of a large and diverse range of historic assets in the form of historic buildings, monuments, historic areas, landscapes and other features. The analysis of data on the number of historic assets within this section excludes county councils and national parks to avoid 'double-counting'.

4.1.1 **Listed Buildings**

Properties included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest (listed buildings) form the backbone of protection of the historic environment by local planning authorities. Buildings are selected by the Secretary of State on the advice of English Heritage against national criteria and graded I, II* or II according to their importance. Local planning authorities are responsible for policing alterations and demolitions to these buildings through a system of statutory consents, as well as being responsible for monitoring their condition.

The survey showed that the average number of listed buildings (statutory list entries of all grades) under the jurisdiction of local planning authorities is just under 1200. This figure is consistent with data from other sources e.g. CIPFA (2002). It would appear from the survey that, in practice, the actual number of individual buildings protected by statutory listing exceeds the number of list entries by as much as 50% because some groups of buildings, for example those in residential terraces, appear as a single list entry. If this variation is projected on a national scale, the figure of 375,000 list entries could rise to some 550,000 individual buildings. The table in Section 3.2 summarises the average number of list entries and individual listed buildings by grade identified in the survey (excluding county councils and national parks in order to avoid double counting).

A surprising number of respondents were unable to identify separately how many Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings they had. Furthermore over two thirds of respondents were unable to state how many individual buildings were protected by listing as distinct from statutory list entries. One authority could not give an exact number of listed buildings at all, but indicated that there were about 1300! Given the relatively large numbers of buildings involved, the lack of accurate and comprehensive information about numbers of listed buildings has implications for the effective management of the resource. This lack of information is reflected by the absence of integrated databases in many authorities, discussed in 4.1.7.

4.1.2 Buildings at Risk

Listed buildings that are vulnerable to loss through decay and neglect have are usually referred to as 'Buildings at Risk' (BARs). During the mid 1980s English Heritage devised a 6-point scale of vulnerability for such buildings in which grades 1-3 are considered to be 'at risk'. This grading system can be regarded as the 'industry standard' (although some local authorities have devised their own systems). Identification of BARs is regarded as one of the most effective ways of targeting conservation actions such as Urgent works notices or grant aid.

English Heritage currently maintains a national register of Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings at risk and strongly encourages local authorities to maintain registers of BAR for Grade II listed buildings. However, only a proportion of local authorities have been able to maintain such lists. This has, in effect, led to an inconsistent and unsatisfactory national approach to monitoring buildings at risk. Unpublished research by the University of Gloucestershire, based on a sample of 146 rural district authorities, found that 23% had never had a BAR register and of those who did only about one third regularly updated the register, i.e. annually or biannually (Gaskell, 2001).

The LACP survey sought to establish the extent to which all authorities maintained registers of Buildings at Risk (English Heritage BAR grades 1-3 or equivalent) and the frequency with which they undertook review. Nearly one third of respondents stated that they do not maintain BAR registers. For those who do maintain a register the average number of listed buildings at risk is 48 (excluding counties and national parks). If this figure is projected on a national level to include all planning authorities it suggests that there could be as many as 17,000 buildings at risk in England.

Not all of those who maintain a register gave details of the frequency of review, but of those who did, only a third of authorities undertake annual updating. There were some inconsistent responses to questions relating to BAR and it would appear that, whilst some authorities have identified BARs on an ad hoc basis, they have not formally established or do not regularly maintain a register. The absence of a comprehensive, up to date and systematic approach to dealing with buildings at risk of all grades is one of the fundamentally absent 'building blocks' of conservation policy and management and a key finding of this survey.

4.1.3 Locally listed buildings

Not all historic buildings qualify for inclusion on statutory lists as they do not meet national listing criteria. Some authorities therefore compile their own 'local lists' as a means of maintaining local distinctiveness and sustaining the wider historic environment. The survey found that some 44% of authorities (excluding county councils and national parks) identified locally listed buildings, a figure consistent with previous independent research (Boland 1999). The average number of locally listed buildings based on those who defined numbers is 226. The effectiveness of local lists as a means of protecting buildings of local importance has been shown to be enhanced greatly if the lists are supported by specific policies within the authority's development plan. Accordingly the survey asked if local lists were backed by such policies and less than half (46%) of those identifying locally listed buildings stated that they were.

4.1.4 Conservation areas

Conservation areas are defined within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. After listed buildings, conservation areas are the most significant elements of the historic environment under the jurisdiction of local planning authorities. Their designation and management is a statutory duty of local authorities. The number of conservation areas nationally has grown enormously since the enabling legislation was first introduced in 1967. The survey found that the average number of conservation areas within responding authorities (excluding counties and National Parks) is 28, ranging from 1 at the lowest end to 144 at the highest.

The process of designation of a conservation area is a simple one, and in the past many local authorities have made designations without detailed analysis of the particular aspects that make areas special and distinctive. In recent years it has become increasingly recognised that without character appraisals conservation areas cannot be properly managed, either in terms of formulation of effective policies, or in making consistent development control decisions. As a result many authorities are conducting retrospective character appraisals for their conservation areas. For many authorities this activity represents an enormous and time-consuming task and is particularly difficult to achieve in the face of continued development pressures that result in officers' time being predominantly spent in dealing with development control casework.

The LACP survey shows that 30% of responding authorities have no adopted conservation area character appraisals whatsoever, and that under 10% have appraisals for all of their conservation areas. The average number of conservation areas with adopted character appraisals is 8 per authority. On this basis it would appear that well over 70% of conservation areas in England are still without character appraisals. Moreover, the survey also showed that the average number of character appraisals adopted during 2001 was just under 1.5, indicating a very slow rate of progress in dealing with the backlog. These findings accord broadly with those of research conducted in 2001 by the University of the West of England that showed that as few as 14.4% of English Historic Towns Forum member authorities had completed character appraisals (Guisse and Webb 2002). The issue of adoption of character appraisals is discussed further in Section 4.5.4.

It is clear from these figures that many authorities are unable to prioritise the important task of undertaking conservation area character appraisals. It is likely, therefore, on present trends, that many conservation areas will remain without appraisals for some considerable time. However, it should be recognised that assessment of progress should not be simply in numerical terms, but also in terms of the quality and complexity of character appraisals produced. Nevertheless, the failure of many local authorities to achieve comprehensive coverage of their conservation areas with character appraisals must be of major national concern as it has serious implications for the effective management of these areas including development control and the targeting of resources for enhancement and regeneration.

Along with BAR registers, the lack of comprehensive character appraisal coverage is one of the fundamentally absent 'building blocks' of effective conservation policy and management. The provision of character appraisals is likely to take on even greater significance in future in the context of the emergence of Local Development Frameworks and Conservation Area Action Plans which are proposed as part of the Government's reform of the planning system (ODPM 2002b).

A potentially important management tool for conservation areas is the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC). These are bodies made up of a cross-section of local people with an interest in the future of a particular area, including representatives of local residents or business interests, amenity societies or other individuals who can assist in formulating policies for the area or contribute to advice on development proposals affecting the area. Despite the fact that the government has consistently asked local authorities to consider setting up CAACs since the introduction of conservation areas in 1967 relatively few have done so. In seeking to examine the extent to which these bodies had been set up the LACP survey found that only 23% of responding authorities operated a CAAC.

4.1.5 Article 4 Directions

Unlisted buildings of interest often contribute much to the character and distinctiveness of a locality, especially if they are unaltered and form part of a unified group. Unfortunately, even if these buildings are locally listed or within conservation areas, they can be vulnerable to unsympathetic alterations as a result of 'Permitted Development' (PD). Under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order powers exist to enable authorities to take away PD rights in respect of certain types of development where these are likely to have an adverse effect on the character of a locality. However, not all authorities make use of such powers.

The survey sought to determine the extent to which these powers are being used by authorities. 60% of authorities indicated that they had made Article 4 directions. The average number of buildings covered by these directions was 405 with a range from 0-10,000. Some respondents reported very high numbers of buildings covered by Article 4 Directions, and comments from some of these authorities identify this as a result of a specific policy to routinely place directions on all, or a large proportion of, buildings within conservation areas.

4.1.6 Other elements of the historic environment

In addition to listed buildings and conservation areas local authorities have responsibility for protecting a range of other elements within the historic environment, either by way of direct protection of fabric or in terms of protecting their setting. Respondents were asked to state the number of other identified features of the historic environment falling within their jurisdiction, both statutory and non-statutory. With the exception of Scheduled Ancient Monuments the numbers of designations under these categories are limited. In summary the average number of these features within English planning authorities (excluding county councils and national parks) is:

• Historic Parks, Gardens & Cemeteries (English Heritage register)	4.5
• Historic Battlefields	0.2
• Scheduled Ancient Monuments	57.5
• World Heritage Sites	0.11

Authorities were also asked if they had established any other form of non-statutory designation of the historic environment not covered under the categories already mentioned. It is interesting to note that 21% of respondents answered ‘yes’ to this question and that a wide range of special designations were mentioned. The most commonly occurring form of non-statutory designation is ‘areas of historic value/local importance’. A summary is given in Section 3.2. This reflects the fact that a significant proportion of authorities are interpreting the historic environment much more widely than statutory designations. Further research into the effectiveness of these designations could be useful in the context of sustainability and characterisation of the wider historic environment.

4.1.7 Integrated historic environment information systems

If the wide range of elements within the historic environment is to be effectively managed, it is clearly essential that these are properly identified and changes fully recorded and monitored. This is increasingly recognised as being particularly important since many of these features, such as buried archaeological remains and standing historic buildings, coincide. In the past there has been heavy reliance, within most authorities, on a combination of individual local knowledge and paper records which do not facilitate regular updating or integration of differing types of information. Today there is a wide range of sophisticated information systems available that enables important features to be identified on a consistent basis, and changes recorded. However, pilot research (Oxford Brookes, 2000) indicated that such systems were uncommon within English local authorities. A questionnaire survey of 179 ‘front-line’ planning authorities (Baker, 2001) showed that at least half, and perhaps up to two thirds have no specialised information system to support their conservation work on historic buildings and areas.

The LACP survey sought to throw further light on this issue and asked authorities if they maintained an integrated historic environment database/information system (ie record system combining archaeology, buildings and sites); over two thirds of authorities (69%) said that they do not. There is a wide variation between authority types with over three quarters of district councils stating that they do not have integrated databases, whilst 80% of county councils stated that they do.

Clearly the absence of integrated databases within many authorities is likely to have serious implications for the effective management of the historic environment and there is considerable scope improved use of emerging technology. In terms of efficiency and effectiveness, investment in integrated information systems, together with appropriate training, could bring major benefits to the delivery of conservation services within most local authorities.

4.1.8 Summary

The key finding in respect to the historic resource is the fact that, despite having responsibility for managing an extensive and diverse range of finite historic assets, a significant proportion of authorities do not appear to hold clear information about its full extent, character or condition. This is reflected in the absence of comprehensive data on listed buildings and buildings at risk, and minimal coverage of conservation area character appraisals. Currently very few local authorities make regular reports on the state of the historic environment within their area. Furthermore, less than one third of 'frontline' planning authorities maintain comprehensive integrated information systems to support their statutory duty to manage the historic environment. Clearly the lack of sufficiently comprehensive information in the case of some authorities is likely to severely impede the effective management of the historic resource, and limit the ability of authorities to make properly informed decisions about its future in terms of both development control and more strategic actions.

4.2 Financial resources for conservation

'This authority has severe financial problems and does not really understand the importance of funding for its most important asset.'

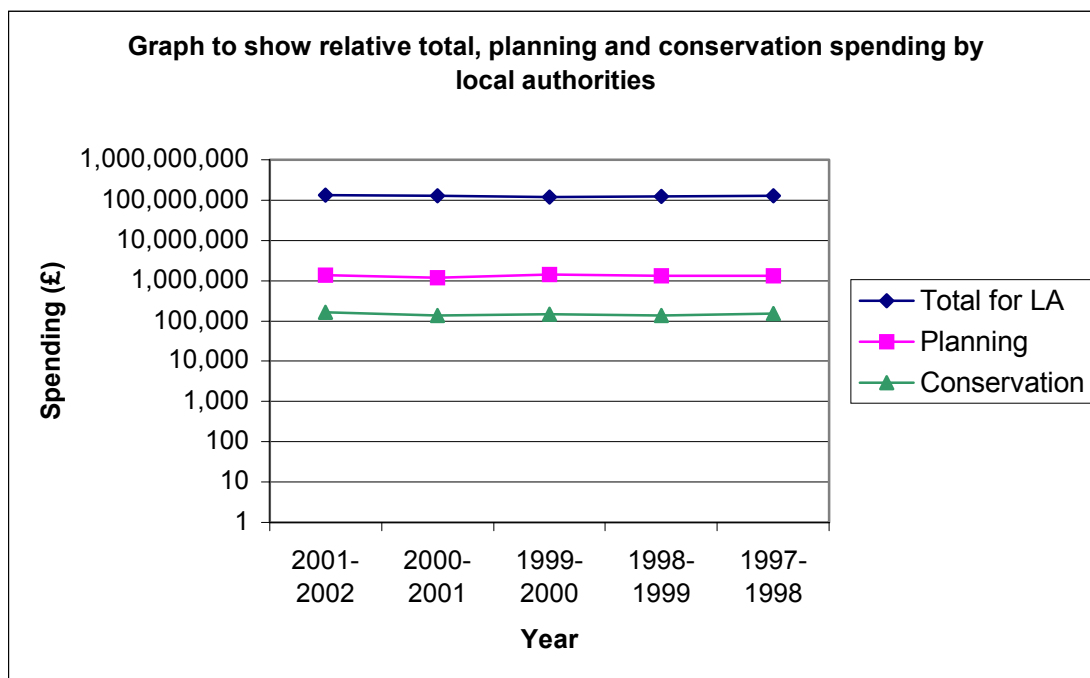
LACP Survey 2001

4.2.1 Overall spending on conservation

'Heritage under Pressure' (Baker & Chitty, 2002) highlighted the apparent decline in conservation spending by local authorities between 1996 and 2000 both in terms of direct spending on the historic environment and on staff costs. This coincided with a reduction of 23% in grants by English Heritage to local authorities over a similar period. This reduction in funding for conservation is reflected by anecdotal reports from conservation specialists and in comments made by some respondents to the LACP survey.

The survey set out to investigate the level of funding that local authorities are allocating to conservation of the built environment. Respondents were asked to state their authority's spending profile over the past five years on conservation in relation to planning spending and overall spending of the authority as a whole. Significantly, only one third of the respondents were in a position to identify overall spending on conservation services as defined in CIPFA returns. Indeed this question yielded the fewest responses in the entire survey. Based on those who did provide information, it seems that spending, both in

overall terms, and for conservation, has remained generally flat over the last 5 years, equating to a downward trend in 'real' terms (see graph).



The graph also shows that the proportion of local authority spend on conservation has not altered, either in relation to overall planning spend or total local authority spend. This pattern of local authority expenditure reflects the findings of other recent research (Baker and Chitty 2001) and (Arup 2002) which, based on CIPFA data indicate a generally flat profile on planning services over the last five years despite rising workloads resulting from increased development pressure. The LACP survey found that, taking into account expenditure in all types of local authority over the past five years, an average of 11% of total planning expenditure went on conservation. This compares with a figure of 9% quoted in 'Heritage under Pressure' (Baker and Chitty 2001) based on 'grossed up' CIPFA data.

The survey also asked respondents to state their authority's budget for specialist conservation staff. Again well under half (43%) of those returning questionnaire were able to answer this question. Based on those who responded to this question, the average expenditure for 2001/02 was £62,500. This figure is consistent with the figure for the average number of specialist conservation staff members employed by local authorities.

The inability of well over half of the respondents to provide financial data suggests that many conservation specialists are unaware of how spending on conservation within their authorities relates to overall spending on planning or for the authority as a whole, and hence their authority's relative commitment to conservation in terms of expenditure on specialist staffing.

The issue of resources available for conservation was the subject that generated by far the most additional written comments with 45 (26%) respondents stating that resources were inadequate to provide a satisfactory level of provision, mentioning the complexity of bid preparations, increase in number of LB/CA applications and problems of BAR as

contributory factors. A further 20 (11%) described a reduction in staff or financial resources for the last or current financial year. The most depressing of all comments is

'Until 2000 this authority had a specialist conservation and design team. Now broken up as a result of reorganisation. All grant budgets and conservation area enhancement budgets cut. Staff have left or retired early due to cuts. No replacements.'

LACP Survey 2001

4.2.2 Grants

Local authority historic building grant programmes

Under section 57 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities are empowered to give grants for the repair historic buildings in their area. This is not a mandatory requirement and not all authorities allocate budgets for this purpose. The provision of grant aid is therefore a potentially useful indicator of commitment to conservation by an authority and accordingly formed an important part of the LACP survey.

Respondents were asked if authorities operated their own historic buildings grants scheme (i.e. solely funded by the authority under S57 of the 1990 Act) and a near full response rate (98%) was achieved on this question as a result of both full questionnaire responses and targeted telephone chase up. Exactly half of responding authorities stated that they did operate such programmes. Budget allocations vary enormously between authorities, ranging from £10,000 to £500,000. Most budgets are however very modest with an average £20,000 per annum.

There are significant regional variations both in terms of provision of grants and in terms of budget allocations. Only 21% of authorities in the North East have budgets for their own historic building grant programmes whereas 61% of authorities in the South West and South East regions do. For those authorities that operate grant programmes the average annual budget in the north East is £5,250 whereas in the South East it is £32,000.

Asked how budgets for these grant programmes had changed over the past three years, nearly half of respondents (49%) reported no change. Of the remainder twice as many reported a decrease (35%) as opposed to an increase (16%) pointing to a downward trend in resources for grants overall. This is consistent with the findings of 'Heritage under Pressure' (Baker & Chitty, 2002).

Partnership historic building grant programmes

In addition to grants solely funded from their own resources, local authorities are also empowered to provide grant aid in partnership with other organisations such as English Heritage. The survey showed that significant numbers of authorities are benefiting from such arrangements, the most common being Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (HERS) operated by English Heritage and with 40% contributing to these schemes. Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) schemes, operated by the Heritage Lottery Fund, were cited by 11% of respondents. A variety of other types of partnership grant schemes were mentioned by a small number of authorities (6%). Just over half of the responding authorities (50.5%) contribute to no jointly funded/partnership grant programmes.

In terms of how budgets for these programmes had changed over the past three years a slightly healthier picture emerges than for grant schemes solely funded from authorities own resources, with more respondents reporting an increase than a decrease in their authority's contribution (25% and 20% respectively). This is perhaps a reflection of a trend towards limited funds being targeted towards areas where authorities can lever in partnership funding, and where collaboration with partners will lead to better value for money and greater localised impact.

4.2.3 Other forms of conservation expenditure

The survey sought to determine the extent to which authorities allocated funds to aspects of conservation other than grant aid. In relation to conservation area enhancement it is significant to note that nearly two thirds of authorities (65%) stated that they did not have a budget for this purpose; this despite the fact that the survey of workloads indicated that 76% of conservation specialists were normally undertaking conservation area enhancement. The survey highlighted significant regional variations in budget provision with 83% of authorities in London and in the North East regions stating that they did not have a budget for conservation area enhancement compared with 50% in the East region. For those authorities with a budget the amount of money allocated was very wide ranging from £800 to over £3m, but with over half (41%) allocating less than £20,000 per annum with an average of £32,000.

These statistics suggest that, whilst conservation specialists see conservation area enhancement as an integral part of their job, for most authorities enhancement is restricted to reactive aspects of development control. It is likely that this lack of proactivity is related to the absence of conservation area character appraisals referred to in section 4.1. Given that enhancement of conservation areas is a statutory duty of local planning authorities the lack of financial commitment to this aspect of their work must be regarded as a major weakness in conservation activities.

Respondents were asked if their authorities allocated budgets for conservation projects other than grant aid or enhancements (e.g. research). Over three quarters (76%) of respondents stated that they did not. For those who did, the amounts were generally very small with over half (53%) indicating budgets under £10,000 per annum, with an average of £8,000.

4.2.4 Summary

Spending on conservation has remained broadly flat but in line with other local authority spending over the past five years, indicating a downward trend in real terms. Whilst many respondents indicated, either within the questions or in additional comments, that resources were insufficient to provide a satisfactory level of service, many authorities were unable to give specific information on conservation spend.

Half of all authorities operate their own grants programmes, although the budgets involved are generally small and there is evidence that they have been falling over the past three years. On the other hand, many authorities are involved in partnership grant schemes with English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund and there has been a trend for contributions to these types of grant programme to increase over the same period. Nearly two thirds of authorities do not have a budget for conservation area enhancement.

4.3 Conservation service provision and organisational structure

'The Government ... urges authorities to appoint champions for the historic environment within their management structures.'

The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future (DCMS/DTLR , 2001)

4.3.1 Staffing provision

Power of Place (English Heritage 2000) stated that as many as 'eighty-five planning authorities in England (22% of the total) employ no qualified conservation officer'. Given the strongly worded advice in paragraph 1.6 of PPG 15 that local authorities should ensure that they are able to draw upon sufficient specialist conservation advice, investigation of staffing levels was one of the most important aspects of this study. Information about numbers of specialist staff was therefore systematically collected from all 396 local authorities and, as a result, it has been possible to construct an accurate national picture of specialist staffing provision in England.

In house specialist staff

The survey found that the great majority of authorities are able to draw on at least some in-house specialist advice, with 85% of all types employing conservation staff, albeit that in some cases (5%) they occupy fractional posts. Those authorities employing one or more staff account for 80% of the total.

The percentage of authorities with specialist conservation staff was found to vary between authority types. For example, whereas only 70% of county councils have building conservation specialists, 86% of all other types of authority have specialists. Of the latter group 81% employ one or more staff, and 5% have only fractional posts. This shows that most 'front-line' planning authorities with statutory duties in respect of the historic environment are able to draw on in-house advice. However, it should also be noted that in terms of numbers 49 of these authorities (14%) employ no specialist staff at all.

The survey found that specialist staffing provision varied between regions. The highest average conservation staffing levels were found in London with an average of 2.8 FTE per authority whereas the lowest were found in the North East with an average of 1.2 FTE

The average establishment of specialist conservation staff within all types of authorities in England is 1.7 FTE. Given the size of the historic resource that most authorities are responsible for managing, and the fact that up to 30% of all planning applications have conservation implications, this level of staffing provision must be regarded as minimal, especially when related to an average of 38 FTE for planning as a whole.

The anecdotal view that numbers of staff are decreasing is reflected in this comment:

'The last two years has seen a period of decline of staff and funding.'

LACP Survey 2001

However, over two thirds (67%) of respondents reported 'no change' in staffing over the last 3 years and roughly equal numbers reported increases or decreases. This points to a

static rather than a changing situation and tends to suggest that the anecdotal view is not universally true. Taking averages does, however, mask the fact that in some authorities there has been a dramatic reduction in specialist staffing provision. For example one large unitary authority reported that in the last 5 years specialist design and conservation provision has been cut from five full time officers to just one. It is worth noting that, according to the responses received, established posts within planning services overall have on average shown a tendency to rise whereas conservation posts appear to have remained static. This disproportionate increase of mainstream planning staff in relation to conservation specialists (and support staff) could be interpreted as reflecting a lowering of priority of conservation within the planning process.

Sponsored posts

One factor that is likely to be having a positive impact on overall numbers of conservation specialists within local authorities is the existence of externally sponsored posts, e.g. posts partly-funded by English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund or others. Whereas the overall number of specialist staff is broadly static, the number of sponsored posts is showing an increase. The existence of sponsored posts could therefore be masking what otherwise might be a decline in overall staffing.

The survey found that a quarter of responding authorities had sponsored posts. In some authorities the numbers of these posts were very high. One London borough, for example, reported 6 sponsored posts in comparison with only one permanent conservation post within its establishment. In 4% of responding authorities the number of sponsored posts exceeded one. 'Heritage under Pressure' (Baker & Chitty, 2002) highlighted that English Heritage has been supporting conservation posts in a number of authorities especially in London, for several years, albeit on a tapering basis. Outside London some 35 local authority conservation posts have been supported at a total figure of £1.26m between 1996/7 and 1999/2000, together with a current annual commitment of £600k in the London boroughs.

The survey did not investigate the matter of sponsored posts in detail, but the impact and relative merits of sponsoring arrangements is a subject worthy of further research, particularly if there is a suggestion that this may be 'propping up' an otherwise declining commitment to fund specialist conservation posts on the part of local authorities.

Support staff

Dedicated support staff for conservation activities is generally minimal with over two thirds of authorities having no dedicated staff. The average provision is 0.3 FTE and remaining generally static. In a significant proportion of responding authorities (41%) other, non-specialist staff routinely spend time delivering aspects of the conservation service.

External advice

The survey showed that for those authorities not employing their own in-house conservation specialists the largest provider of advice is the county council (42%). After county councils the next most common provider are external consultants (30%). A smaller number of authorities rely on their own development control or planning policy

staff (18%) and (6%) respectively. It is worth noting that in some areas, where former county specialist heritage teams have been disbanded, they have survived in differing forms to continue to provide advice to a number of local authorities within their area. For example, the former metropolitan county team at West Yorkshire forms the West Yorkshire Archaeological Trust and at Tyne and Wear the team is now situated within the Planning and Transportation Division at Newcastle City Council. A unique variant of this is the former Hertfordshire County Council conservation team which in 1996 was seconded to the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust and was subsequently formed into a charitable trading company 'BEAMS' (Built Environment Advisory and Management Services) providing conservation advice to four local authorities in Hertfordshire.

Authorities were asked about their use of private consultancy firms in providing aspects of their conservation service. Only 6% routinely do so, 33% never do, but 61% stated that they occasionally or sometimes did. Amongst those who use consultancy firms the most common aspect of work covered is in relation to bids for funding (58 mentions) followed by buildings at risk (42 mentions), conservation area enhancement (38 mentions) and development control (36 mentions).

4.3.2 Organisational structure – Where is the conservation specialist placed ?

'All too often a conservation adviser is seen as a semi-detached official working to his/her own agenda.'

LACP Survey 2001

'The provision of conservation advice is still considered to be a bolt-on specialised service to the normal planning service and there is an unfortunate tendency to split the conservation resource between teams thereby reducing its possible effect.'

LACP Survey 2001

The above comments reflect what is perhaps a traditional image of the conservation officer, namely somebody who sits within the planning department, but typically works somewhat independently. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that conservation specialists may be found in a variety of local authority departments other than planning.

However, the survey found that within almost all authorities the conservation service sits within the planning service area, although within a variety of different sections including development control, planning policy and regeneration. In 55% of authorities it was found that the conservation service is performed by staff within a defined specialist team as opposed to individuals working within generalist planning teams. These teams vary considerably in composition and undertake a wide variety of other specialist functions. Whilst urban design and environmental enhancement were the functions mentioned most frequently, 58 other work areas were mentioned in addition to those indicated in the questionnaire.

In the vast majority of authorities (83%) LBC/CAC applications are processed by development control staff with advice from specialists. Only in 13% were applications processed by conservation specialists themselves, with the remaining 4% being processed solely by development control staff. It is therefore clear that the most common model for processing of LBC/CAC applications is with specialist staff acting in an advisory capacity

4.3.3 Status of conservation specialists

A frequently heard anecdotal view of conservation specialists is that they are a lone voice within their authority, and lack real influence due to their modest status within the departmental hierarchy. The survey therefore asked various questions about the status and role of conservation specialists within their authorities. A key question was the position of the lead conservation specialist within the overall hierarchy of the authority, with the chief executive (or equivalent) being the first tier. The results showed that the dominant position of lead officers was 4th tier (49%). Respondents were also asked whether or not the lead conservation specialist sits on the departmental or service area management committee. Only 25% of respondents said 'yes' to this question.

It is reasonable to conclude from these statistics that, in terms of management influence, conservation specialists are, generally speaking, of middle ranking status within their authorities, and on average less likely to be represented at managerial decision making groups within their departments. On the other hand, in almost half of the cases (49%) the advice of the conservation specialist was separately recorded on reports to planning committee. This would suggest that conservation specialists have potentially more influence than might be expected by their position in the departmental/local authority hierarchy. This is supported by the fact that, when asked to rate the status accorded to specialist conservation advice almost two thirds said that this was 'good' or 'very good' with only 7% rating it as 'poor/very poor'.

The survey sought to throw light on the degree of direct contact conservation specialists enjoyed with elected members within their authorities. Whilst only 27% of respondents stated that the lead conservation specialists routinely attended planning committee (or the equivalent decision making body) nearly two thirds (63%) of respondents said that the lead conservation specialist had regular direct contact with elected members. The amount of formal contact that these middle-ranking officers have with elected members at formally constituted meetings, as opposed to informal contact, has to be viewed in the context of changing decision-making structures in local authorities where conventional planning committees are largely being replaced by cabinet structures, and more decisions are being delegated to officers. This is clearly an area of considerable change that should be the focus of further research in the future.

It should be noted that if the current proposals emerging from the Planning Green Paper (DTLR, 2001) to increase the delegation of decisions on all planning applications to officers to a target of 80%, rising to 90% in three years are implemented, the position of conservation specialists within the departmental hierarchy, rather than status in the eyes of members, will become more important.

4.3.4 Summary

The great majority of local authorities (85%) can draw on at least some in-house conservation expertise albeit that some rely on fractional posts. At an average of 1.7 full time equivalent specialists staffing levels are minimal in relation to the size of the resource that most authorities have to manage. Those authorities without their own specialists mostly draw on advice from either the county council or external consultants. A very few authorities do, however, operate without specialist advice. Contrary to

popular belief the numbers of staff do not appear to be falling, although a possible reduction in commitment by local authorities may be masked by an increase in sponsored posts.

Most specialists act as in-house advisors to development control colleagues rather dealing directly with applications themselves. Although the lead conservation specialist is normally middle ranking in the local authority hierarchy, they appear to have considerably more influence on decision-making on the historic environment than this status would imply.

4.4 Skills and pay

'All local authorities stand to benefit from the skills of properly qualified conservation staff.'

The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future (DCMS/DTLR, 2001)

4.4.1 Skills

The survey of workloads (see Section 4.5.1) demonstrated that local authority conservation specialists are expected to be capable of performing a very wide range of professional tasks. This emphasises the multi-skilled nature of the conservation specialist's job and it is likely that the lead officer will require considerable expertise and experience to perform the job effectively. This has implications for recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff. The need to recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced specialist conservation staff is recognised by central government. In its recent review of policy (DCMS/DTLR 2001) the government urges authorities to appoint champions for the historic environment within their management structures.

The minimum entry requirement stipulated by authorities for employment as a conservation specialist varied widely. At the lower end 'A' levels were the minimum requirement whereas at the upper end a relevant postgraduate qualification and 5 years experience were sought. 44% of authorities require 'specialist qualifications'. In 37% of cases IHBC membership was cited as a requirement. However, it is clear from the survey that there is little consistency between authorities in the entry requirements for conservation specialists.

4.4.2 Professional and academic backgrounds

In examining the professional and academic backgrounds of existing post-holders the survey highlighted the multi-disciplinary nature of the conservation specialist's role. The findings show that conservation specialists come from a wide variety of professional disciplines, the most common of which is town planning (34%) followed by architecture (10%) then surveying (4%). This ranking of representation amongst conservation specialists reflects the findings of an earlier professional status survey conducted on behalf of the Association of Conservation Officers in 1995 (McManus, 1995). This placed planners as the predominant group (57%). It is interesting to note however that the percentage of RTPI and RIBA members amongst conservation specialists appears to have diminished significantly since 1995, suggesting that other routes into the specialism may have developed in recent years. In this respect it is worth noting that the survey showed that a high proportion of specialists have postgraduate qualifications and that 62% of all

post-holders are IHBC members. For lead professionals these figures are even higher – 76% with postgraduate qualifications and 75% holding membership of IHBC.

The average length of time in post for lead conservation specialists is 9 years whereas for junior posts the average is 4.5 years. The average tenure for all levels of post is 7 years indicating that local authority conservation specialists on average have considerable experience. The implications of long tenure within conservation posts are mixed. On the one hand it can be seen as advantageous since staff are truly able to ‘get to know their patch’ and thereby be effective. On the other hand remaining in one job can lead to stagnation and loss of fresh ideas. The long tenure within senior conservation posts may be as much a reflection of lack of opportunities for career progression as a reflection of high job satisfaction. These issues have not been explored within this study but are worthy of further research.

Respondents were asked if their authority actively supported professional/academic training for conservation staff (i.e. day release courses). 79% answered ‘yes’ to this question. A similar proportion of authorities (78%) supported in service training/CPD in conservation, indicating a strong commitment on the part of authorities to invest in the skills and knowledge of their specialist staff. However, it should be noted that this commitment might not necessarily be an indication of commitment to conservation training, but more likely a reflection of a commitment to training of local authority staff generally.

4.4.3 Salaries

The high levels of skills, qualifications and experience that conservation specialists must ideally possess are not necessarily reflected in the salaries typically offered by local authorities. It is not uncommon to see advertisements for conservation posts that ask for wide-ranging skills, extensive experience and academic and professional qualifications in return for comparatively modest salaries.

The survey set out to investigate the range of salaries paid to local authority conservation specialists. In examining this issue reference has been made to the monitoring work that has been undertaken on behalf of the IHBC over the last five years based on advertised posts (Kindred, 2002). Kindred’s figures for 2001 show that, in 123 advertised posts, the median salary for conservation officers was £22,687. Taking into account the starting and finishing range of all advertised posts in England, it appears that salaries have remained broadly static in the £20k to £24.5k range over the last four years, growing by only 4.4% since 1999.

The LACP findings reflect a similar situation for existing posts within local authorities. The most common salary bracket (mode) is £21-25k accounting for some 38% of all posts. A substantial proportion of conservation specialists (27%) are within the 26-30k salary bracket, although 17% are within the £16-20k bracket. For lead officers the most common range was somewhat higher £26-30k (38%) with some 27% above £30k.

Kindred’s analysis of advertised conservation posts (Kindred, 2002) points to distinct regional salary variations. In 2001 salaries for London showed a variation of 8% above the national average with a median level of £24.5k, and salaries for the South East at 6% above the national average with a median level of £24k. Salaries in both the East

Midlands and Yorkshire regions showed a variation of 11% below the national average with a median level of £20k. Distinct regional variations were also revealed in the LACP survey which found that, on average, the highest salaries are in London followed by the South East, and that the lowest by far are in the North East, followed by the East Midlands. The mode salary bracket for London and the South East regions is £26-30k, whereas for all other regions the mode is £21-25k. As an indication of the scale of regional variation it is significant to note that 75% of posts in London command salaries of £26k and above, whereas 75% of salaries in the North East are below £26k.

The modest salary levels enjoyed by local authority conservation specialists should be viewed in the context of salaries for local authority planning staff generally. A recent survey undertaken on behalf of the DTLR into the resourcing of local planning authorities (Arup, 2002) showed that salaries for planning staff were low by professional standards. An RTPI members' survey (RTPI, 2001), indicates that the most common salary range for all local government planners is between £25-30K with the next most common range between £20-25k. The LACP survey findings therefore indicate that salaries for local authority conservation specialists are broadly comparable with those of their professional planning counterparts.

According to nationally collected data (IDS, 2002) average annual earnings at April 2002 for all full time workers was £24,603. This highlights the fact that the median salary for conservation specialists falls below the national average salary by almost £2000. Clearly the fact that salaries for conservation specialists are typically low, and yet the professional skill levels needed for the job are high, means that recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced staff is likely to become an increasing problem, particularly in some areas of the country.

'Recruitment and retention of staff, both development control and conservation specialists, has reached crisis point in London, yet councils have proved unable to prioritise or resource adequately these services. This is in stark contrast to the level of public support for conservation.'

LACP Survey 2001

'Attracting new staff (young and old) is proving more and more difficult.'

LACP Survey 2001

4.4.4 Summary

Local authority conservation specialists need to multi-skilled in order to carry out their work effectively. There is little consistency in the professional and academic qualifications or experience required by authorities in employing conservation specialists and these vary widely between authorities. They come from a variety of professional backgrounds, the most common of which is town planning followed by architecture and nearly two thirds of all post holders are members of IHBC. Most are highly qualified with over two thirds holding post-graduate qualifications. Nevertheless, salaries are generally modest, with many falling below the national average for all employment, although salaries for conservation specialists are broadly in line with their planning colleagues. In some areas there is evidence of increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled and experienced conservation staff.

4.5 **Conservation activities and workloads**

'The council expects the service to fulfil a much wider role than that of dealing with historic buildings and areas. Urban design, environmental improvements and public art, regeneration and community engagement are all areas of work that are becoming increasingly significant. Unfortunately there isn't a realistic appreciation on the part of Council of the resources needed to carry this out.'

LACP Survey 2001

4.5.1 **Range of activities undertaken by conservation specialists**

The survey sought to determine which activities conservation specialists normally undertake by asking respondents to place a tick against a checklist of 53 potential areas of work under five broad categories. It was clear from the results that conservation specialists are routinely engaged in a very wide range of tasks, covering the majority of those listed in the checklist.

Development control

Perhaps not surprisingly some of the strongest responses were in relation to development control work. Almost all of the respondents (90% and over) indicated that conservation specialists are engaged in advising their colleagues on the conservation aspects of planning applications, as well as on listed building and conservation area consent applications. They give pre-application advice and also negotiate directly with applicants. The nature of the advice that conservation specialists are expected to provide is clearly very wide-ranging with most respondents (85%) indicating that they give urban design/architectural design advice, and more than half (56%) that they give advice on historic parks and gardens. On the other hand, few of them (29%) give archaeological advice.

Most conservation specialists (89%) deal with appeals, preparing statements and appearing at hearings and inquiries. They discharge planning conditions and deal with other post-decision work, such as Section 106 agreements. More than half of them (66%) are also involved in post-decision enforcement and prosecutions although it is clear from information collected about actual workloads (see below) that the amount of post-decision work is modest for most conservation specialists.

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that conservation specialists are normally heavily involved in most aspects of the development control process. Although from data collected elsewhere in the survey only 12.5% of conservation specialists are directly responsible for processing listed building/conservation area consent applications themselves, 37% of respondents to the checklist indicated that conservation specialists are involved in the processing of live applications.

Policy/strategic

In addition to their role as advisors on development control casework, almost all conservation specialists (93%) provide input into statutory development plans and other policy such as supplementary planning guidance. More than half of respondents (52%)

indicate that conservation specialists make input into cultural strategies, whilst only just over one third (39%) input into community strategies. Clearly, as these strategies become more established conservation specialists may have greater future involvement in these areas of work.

In addition to input into wide-scale strategic policy work conservation specialists are involved in developing more detailed policies aimed at managing specific historic areas. For example 69% of specialists are involved in preparing development briefs for historic areas and over half (51%) are involved in undertaking conservation plans.

The responses indicate that in nearly all authorities specialists are involved in conservation area designation (91%), with slightly fewer (88%) involved in undertaking conservation area appraisals. It should be noted, however, from data elsewhere in the survey (see 4.5.4) that the average number of appraisals undertaken annually is extremely low indicating that whilst this work is regarded as forming part of the role of conservation specialists, it receives low priority in practice.

Care of the historic resource

Respondents indicated that conservation specialists are engaged in a wide range of activities relating to the care of the historic resource. By far the strongest response was for provision of advice to owners on repair and maintenance (98%), which can be regarded as one of the traditional roles of local authority conservation specialists. Under the category of 'care of the resource' nearly all activities are routinely undertaken by over 70% of conservation specialists, for example, survey and update information on buildings at risk, provision of follow up advice to owners and taking necessary repairs or urgent works action. In respect of financial aspects relating to care of the resource 80% of specialists are involved in provision of grant aid with over two thirds (71%) being involved in preparation of bids for external funding.

The policy areas in which conservation specialists appear to be least involved are annual state of the environment reports (20%) and input into input into community strategies (39%).

Education/promotion/outreach

The survey of work activities indicated that most conservation specialists are engaged in aspects of education and outreach. For example, giving talks to local groups/amenity societies involves some 87% of specialists and preparation of promotional material some 80%. Staging of exhibitions promotional events involves well over half of specialists (59%). Conversely considerably less than half (44%) are involved in environmental education, providing talks and information to school or college groups. Training of colleagues involves some 45% of specialists whereas councillor training only involves a third. Given the importance that the government attaches to the training of elected members outlined in 'A Force for Our Future' (DCMS/DTLR 2001) this aspect of conservation specialists' work could increase significantly in future.

Personal and professional development

Under ‘personal and professional development’ attendance at conferences and short courses features high on the list of activities normally undertaken by conservation specialists (97%) indicating that as a group they are professionally aware. This awareness is further supported by the fact that 85% of specialists are involved in responding to government consultations on evolving legislation. Professional roles, such as involvement in IHBC committees are enjoyed by nearly half of the respondents. A high percentage of conservation specialists (45%) are engaged in career development, leading to recognised qualifications.

4.5.2 Trends in work activities undertaken by conservation specialists

In addition to stating whether conservation specialists normally undertook tasks outlined in the checklist, respondents were also asked to indicate how workloads under these headings had changed over the last 3 years. In most cases involvement at least remained constant if not increased over the past three years (see Section 3.5). The single strongest increase was seen under the heading ‘developing best practice/performance standards (e.g. *Best Value*)’ where 68% of authorities reported an increase compared with 3% a decrease. Given the emergence of ‘*Best Value*’ as a statutory activity for local authorities this trend is perhaps unsurprising and should be viewed in the context of other information collected elsewhere in the survey about development of performance indicators for conservation services (see Section 4.6.1).

Amongst the work areas that showed the strongest trend towards an increase were tasks associated with reactive development control casework, in particular advice to colleagues on live LBC/CAC applications, pre-application advice and negotiation with applicants. This reinforces the anecdotal view that such work is increasing in line with the general trend of increasing numbers of planning applications being dealt with by local authorities.

An encouraging trend is in relation to conservation area appraisals where, despite the low rate of adoption reported elsewhere in the survey (see Section 4.5.4) there is a clear increase in time spent by conservation specialists. This indicates an increased priority being given to this work by local authorities. Other areas of work showing strong increases include input into both cultural and community strategies. These increases are perhaps unsurprising given the emergence of this new area of policy work for most authorities.

Work areas showing a net decrease in time spent include environmental education (talks and information for schools/colleges) CPD (attendance at conferences and short courses) and career development leading to recognised qualifications. It should be noted however that in each of these cases three quarters of respondents reported no change in time spent.

4.5.3 Balance between key work areas

It is clear that in order to provide an effective and balanced conservation service an authority’s conservation specialists must be in a position not only to respond to day-to-day casework demands, but also to undertake essential long-term proactive and strategic tasks. Anecdotal evidence suggests that conservation officers are hard pressed and are often dissatisfied with the balance between reactive and proactive work. ‘Heritage under

Pressure' (Baker & Chitty, 2002) indicates that short-term reactive development control work tends to dominate the workload at the expense of long-term proactive and strategic work.

The survey sought to investigate this issue of balance between work areas in greater depth. Respondents were asked to indicate the proportion of time they actually spent on each of five key work areas and to state the time they felt should ideally be spent on these if different.

The average proportion of time spent by specialists against these work areas was as follows:

Key work area	Ave. actual time spent	Ave. ideal time spent
Development control (responding to applications)	53.0%	39.4%
Care of the resource (grants, BAR etc)	22.4%	25.3%
Policy/strategic	15.5%	20.0%
Education/promotion	5.1%	9.1%
Personal and professional development	4.0%	6.2%

These findings support the widely reported view that the majority of routine work is indeed reactive rather than proactive, and that most conservation specialists consider that they should ideally spend a greater proportion of time on more strategic or proactive work in order to offer a balanced service. A considerable number of the written comments received as part of the survey reflected the above trends, including the following comments:

'The areas of work that conservation officers concentrate on ... are often reactive rather than proactive'

LACP Survey 2001

'Constant fire-fighting rather than positive proactive projects'.

LACP Survey 2001

In addition to stating the actual and ideal balance between work areas respondents were also asked to indicate how the balance of time spent had changed over the last three years. A clear picture emerged that, on average, increasing time was being spent on development control and decreasing time was being spent on the other work areas. This accords with anecdotal views expressed by conservation specialists.

4.5.4 Workloads

A range of questions was asked about specific workloads over the preceding year (2001), including development control, enforcement, repairs notice action, conservation area appraisals and grants.

Development control

It is clear that on average, most conservation specialists deal with substantial numbers of conservation related development control cases. This reflects the rising trend in the number of applications received by planning authorities over the past three years referred to in 'Heritage under Pressure' (Baker and Chitty 2001) and in research undertaken for DTLR on resourcing of planning authorities (Arup 2002). The LACP research found that on average local authorities were dealing with 1891 applications each year, and that conservation specialists were advising on 17% of these. The average number of applications that conservation specialists advise on is 324. In more than half of authorities (53%) specialists advise on more than 250 applications.

Conservation specialists are frequently involved in preparation of statements for appeals, public inquiries and informal hearings (79% in 2001). On the other hand, an average of just five appeal statements prepared or contributed to during the year could be regarded as quite modest. Specialists in just over half of responding authorities (55%) gave evidence at public inquiries/informal hearings, but again in most cases involvement was modest with the average number of appearances being only 1.5 in 2001.

Article 4 Directions

The contribution that Article 4 directions can make to the management of historic areas and the protection of unlisted buildings of character is fully discussed in Section 4.1.5. Whilst 60% of authorities stated that they have Article 4 directions in place, the number of authorities making additional directions in 2001 was relatively small (15% of respondents). Only 1.3% of responding authorities made more than three directions. This indicates that there is very variable use of Article 4 directions by local authorities with some authorities clearly using these powers more extensively than others, but with the majority being inactive in this area.

Prosecution and enforcement

It is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised works of demolition or alteration to listed buildings or demolitions in conservation areas. Where such unauthorised works have been carried out local authorities are empowered to take enforcement action to rectify matters or, in the most serious cases, to bring prosecution action through the courts.

The survey found that the average numbers of conservation related enforcement and prosecution cases dealt by planning authorities in 2001 was modest, with an average of 5.3 enforcement notices served and 0.3 prosecutions brought. The returns show that 47% of responding authorities served no enforcement notices whatsoever in 2001, and 81% brought no prosecutions. In only 2% of cases did authorities bring more than 3 prosecutions in 2001. The survey highlighted regional variations in enforcement activity in 2001 with an average of 21 conservation related notices served by authorities in the London region compared with only 0.4 in the North East. For prosecution action the figures were generally consistent between regions but with authorities in the Yorkshire region bringing an average of 0.8 actions in 2001 compared with zero for authorities in the North East.

The low level of activity for both enforcement and prosecutions indicated by the survey suggests either that there are relatively few cases of unauthorised works, or, perhaps more likely that authorities are simply unable or unwilling to prioritise this work.

Repairs and Urgent Works action

A similar picture emerges for Repairs and Urgent Works Notices, where 88% of authorities served no Repairs Notices and 82% no Urgent Works notices in 2001. In only 0.5% of cases were more than three Repairs Notices served, and only 1.4% of cases more than 3 Urgent Works Notices. The average number of notices of both types served by This would suggest that generally local authorities are not using these powers as effectively as they might to protect the historic built resource. There is a clear relationship between the limited use of these powers and the lack of comprehensive coverage by authorities of buildings at risk registers.

Conservation area character appraisals

Given the number of conservation areas without adopted character appraisals within English local planning authorities (see Section 4.1.4) a major task faces authorities in addressing this issue. The survey shows that the rate of progress in dealing with the backlog of conservation areas without appraisals is slow. Whilst the average adoption rate for 2001 was 1.5, nearly two thirds of respondents (61%) stated that they did not adopt any conservation area character appraisals during this period and less than 10% adopted more than 3. There were significant regional variations in progress in producing conservation area character appraisals with authorities in London and the South East regions adopting an average of 2.9 appraisals in 2001 compared with only 0.3 in the West Midlands.

It clear from the survey that, although the production of conservational area character appraisals must be regarded as a high priority, a considerable number of authorities are unable to allow sufficient time to make substantive progress, especially if appraisals are to be of high quality. There are clear issues for efficient and effective management of conservation areas arising from these statistics.

Grants and funding bids

The survey showed that some 50% of authorities operated grant programmes funded solely from their own funds. In addition, a significant proportion of authorities were also contributing to partnership grant programmes with English Heritage or Heritage Lottery Fund. Accordingly, processing of grant applications features as part of the normal workload of many conservation staff (80%).

The wide variation of budgets for grants (see Section 4.2.2) is reflected in terms of workloads. Some specialists are clearly spending much of their time on administering grant aid whereas for others this forms a relatively small element of their work. In the case of grant programmes funded solely by authorities the highest number of offers processed in 2001 ranged from 1 to 111. The great majority of specialists however, handle relatively few applications with the average for all authorities being just over 8 grants per annum.

In the case of partnership grant programmes there is a similarly wide variation in numbers of applications processed. For example, for Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) grants (partially funded by English Heritage) the numbers of offers processed in 2001 ranged from 1 to 128 averaging 4.4 grants processed per annum. The numbers of Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) grants (partially funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) ranged from 2 to 17 averaging 0.2 grants processed per annum, appearing very small in relation to the overall number of authorities engaged in such schemes. However, this may be due to the fact that many of these programmes had been newly launched at the time of the survey and had yet to gain momentum. The figures indicate that whilst processing of grants forms part of the routine workload of many conservation specialists, for the majority the numbers of grants processed in a year are relatively small.

It is clear from the survey of workloads that conservation specialists in some authorities are spending an increasing amount of time preparing bids for external funding and over half of respondents (55%) indicated they had prepared bids during 2001. However, the great majority (94%) prepared less than three bids. Given that the staffing level in most authorities is modest there can be real difficulties for authorities in finding sufficient staff time to undertake this work in addition to their routine duties. This could mean that potential funding opportunities are missed because there is inadequate time to prepare bids, or where bids are made this may be at the expense of other important work. An interesting comment was received from one authority stating:

X 'has been successful in securing external funding, but only at the expense of other mainstream conservation work.'

LACP Survey 2001

4.5.4 Summary

It is clear from the statistics that conservation specialists have diverse roles. In many authorities they are involved in all aspects of the planning function, i.e. policy, implementation and control. As such they are often expected to act both as professional casework advisors and strategic thinkers. Given the relatively small numbers of conservation specialists in most authorities it is inevitable that there is an immense challenge in attempting to balance day-to-day casework with more strategic long-term tasks.

The survey confirms that conservation workloads are dominated by reactive development control casework and that the demands of this work are increasing within most authorities. The inevitable consequence of this is that other important tasks such as ensuring compliance with legislation and enforcement are receiving lower priority. At the same time, output in relation to vitally important proactive tasks, such as dealing with buildings at risk, serving Repairs and Urgent Works Notices, and undertaking conservation area appraisals is also very low compared with development control activities. From comments received and from the responses given in relation to the balance of workloads it is clear that most specialists feel that reactive work is dominating at the expense of necessary proactive tasks.

The overwhelming impression from the survey is one of a stretched service strongly biased towards reactive day-to-day casework at the expense of vital proactive work. For a more balanced service to be achieved it would appear that, in most authorities, more staff resources would need to be directed towards strategic work. If such work is to be covered

contemporaneously with day-to-day casework without loss of input there are clear implications for overall conservation staffing levels.

4.6 Quality of service and internal/external relationships

4.6.1 Best value

'Conservation is seen as a bolt-on to the planning section therefore no real targets or assessment criteria have been formulated apart from the number of CA Appraisals carried out per year'

LACP Survey 2001

In the Local Government Act 1999 the Government introduced a performance framework for local authorities known as *Best Value*. This places a duty on local authorities to deliver services to clear standards, of cost and quality, by the most economic, efficient and effective means available (DETR, 1999). Under *Best Value* councils are required to produce annual performance plans showing how well they perform against a range of indicators. Some of these indicators are compulsory so that all authorities are measured in exactly the same way, and can be compared easily. Others are 'local' indicators developed by individual authorities as a means of monitoring their own performance.

There are currently no specific nationally agreed performance indicators for local authority conservation services and the absence of such standards means that there is potential for a high degree of inconsistency between authorities for this important area of work. Without agreed standards it will always be difficult to measure individual performance of authorities or to make meaningful comparisons between authorities.

The LACP survey sought to throw light on the extent to which authorities were developing consistent local measures of performance for their conservation services. It is significant to note that, in the context of questions about workloads, 'development of best practice/performance standards (e.g. *Best Value*)' is on average identified as the activity with the strongest increase over the past three years, so clearly this work is taking a significant and increasing proportion of many conservation practitioners' time.

However, well under half (38%) of the respondents said that their authorities had adopted *Best Value* Performance Standards for their conservation service although 52% of authorities stated that they collected data against performance indicators for conservation. This would indicate that, whilst a proportion of authorities have developed standards for measuring performance for conservation, only some of them have adopted them formally for *Best Value* purposes. A number of authorities stated that they were in the process of developing standards for *Best Value* purposes and it is therefore likely that a clearer picture will emerge in future. Only 37% collected data on customer satisfaction.

There were mixed views about whether *Best Value* had improved the way in which their conservation services were delivered – 50/50 either way - the jury is still out and it would be interesting to monitor this in the future.

'Best Value has been done. We do everything that the government expects, but do not do conservation!'

LACP Survey 2001

Whilst it is clear that some authorities have taken up the task of identifying specific performance indicators for its conservation service, others have yet to do so. Due to the many differing models of delivery of conservation services there appears not to have been a consistent approach to the task of identifying performance standards for conservation. Some authorities appear to have subsumed the conservation role into that of development control whereas others may have yet to identify specific indicators for conservation at all. It is clear that this inconsistency is likely to perpetuate and could lead to a risk of inadequate monitoring and resourcing of local authority conservation activities.

4.6.2 Quality of service

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of conservation service their authority is able to offer. It is clearly difficult for respondents to be entirely objective about this question in the absence of agreed measurable service statements for conservation and some form of independent assessment. Additionally evaluation of performance might involve potential self-criticism or congratulation. Consequently the responses to this part of the survey have to be treated with some caution. However some very useful data was obtained from respondents.

Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) rated their service as good or very good, but a significant number (31%) rated it as only 'fair' with 4% rating it as 'poor/very poor'. The majority claim to be providing a high quality service has to be viewed in the context of the high levels of inactivity in relation to proactive tasks such as urgent works notices and conservation area appraisals. It could perhaps be argued that the advice that is being provided by many specialists may be of good quality, the service as a whole is unbalanced.

A majority of respondents rated the status accorded to conservation advice within their authorities as good or very good (65%) with 27% as fair. Significantly a high proportion of respondents rated their authority's commitment to conservation as just 'fair' (39%) with 18% 'rating it as poor/very poor'. This means that, on average, well over half of authorities (57%) rated their authority's commitment as fair or worse. Only 37% rated their authority's commitment to conservation as good or very good.

These figures tend to suggest that whilst there may appear to be a high degree of general support for conservation, in a significant proportion of authorities the commitment to conservation may be superficial. A number of interesting comments were received in respect of this issue an example of which is:

'Conservation is taken for granted – it just happens. The attitude of 'we have a historical environment' goes without recognition that it needs 'managing' and professional staff to do it. Councillors/chief officers see heritage as an 'asset' for tourism etc. but it is mostly a negative factor (LB/CA and Archaeology) to development and growth, and hence given little weight in decision making process or financial allocation, especially to its own property portfolio.'

LACP Survey 2001

4.6.3 Internal/external relationships

Given the very wide range of work undertaken by local authority conservation specialists it is perhaps inevitable that they have a similarly wide range of interrelationships with professional colleagues both within and beyond their own authorities. In addition they are actively engaged with individuals and organisations outside their own professional sector, for example, property owners, local amenity and community groups. For a conservation specialist to be effective these interrelationships need to be positive.

In order to assess the quality of these interactions, the survey asked respondents to rate the relationships that conservation specialists enjoy with various groups both within and beyond their own authorities. Generally speaking these were found to be positive.

Positive relationships

Some of the most positive relationships were found to exist between close working colleagues within local authority departments. For example the highest scoring relationships are between conservation specialists and their planning colleagues where some 88% rated relationships as good or very good. Also strong are relationships with colleagues in building control where 68% rated relationships as good or very good with local authority archaeology colleagues where 71% of respondents rated relationships as 'good' or 'very good'. It is also significant to note that some 59% of respondents rated relationships between conservation specialists and elected members as good or very good.

With regard to conservation specialists' relationships with outside bodies the strongest was found to exist with English Heritage where 84% enjoyed good or very good relationships. Other strong relationships were enjoyed with diocesan advisory committees.

Less positive relationships

Of the less positive relationships enjoyed by conservation specialists the worst ratings were with public utilities where some 25% of respondents stated relations as 'poor' or 'very poor'. It is also significant that a very high proportion of respondents (43%) stated that they had no significant contact with public utilities or that relationships were not applicable to their work. The next poorest relationships were with highways colleagues (19%). The comparatively poor relationships with both public utilities and highways must be of concern given the potential for both groups to make substantial impacts within the public realm.

Lack of significant contact

One of the bodies respondents were asked to comment on was the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). It is clear from the responses that, as yet, a large proportion of conservation specialists in local authorities have yet to engage with this relatively new organisation. One respondent asked 'who is this?' and well over half (57%) of respondents reported 'no significant contact/not applicable'. Bearing in mind the considerable involvement many conservation specialists have with design issues, and the emerging importance of CABE, relationships with this group is likely to become of increasing significance in future. For this reason positive working relationships need to be encouraged both at national and regional level.

Nearly half of respondents (48%) stated that conservation specialists had no significant contact with regional government or considered that contact was not applicable to their work. It is likely that contact with regional government will become of increased importance in future and it would be valuable to monitor interaction between local government conservation specialists and these bodies in future.

4.6.4 Summary

Well under half of authorities have adopted *Best Value* performance standards specifically for their conservation service. The indicators used vary from authority to authority with no universally recognised indicators for conservation. This is likely to lead to inadequate monitoring and in turn inadequate consideration of the needs of the historic built environment. Specialists in authorities using performance indicators are evenly split about whether or not this has improved the delivery of their conservation service.

Whilst two thirds of respondents felt that their authority provided a good conservation service the remaining third felt the service offered was at best fair. Well over half rated their authority's commitment to conservation as only fair or worse, indicating that in some authorities the commitment to conservation may be superficial.

Generally speaking conservation specialists enjoy good relationships with professional colleagues inside and outside their authorities, the best relationships being enjoyed with planning colleagues and English Heritage and the worst with public utilities.

Given the interactive nature of the conservation specialist role it is vital that relationships both with close professional colleagues and with those of other related disciplines are positive. Similarly it is essential, if conservation specialists are to be effective that positive relationships exist with individuals and groups with an interest in conservation outside local authorities. Where relationships are not particularly positive, for example with public utilities, it is important that initiatives are undertaken, both at local and national level to cultivate more positive working relationships.

4.7 Professional viewpoint of the role of conservation specialists

'Like many authorities our conservation department is under-resourced and not well managed. It is an uphill struggle and frustrating because we could do so much more'

LACP Survey 2001

As well as asking for responses to a specific range of questions the survey additionally sought comments from respondents on matters not covered elsewhere. Nearly half of the respondents provided additional comments covering a wide variety of issues. The greater proportion of these comments related to staffing and resourcing issues with a large number stating that resources were inadequate to provide a satisfactory service.

4.7.1 What conservation specialists would like to do

It is clear from analysis of returns that the majority of conservation specialists are spending most of their time undertaking reactive development control work and that there has been a clear tendency for upward growth of such work in the last three years. The survey has also shown that, based on estimates of respondents and individual comments received, they would prefer to spend less time on reactive work and more on other aspects (see Table in Section 3.3 above). Significantly however, when asked to state the 'ideal' balance in percentage terms between time spent on development control and other tasks, development control remained predominantly the favoured work, 40% on average. The remaining 60% of time being split between the other work areas.

It is therefore fair to conclude that, in most cases, responding to development proposals is seen as the 'staple diet' of local conservation services whilst other more proactive activities, such as advising on care of the resource and formulating policies, although important, are seen as less of a priority. Whilst conservation specialists would like to be more proactive this would not take over from the traditionally reactive workload. The self-image of conservation specialists would therefore appear to be predominantly as a regulator or manager of change, rather than that of an initiator. This is likely to have important implications for the way in which conservation specialists and conservation services are perceived both within authorities and externally.

There is a clear tension between, on the one hand the demands of proactive work (which tends to be time-consuming by nature), and on the other those of more routine day-to-day development control case work. These tensions are perhaps summarised in the following response:

'Increasing paperwork resulting from complexity of bid preparation ... and the fact that LB applications appear to have doubled over the past year mean that less specialist staff time is being spent on site and more in endless committee meetings on the hundred and one 'strategies' and initiatives resulting from partnership consultations!!'

LACP Survey 2001

There is evidence through the survey that some authorities have sought creative solutions in order to integrate the conservation function more fully with that of mainstream planning and regeneration and thereby maximise available resources.

'The 3 ½ FTE Conservation Officers are also Regeneration Officers in a plural sense. We always have a Conservation hat on and a Regeneration hat on. We find this much more efficient of staff time...'

LACP Survey 2001

It was suggested by some respondents during the course of the research that, in certain situations, the embedding of conservation services within regeneration teams might be more effective and seen as more politically and culturally acceptable as well as being perceived as more positive and proactive than traditional conservation models. In turn this could prove to be beneficial in terms of career progression for individual professional staff. It would be interesting to examine these different structural models for conservation services and to monitor their effectiveness in differing situations.

4.7.2 Summary

Respondents to the survey expressed a wide variety of individual viewpoints, but the most common area of concern was in relation to the inadequacy of resources available to provide a satisfactory conservation service. Many respondents expressed concerns about the predominance of development control at the expense of more proactive work. It is very clear from these comments that most conservation specialists are working under extreme pressure, and many believe that they are unable to provide a balanced service without additional resources.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The LACP survey has collected a wide range of data about conservation services within English local planning authorities. This report highlights key issues and trends and the data analysis will contribute to a number of important current strategic initiatives at both national level and within the conservation profession. In particular it will inform *Best Value*, the reorganisation of the planning system and policies on standards and delivery of conservation services. The key findings are summarised below under the relevant headings together with recommendations to the Steering Group.

5.1 The historic resource and its management

First and foremost it is clear that whilst most authorities have responsibility for managing a substantial historic resource (on average around 1200 listed buildings and 28 conservation areas), a substantial proportion do not maintain up to date or comprehensive information about the resource and its character and condition. Furthermore more than two thirds of front-line planning authorities do not maintain integrated database systems to support their conservation work. As a consequence there is a very real danger that in many areas appropriate resources may not be allocated to manage the historic environment effectively. More over the lack of sufficiently comprehensive information about the historic resource is likely to limit the ability of authorities to make properly informed decisions about its future, both in terms of development control and more strategic actions. There is therefore an urgent need to promote, at national level, more systematic monitoring of the character and condition of historic assets and to maintain integrated record systems. The production of local state of the historic environment reports to feed into regional or national data would be of particular value.

Summary of findings:

- Most local authorities have responsibility for protecting a substantial stock of historic buildings and areas (on average 1198 LBs and 28 CAs) as well as safeguarding the setting of many other elements of the historic environment.
- Nearly a third of authorities do not keep registers of Listed Buildings at Risk.
- Over a third of authorities identify locally listed buildings.
- Nearly three quarters of conservation areas in England do not have adopted character appraisals.
- More than two thirds of 'front-line' planning authorities do not maintain an integrated historic environment database.

5.2 Financial resources for conservation

A crucial issue emerging from this study is the fact that pattern of local authority spending on the historic environment appears extremely unclear when viewed either at local or national level. Data on overall spending and spending on particular aspects is difficult to determine. Nationally collected statistical data, e.g. CIPFA data, is very generalised and not particularly 'fine grained', combining conservation of the historic environment with

other environmental conservation activities. At local level there often appears to be a lack of clear or readily available data.

Over the past 5 years the average overall conservation spending in local authorities has remained flat equating to a decline in funding in real terms. Although half of all authorities allocate funding for their own grant programmes spending on these schemes has shown a tendency to fall. On the other hand spending on partnership grant programmes has tended to rise, with a large proportion of authorities being involved in HERS arrangements with English Heritage or THIs with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Summary of findings:

- Overall local authority spending on built environment conservation has, on average, remained 'flat' over the past 5 years equating to a decline in 'real' terms.
- 50% of authorities operate their own historic building grant schemes.
- Spending on local authority grants schemes has tended to fall over the past 3 years.
- There has been a slight increase in partnership grant spending by local authorities.
- 40% of authorities are involved in HERS, 17% in CAPs and 11% in THIs.
- Nearly two thirds of authorities do not allocate budgets for conservation area enhancement.

5.3 Service provision and organisational structure

In terms of service provision the great majority of local authorities appear able to draw upon at least some in-house conservation expertise albeit that some rely on fractional posts. On average conservation staffing levels are modest in relation to the size of the resource to be managed with 1.7 full time equivalent specialists dealing with conservation. Average staffing levels have remained static over the past three years, but this does not fully reflect a patchy picture up and down the country where, in some authorities, there has been a marked down turn in staff numbers of conservation specialists.

In relation to organisational structure, in most authorities the conservation service sits within the planning service area and in over half of cases conservation professionals are in specialist teams dealing with a range of conservation related work. In the majority of cases these specialists act as internal 'consultant' advisors to development control staff rather than processing applications themselves. In most authorities, conservation specialists are small in number, of middle rank and not frequently represented on high-level decision-making bodies, although they have regular direct contact with elected members and consider that their advice generally is accorded high status.

Summary of findings:

- 85% of all local authorities are able to draw upon at least some specialist in house advice.
- The average establishment of conservation specialists within authorities is 1.7 FTE.
- Specialist conservation staffing levels have, on average, remained static over the past three years.
- The number of sponsored posts has increased in the last 3 years in 20% of authorities.
- Two thirds of responding authorities have no dedicated technical /administrative support for their conservation services.
- In 55% of local authorities conservation advice is provided by staff within specialist teams.
- 83% of LBC/CAC applications are processed by development control officers with conservation specialists acting as advisors.
- The predominant position for lead conservation specialists in authorities is 4th tier.
- 25% of lead conservation specialists sit on departmental management committees.
- 27% of lead conservation specialists routinely attend planning committee or the equivalent decision making body.
- 63% of conservation specialists have regular contact with elected members.
- In 65% of authorities the advice of the conservation specialist is accorded high or very high priority in decision-making.

5.4 Skills and pay

Conservation specialists need to be multi-skilled in order to be effective, and most are highly qualified with over two thirds holding post-graduate qualifications. However, there is no standard specification as to the skills, qualifications and experience they should possess. As a consequence there is little consistency in the professional and academic requirements called for and recruitment criteria vary widely between authorities. The predominant professional group amongst local authority conservation specialists is town planning (34%) followed by architecture. IHBC membership is high, especially amongst lead conservation specialists (76%).

Average salaries for conservation specialists are typically between £21-25k, although lead professionals may earn around £30k. Given the complexity of work and qualifications and experience ideally needed for the post these salaries are modest relative to national average salaries. As a result, in some parts of the country, especially the southeast and London, there are acute problems of recruitment despite higher average salaries being paid in these areas.

Summary of findings:

- Conservation specialists are generally well qualified with 67% holding postgraduate qualifications.
- 34% of local authority conservation specialists are RTPI members, 10% RIBA and 4% RICS.
- 62% of conservation specialists are members of IHBC.
- 79% of authorities support professional/academic training for conservation staff and 77% support in-service training/CPD in conservation.
- The predominant salary bracket for conservation specialists is £21-25k (38%).
- 27% of conservation specialists earn £26-30k.
- 13% of conservation specialists earn above £30k.
- There are significant regional variations in salaries with 75% of specialists in London earning £26k or more whilst in the North East only 18% earn £26k or more.

5.5 Conservation activities and workloads

It is clear that conservation specialists are routinely engaged in a very extensive range of complex professional work, and in most authorities these workloads are increasing. Workloads tend to be dominated by the ‘traditional’ activities of development control advice, and advice to owners on repairs and proposed changes. Reactive development control casework remains the ‘staple diet’ of most conservation specialists, accounting on average for well over half of specialists’ time. This gives relatively little time for more proactive work that specialists recognise is necessary to do the job effectively. For example, in 2001 specialists within an overwhelming proportion of authorities carried out no repair or urgent works notices action whatsoever. Large numbers carried out no enforcement or prosecution action and less than half undertook character appraisals of conservation areas. Activities such as education and outreach and councillor training inevitably feature low on the list of activities for most specialists. Most conservation practitioners feel that they could be more effective if they spent a greater proportion of their time on proactive work.

It is clear that in order to provide a balanced and well-rounded service, authorities need to have sufficient staff resources to enable specialists to undertake both reactive and proactive work. The absence of proactive work leading to conservation area appraisals, buildings at risk surveys and maintained databases means that in many cases the day-to-day development control work is being done in the dark (or at best intuitively). This is a major weakness that needs to be addressed if local authority conservation specialists are to be both efficient and effective and balanced service. Given the limited staffing provision within most authorities, coupled with growing caseload, it is unlikely that most authorities will be in a position to deliver a balanced service without additional staffing resources for conservation.

Summary of findings:

- Conservation specialists are routinely engaged with a very wide range of activities, and on average workloads are increasing in nearly all areas.
- Development control tasks dominate the workload with pre-application advice, provision of advice to development control colleagues and negotiation with applicants undertaken by over 96% conservation specialists.
- On average 53% of conservation specialists' time is spent on development control but they feel that 39% of time spent would be preferable.
- Giving advice to owners on repairs is undertaken by 98% of specialists.
- Education/outreach work such as councillor training and talks to educational groups are amongst the least commonly undertaken work.
- 20% of conservation specialists are engaged in Annual State of the Environment Reports.
- The strongest increase in workload is under the heading 'developing best practice/performance standards (e.g. *Best Value*)'.
- 47% of authorities reported no conservation enforcement action and 82% brought no prosecutions in 2001.
- 88% served no Repairs Notices and 82% served no Urgent Works Notices in 2001.
- 61% adopted no character appraisals in 2001.

5.6 Quality of service and internal/external relationships

Despite the fact that developing best practice/performance standards was identified as the largest workload growth area in 68% of cases, well under half of authorities have yet to adopt *Best Value* Performance Indicators for their conservation service. Where such standards have been adopted there are mixed views about whether or not they have had a positive impact on the quality of service delivered. Detailed monitoring of the impacts of *Best Value* performance standards for conservation would be valuable, as would the development of an agreed national template for *Best Value* Performance Indicators for local authority conservation services.

Whilst a substantial proportion of authorities rate the quality of their conservation service as good/very good (65%) and a similar proportion rate the status of conservation advice as high, it is significant that a substantial proportion (39%) rate their authority's commitment to conservation as only 'fair'.

Generally speaking conservation specialists enjoy good relationships with professional bodies both within and outside their authorities. Likewise they have good relationships with other interest groups. The best relationships are enjoyed with English heritage whereas the least good are with public utilities.

Summary of findings:

- Only 38% of authorities have adopted *Best Value* Performance Standards for the conservation service.
- 35% of respondents rated the quality of conservation service offered by their authorities as only 'fair' or worse.
- 57% of respondents rated their authority's commitment to conservation as 'fair' or worse.
- 88% of respondents rated relationships with planning colleagues as 'good' or 'very good'.
- 71% rated relationships with archaeologists as 'good' or 'very good'.
- 84% rated relationships with English Heritage as 'good' or 'very good'.
- The worst relationships reported by conservation specialists were with public utilities (only 7% 'good' or 'very good').

5.7 Future actions

The overwhelming impression emerging from the survey is of a conservation service that is often stretched, under-resourced and operating without many of the necessary 'building blocks' that would ensure an effective, efficient and balanced service. Too many authorities hold inadequate information about the extent, character and condition of the historic resource to be managed. This is likely to lead to a failure on the part of authorities to match resources with the scale of the challenge they face. Staffing levels are often modest in relation to the size of the resource to be managed and the workloads faced. . Whilst it is clear that the majority of conservation specialists would claim to be covering a very wide range of activities, development control tasks invariably predominate at the expense of other important work. Consequently much of what might be regarded as essential best practice, such as buildings at risk work, conservation area appraisals, enforcement, monitoring and other proactive tasks, inevitably receives comparatively low priority in many authorities. This situation seems likely to persist so long as much of the work remains non-statutory in nature, performance remains unmeasured, and resources continue to be limited

In the context of rising development pressures, it seems unlikely that local authorities will be able to properly address their responsibilities for managing the historic environment without more resources, a national framework of standards and associated performance indicators.

Among the challenges that face conservation specialists and the heritage agencies is how to ensure that conservation remains high on the agenda within local authority decision-making, and how to fulfil effectively the responsibilities set out in the 1990 Act and PPG15 (DOE/DNH, 1994) and any new legislation or guidance emerging from the current review of the planning system. This is particularly challenging when resources are limited. There could be a tendency, with 'traditional' models of conservation services, for specialist teams to be seen as 'bolt-on' optional extras to mainstream planning and be a 'soft target' for funding cuts. This may be particularly likely if there continues to be an absence of nationally agreed *Best Value* Performance Indicators for conservation services.

If conservation is to feature as a high priority in planning decision-making then traditional roles and status of the conservation specialist may have to be re-examined, and a new model of 'best practice' considered. This could be investigated by closely examining a range of differing local authority models of delivery of conservation services, and be informed by 'best practice' as defined by various groups including RTPI, DCMS, IHBC and POS. This could be contentious, but is highly topical in the light of 'Power of Place' (English Heritage 2000) and the Government's response 'Force for our Future' (DCMS/DTLR 2001).

5.8 Recommendations

Defining and monitoring the historic resource:

It is recommended that:

- **Development of integrated historic environment database systems be urgently promoted to enable both professional and public users to have access to detailed information about the historic resource.**
- **The systematic monitoring of the historic resource be promoted at national level and encouragement given for local authorities to allocate appropriate resources to establish and maintain information on the character and condition of historic assets e.g. BAR registers for all categories of historic buildings and conservation area character appraisals.**
- **Local authorities be encouraged to published regular state of the historic environment reports (SHERs) for their areas, and for this information to be used to inform national and regional SHERs.**

Delivery of conservation services:

It is recommended that:

- **The LACP research findings be disseminated to assist in the development of consistent national performance standards of conservation service provision by local authorities in England.**
- **Clear guidance be developed at national level for the establishment of model standards of conservation service provision within local authorities, based on examples of 'best practice'.**
- **An agreed set of national Best Value Performance Indicators be developed for local authority conservation services combining both proactive and reactive work.**
- **Data collected for CIPFA be redefined under discrete headings for historic environment conservation linked to Best Value Performance Indicators in order to facilitate meaningful comparisons between authorities and to enable a clear national picture to be built.**
- **The case for allocating more resources to specialist conservation services and staffing be vigorously promoted in the context of the Government's current review of the planning system in the interests of developing more consistent and effective delivery of services.**
- **That consistent standards of professional competence for local authority conservation specialists be systematically promoted and that clear guidance for minimum entry qualifications be developed for conservation practitioners.**

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Appendix A – Project Brief

**English Heritage/Institute of Historic Building
Conservation/DETR/DCMS**

RESEARCH PROJECT INTO LOCAL AUTHORITY CONSERVATION PROVISION – STAFFING, CASEWORK & RESOURCES

OUTLINE PROJECT BRIEF

Local authorities should call on sufficient specialist conservation advice individually or jointly to inform their decision making to assist owners and other members of the public

PPG 15, paragraph 1.6

Introduction

This Outline Brief sets out a framework for a proposed research project into local authority staffing provision and casework loads relating to the conservation of buildings. The work will be funded by English Heritage with support from the IHBC and will complement related work in archaeology. This brief is intended to enable a consultant to prepare a full project design and costing for the work.

Background to the Project

At present there is no systematic data available about local authority conservation provision. Yet local authorities are facing a number of critical issues with regard to conservation provision where systematic data would be useful.

The responsibilities which local authorities should exercise with regard to listed buildings, conservation areas and the historic environment are set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and PPG 15. Inevitably, these responsibilities interact with – and potentially conflict with - other statutory responsibilities for building control, fire safety, environmental health transport, development, urban design and other duties. Local Performance Indicators, based on a delivery of individual services, do not take account of these interactions or consider how they can be managed most effectively. As with many other services, there is currently a tension between performance based on numbers and cost, and performance based on quality of outcome. They are encouraged to commit time to proactive initiatives but often lack the resources to undertake basic reactive work. At the same time, there is anecdotal

evidence that demand for conservation services and advice is rising, and process-based performance indicators do not recognise the value of pre-application and informal advice.

There is no systematic data about how local planning authority staff meet these challenges. We do not know how many staff exist or what their case loads are. We don't know how much weight is given to their advice or how effective it is. There is no systematic data about casework levels, or type. Nor is there any trend data, which enables us to analyse what is happening both within local planning authorities and externally.

Such data is essential if we are to establish how effective local planning authorities are. Base data is needed for initiatives such as Best Value if they are to make a difference to the quality or streamlining of local authority activity. At the same time, Power of Place asks us to look forward, to look at the state of the historic environment and what is happening and the commitment to a State of the Historic Environment report is generating a need for data of all types.

For over 10 years, English Heritage has been collecting data about archaeological activity in England, both within local authorities and in the profession as a whole. We are aware of the number of staff there are, their caseloads and how their work is changing. We also know about the amount of archaeological activity in the private sector, and the type of work that is happening. This in turn tells us something about what is happening to the resource. Because we have such data over a decade, we are now able to establish trends.

The intention of the Local Authority Conservation Provision Project (LACP) therefore, is to begin to collect for conservation provision, the same type of data that has been collected for local authority archaeological provision. This project brief sets out the background to the project, its aims and objectives. It is designed to be the basis against which the project can be commissioned.

Strategic Benefits

Consistent data on local authority casework and performance in conservation will potentially contribute to a number of current strategic initiatives both at a national level, and within the profession:

- * ***Best Value***
At present local government performance is being addressed through the Best Value initiative. Problems are arising for conservation, as there is little data about what such services should be delivering, how such services can be measured, what a local authority should expect of the service and how best to deliver both quality and quantity in decision making, as well as both proactive and reactive work. Service-based Best Value audits give insufficient emphasis to linkages between services.

*

Streamlining

One of the principal concerns with regard to conservation activities is how to reconcile quantitative and qualitative measures of local authority performance. Pressure for fast turn around on conservation casework in turn creates pressure to drive down standards of advice or restrict its scope. Yet many players are anxious to try to streamline the conservation process, to eliminate double handling and to find better ways of providing advice. Is streamlining inconsistent with quality or can both be achieved?

*

Potential Private Sector Involvement. There is a need to consider implications of government proposals for private sector involvement in public service delivery. Hence there is an urgent need for establishing:

- (a) agreed understanding of what the conservation service is and what may or may not be compatible with private sector involvement, and;
- (b) agreed standards for service delivery as a basis for assessing potential providers.

*

Appropriate Standards for conservation activity.

Funding for national conservation comes from central government, but responsibility is split between DETR and DCMS. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) cover their own funding from the Council Tax with Standard Spending Asset input from Government. Some frameworks for standards do exist such as IHBC competencies, British Standard and NVQs. It would be useful to determine exactly whether LPAs use any of these to set and measure standards. Apart from PPG 15 and 16, and recent circulars, there is no consistent formal guidance in place for what conservation services should involve. Local authorities are given powers under the act, but little guidance on how those powers should be exercised. For this reason, there is no consistent definition of the roles or duties of local authorities in this field. Data on current practice might help to inform decisions about the need for further guidance.

*

Status of conservation

Other issues include concerns about the status of conservation within local authorities, and the weight given to conservation concerns in the light of other duties. This is reflected in the fact that conservation staff may be located in disparate sections of the authority such as development control, policy planning, economic development or, leisure services. Status is also reflected in the relatively low salary scales offered by local authorities to conservation officers. Mapping of conservation officers with respect to their authorities might help to provide advice about where such staff are best placed to be effective, and how best their advice can be reconciled with other priorities, in the future.

In addition, to determine status within a local authority and within the heritage community and local sphere of influence, an assessment of conservation officers' involvement and linkage to historic environment initiatives such as Cultural

Strategies, Environmental Education, and promotion of professional, craft and trade skills would be useful.

* ***Owners' concerns***

Many owners of historic buildings feel frustrated by what they see as slow and bureaucratic and sometimes inflexible responses to applications for listed building consent. They are faced with frequently conflicting requirements of different regulatory regimes. They worry about what may be seen as random decisions, and may lack guidance. As conservation officers become busier, this perception may get worse. At the same time, the conservation officer may be frustrated by the lack of time to work proactively, to support owners. A successful outcome usually depends on a combination of a pro-active, problem-solving conservation officer, and the owner appointing a skilled professional who understands historic buildings. A dogmatic approach can alienate an owner, while a skilled conservation officer aims to engage the owner's interest and to generate understanding and enthusiasm. Data about work loads and procedures, particularly on pre-application advice and promotion work, may help to identify ways in which support to owners can be improved.

The LACP Project Structure

The LACP is being led by IHBC, with funding from English Heritage. The project is being overseen by a steering group, which includes representatives from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. We very much hope to involve other organisations such as the Planning Officers Society either directly as members of the project, or through the consultation process.

The current members of the steering group are:

Kate Clark, English Heritage (Project Manager)
David Batchelor, English Heritage
Jenny Carlile, English Heritage
Mike Coupe, English Heritage
Marion Barter, English Heritage
Kate Graham, English Heritage (Project Support)
Rob John, DTLR
Iain Newton DCMS
Bob Kindred, IHBC
John Preston, IHBC
Julia Smith, IHBC

The steering group will meet regularly with the consultant throughout the project.

Project Aim

The aim of the LACP project is to begin to collect quantitative and qualitative data about conservation provision in local planning authorities in England, including staffing and casework issues. This data will be presented in a form that can be used by IHBC, EH and others to inform policy, and in a way which could be followed up in future years to assess trends. The data will also help inform resourcing priorities as well as policy.

Objectives

1. To draw together existing data about local authority conservation provision
2. To design a survey methodology in order to collect quantitative and qualitative data about conservation provision within local authorities in England
3. To undertake the survey
4. To analyse the results of the survey
5. To analyse other relevant sources of data
6. To characterise the casework associated with conservation provision and the methods used to implement PPG 15 and associated work
7. To present a report, setting out the results of the survey to peer groups
8. To incorporate peer group comments into a final report
9. To present the results of the work to a wider audience

Issues to be addressed

The following issues should be addressed in the collection of data and analysis of results.

Structure & Staffing

What is the current level of staffing in the local authority, and how does conservation advice sit within the organisation?

- *Is there a conservation officer? If more than one do they work/are they regarded as a team? Can somebody with primary responsibility for delivering service in relation to PPG 15 be identified? How is the role defined and what job titles exist for conservation provision? Is the service provided in house, by consultants or by a mixture of both?*
- *How many people are engaged in managing, delivering and supporting the process? This should be in terms of both the numbers of local authority staff involved in conservation processes and the amount of time that each person is able to devote to it. Exactly who does what needs to be explicit in terms of dedicated posts and posts that give part of their time.*
- *Where does conservation provision sit within the organisation? To whom do they report? Why is committee attendance important?*
- *What qualifications and experience do staff have? What measures have staff themselves or local authorities taken to provide training, CPD and personal*

development opportunities generally? Is there a need for professional development posts or do these already exist?

- *Linkages – does the authority have formal linkages (e.g. between DC and planning) or are these linkages informal?*
- *How long has each conservation staff member been in post?*
- *Were staff working in the area before appointment to present posts and if so for how long?*
- *What salary range, or grade, is the conservation officer post?*
- *Networking - Can staff name the jobs done by their 3 most important contacts within the local authority and the 3 most important/useful/influential contacts outside?*

The Resource

What is the size and nature of the resource to be conserved?

- *How many listed buildings, conservation areas and historic parks and gardens are there in the area of the authority?*
- *What is the population of the area concerned?*
- *Buildings at Risk – how many BARs as a percentage of total listed buildings and their absolute number? Is there a BAR register and if so, is it countywide or metropolitan wide? Is there a breakdown of building type with the register? Is there anyone who can dedicate time to BARs or who is a focus for them? Due to the monitoring possibilities of this, is important to link this into the **Trend Data section**.*
- *Article 4 Directions - Do conservation officers have article 4(2) directions and if so, in how many Conservation Areas and how many buildings covered? The need for effective conservation area management is something that must be instilled in LAs.*
- *Local Lists – This is a vital issue in light of Part L of the Building Regulations. Do conservation officers have Local List directions?*
- *HERS/CAPs/THIs – the available data on this may be useful in the analysis.*

Budgets - SSA

Is it possible to identify the budget provision for building conservation within the Standard Spending Assessment? Is it possible to estimate provision as a percentage of total local authority provision? Does the LPA have a budget for conservation grant schemes or do they have to involve the HLF or other sources of funding?

Activities and Service Provision

This section will need to be treated with care as some questions may require either trend statistics or some real consideration or work by the respondent. This might mean that the questionnaire is put to one side as time management questions are notoriously difficult.

What is the range of conservation activities within the local authority? What percentage of time is devoted to these? Please indicate the areas with which you are involved and the proportion of time involved.

- *Applications advertised under S.67 and S.73.*
- *Pre application consultation*
- *Design advice*
- *Regeneration*

- *Conservation area appraisals and designation*
- *Input and support to conservation area advisory committee/panels, BPTs and other formal consultation procedures*
- *Involvement with Architects Panel, Project Steering Groups or Community Groups*
- *Social Inclusion*
- *Parks and gardens*
- *Advice on repairs*
- *Does the authority offer grant aid? If so, how much?*
- *Post-decision quality assurance, discharge of conditions, monitoring and enforcement (including prosecutions and other formal action)*
- *Conservation promotion (lectures, environmental education etc)*
- *Conservation Strategy (including policy development, involvement in LA 21, cultural strategies etc)*
- *Developing best practice /CPD*
- *Archaeology*
- *Building analysis and recording and records and local skills/suppliers/contacts database management*
- *Conservation plans and management agreements*
- *BAR work, strategy, legal action, policy review and formation*
- *Best Value*
- *Social inclusion etc. JC*
- *Reactive listed building consent casework and conservation area consent casework? How has the Shimizu ruling impacted in their involvement in the latter?*
- *Influencing elected members*
- *Development control – how many authorities have a formal procedure or even a service level agreement with DC or local plans. How many conservation officers write the conservation chapter of the local plan?*

Applications

What is the level and nature of listed building consent and conservation area consent casework?

- *How many planning applications are received? How many is the conservation officer consulted on formally **and** informally (there is a need to make a distinction here)? How many listed building consent applications and applications for conservation area consent? Do conservation officers see all of these or only some?*
- *What should conservation officers be consulted on?*
- *How many cases are referred to English Heritage and on what basis, Grade I and II* or wider?*
- *Are incoming listed building consent applications vetted by the conservation officer before registration?*
- *Do conservation officers monitor or agree issues covered by conditions attached to consents?*
- *Do conservation officers write briefs for recording or reports from specialist consultants, if not who does? The SMR officer?*
- *How many LB consent applications processed?*

- *How many planning applications commented on?*
- *How many applications for works to churches?*
- *How many grant applications?*
- *How many unauthorised works resolved?*
- *How many prosecutions?*
- *How many listed building enforcement cases?*
- *No. of conservation plans/management agreements (a) agreed and (b) in preparation.*
- *How many applications avoided (by negotiation solution not requiring consent)?*
- *How many appropriate solutions are found through an integrated 'development team' approach?*

These last two questions should form part of any systematic future information gathering.

Trend data

For any of these areas, is it possible to identify:

- *what the situation is now*
- *what the situation was a year ago*
- *what you envisage the situation might be in 12 months time*

Relationship with English Heritage and other Partners and organisations

- Does the conservation officer find the English Heritage regional team supportive and if not, why not?
- What would be a good level of support?
- How much contact do they have with EH?
- What professional/heritage organisations do you regularly engage with?
- Do you find that the assistance/advice/support from these organisations is adequate?

Methodology

The project will undertake the following stages:

Stage 0: Preparation of project design and commissioning work

Stage 1: Collection and consideration of all existing data sources

Stage 2: Design of database for the survey and Drafting of questionnaire, testing on a small sample and revising

Stage 2A: Seminar with peer groups to raise awareness of project and canvas views (e.g. RICS, ALGAO, POS etc)

Stage 3: Circulation of the questionnaire

Stage 4: Input of data into database and any follow up work

Stage 5: Analysis of data and preparation of a draft report

Stage 6: Consultation on draft report

Stage 7: Preparation of a final report incorporating comments

Stage 8: Printing of final report and co-ordination of peer group seminar to discuss results of work and implications

Stage 9: Archiving of data from report and post project review

Scope of the Survey

For practical purposes the scope of the survey will be limited to the conservation control functions of local authorities, defined here as:

Staff or consultants who advise local authorities on their responsibility with regard to the conservation of historic buildings and areas as set out in PPG 15 and PPG 16 and the Planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) act 1990.

This may include internal advice to members and other departments, and external advice to applicants, owners and members of the public. Equivalent data has been collected for archaeology (see Appendix 1– this data should be referred to but new data on archaeology is not required). ‘Green’ conservation activity should not be included (except where there is a direct overlap)

There are 426 local planning authorities. If possible, all authorities should be approached. The questionnaire should be directed towards the lead officer for implementing PPG 15 and the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.

Ideally data should be collected for the past 3 years, but in practice this may not be possible. The consultant should explore the practicality of this.

Analysis

There should be both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data. This brief provides some suggestions as to the type of questions which the project should seek to answer but it is expected that the scope of the analysis will evolve as a result of the collation of existing data and the design of the questionnaire.

Related Surveys

Although there is no directly relevant survey, there is a certain amount of data about conservation provision already available. Appendix 2 sets out a list of known data sources. The consultant will be expected to obtain copies of the relevant data, and use the data both to consider what questions are best asked by this survey and also to draw upon that data in the analysis of the project as a whole.

Of particular relevance are:

ALGAO Planning and Conservation Casework Survey
Survey of Archaeological Services in Local Government 2000
Local Authority Practice and PPG 15: Information and Effectiveness

Where possible the data collection strategy should parallel these surveys so that results can be read across from one to the other. The consultant should also be aware of the format of the CIPFA data.

Procurement

The consultant should provide a costed project design in response to this brief. The project design should set out:

- the methodology for the survey
- proposed strategy for data collection, inputting and management
- the skills and relevant experience of the consultant and any associated staff
- timetable for the work

The consultant should demonstrate an awareness of the current strategic context of conservation (including current initiatives within government, at local authority level and within the profession), a thorough knowledge of the legislation and conservation in general, expertise in data collection and research including the statistical analysis of responses, strong experience in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, and good report writing skills.

APPENDIX 1: Previous surveys of archeological staffing and casework

1990-1 RESCUE Survey: the structure and funding of British Archaeology
1992 Pagoda Survey
1944 Association of County Archaeology Officers Survey
1997 ALGAO survey
1998 Profiling the Profession

APPENDIX 2: Existing data about conservation provision

Heritage Monitor*
CIPFA statistics
DoE Quarterly returns
IHBC membership data (Gus Astley)
Best Value Pilot Projects Data
Analysis of jobs in conservation (Bob Kindred)*
Camden consultancy data on conservation
Buildings at Risk Data*
Local Authority Practice and PPG 15: Information and Effectiveness*
CBA data on applications*
Applications data from Amenity Societies

* copies of this material are available from English Heritage.

Kate Clark &
LACP Steering Group
June 2001

Appendix B – Sample of full questionnaire



LOCAL AUTHORITY CONSERVATION PROVISION

Questionnaire for completion by local authorities

Name and address of authority:

Address if different:

Affix label

Telephone No.:

Fax No.:

E-Mail address:

Name of person completing questionnaire:

Position in Authority/Job Title:

Notes for completion of questionnaire

1. Please try to provide an answer to all questions even if it is a 'nil' response.
2. All responses to this questionnaire will be treated confidentially and will not be attributed to individual respondents.
3. Unless otherwise stated all statistics should be quoted as at 31st March 2002 or for the immediately preceding financial or calendar year.
4. For the purposes of this survey the definition of 'conservation specialist' is somebody whose primary responsibility is to provide expertise with regard to listed buildings, conservation areas and the historic environment as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and PPG15.

General profile of local authority and conservation service

1. Area of authority (hectares)
2. Population of authority
3. Type of authority
 1. Unitary
 2. Metropolitan
 3. District
 4. London B
 5. National Park
 6. County

Size of resource

4. No. of Listed Buildings within authority's area

	Statutory list entries	Individual buildings (if known/different)
Grade I		
Grade II*		
Grade II		
Total		

5. Does the authority maintain a register of Listed Buildings at Risk? (English Heritage BAR grades 1-3 or equivalent) 1.Yes 2.No
6. If 'yes' is this based on a 100% sample of all buildings in LA's area? 1.Yes 2.No
7. Please state frequency of review in years (if applicable)
8. No. of Listed Buildings at Risk
9. No. of Conservation Areas
10. No. of Conservation Area character appraisals adopted to date
11. No. of Historic Parks, Gardens & Cemeteries (English Heritage register)
12. No. of Historic Battlefields
13. No. of Scheduled Ancient Monuments
14. No. of buildings covered by Article 4 directions related to conservation issues
15. No. of locally listed buildings, i.e. non-statutory list kept by LA
16. Are local lists backed by specific development plan policies? 1.Yes 2.No
17. No. of World Heritage Sites

18. Has the authority established any other forms of non-statutory designation of the historic environment not identified above? 1.Yes 2.No
19. If 'yes' please specify.
20. Does the authority maintain an integrated historic environment database/ information system (i.e. records combining archaeology, buildings & sites)? 1.Yes 2.No
21. Does the authority operate a Conservation Area Advisory Committee? 1.Yes 2.No

Spending

22. Spending profile of the authority (as returned in CIPFA statistics)

Revenue Spending (£k)	2001-2002	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Total for LA				
Planning Service				
Conservation service (excluding archaeology)				

23. Does the authority operate its own historic building grant programme (i.e. solely funded by the authority under S.57 1990 Act)? 1.Yes 2.No
24. Please state budget 2001/02 for the local authority's historic Building grant programme in 2001/2002 £
25. Please indicate how this budget has changed over the last 3 years. 1.Increased 2.Unchanged 3.Decreased
26. Does the authority currently contribute to jointly funded/partnership historic building grants programmes under S.80 1990 Act? CAPS 1.Yes 2.No
HERs, 1.Yes 2.No
THIs 1.Yes 2.No
Other (specify) 1.Yes 2.No
.....
27. Is the authority currently delegated to manage such programmes on behalf of other partners? 1.Yes 2.No
28. Please state your authority's contribution to jointly funded/ partnership historic building grants programmes in 2001.02. £
29. Please indicate how the authority's contribution has changed over the last 3 years. 1.Increased 2.Unchanged 3.Decreased
30. Does the authority have a budget for conservation area enhancement? 1.Yes 2.No
31. Please state budget for 2001/02 for enhancement of conservation areas £
32. Does the authority have a budget for conservation projects other than grants or enhancements (e.g. research)? 1.Yes 2.No

33. Please state budget for 2001/02 for other conservation projects £
34. Please state budget for 2001/02 for specialist conservation staff £

Staffing Profile of Local Authority and Conservation Service

35. Please give details of the numbers of posts in the planning and conservation service

	No. of staff (FTE)	Change over last 3 years		
		Increased	No change	Decreased
Established posts within the planning service overall				
Established specialist conservation posts (see note 4 for definition)				
Conservation posts supported by external funding (e.g. English Heritage, HLF) Please state sponsor				
Dedicated administrative/technical support staff for conservation service				
Any other staff who routinely spend time in delivering aspects of the conservation service				

36. Is the conservation service performed by staff within a defined specialist team (i.e. distinct from development control/planning policy)? 1.Yes 2.No
37. If 'yes' what specialist functions do the team perform?
 1. Conservation advice
 2. Archaeology
 3. Urban design
 4. Environmental enhancement
 5. Landscape
 6. Trees & woodlands
 7. Other (specify)
38. In which local authority service area does the conservation service sit?
39. Position in LA hierarchy of person taking lead on conservation (ie 2nd, 3rd, 4th tier – chief executive or equivalent = 1st tier) (Please supply departmental 'family tree' if available)
40. Does the lead conservation specialist sit on the departmental/service area management committee? 1.Yes 2.No
41. Does the lead conservation specialist routinely attend planning committee or the equivalent decision making body? 1.Yes 2.No
42. Is the advice of the conservation specialist separately recorded on reports to Planning Committee? 1.Yes 2.No
43. Does the lead conservation specialist have regular direct contact with elected members? 1.Yes 2.No

44. Please give details of all staff involved in the delivery of the authority's conservation service (Do not give names) (Please attach additional sheet if insufficient space.)

Staff member	Salary range (FTE) *	F/T or P/T ⁺	Length of time in post	Professional/academic qualifications	IHBC Member (Yes/No)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

* Salary ranges: 1. ☐ £15k, 2. £16k-£20k, 3. £21k-£25k, 4. £26k-£30k, 5. ☐ £30k

⁺ To be expressed as a decimal figure, e.g. 0.5.

45. What (if any) minimum entry requirement does the authority stipulate for employment as a conservation specialist?
.....
46. Does the authority provide financial support for membership of relevant professional body, e.g. IHBC? 1.Yes 2.No
47. Does the LA actively support professional/academic training for conservation staff (i.e. day release courses)? 1.Yes 2.No
48. Does the LA support/provide in service training/CPD in conservation? 1.Yes 2.No
49. If yes, who is training aimed at: Conservation staff 1.Yes 2.No
Other planning staff 1.Yes 2.No
Councillors 1.Yes 2.No
Others, e.g. owners (specify) 1.Yes 2.No
.....
50. If no specialist staff, who is the main provider of advice to the LPA on conservation matters? (Please tick one)
1. DC staff
2. Policy staff
3. County Council
4. Consultants
5. Other (specify)
.....
51. Who processes LBC/CAC applications? 1. Conservation specialists
2. DC staff with advice from conservation specialists
3. DC staff
52. Does your authority use private consultancy firms to provide any aspect of its conservation service? 1. All the time
2. Frequently
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never

53. If 'yes', please specify which aspects this covers
1. Devt. Control
 2. Policy formulation
 3. Buildings at Risk
 4. CA enhancement
 5. Funding bids
 6. Other (specify)
-
54. If used how does the authority vet their competence?
1. Track record
 2. Tender submission
 3. Recommendation
 4. Interview
 5. Qualifications
 6. Other (specify)
-

Conservation activities and workloads

55. No. of all applications received by planning authority in 2001
56. No. of applications advised on by conservation specialists in 2001
57. No. of Article 4 directions relating to conservation served in 2001
58. No. of prosecutions brought in 2001
59. No. of enforcement notices served in 2001
60. No. of Repairs Notices served in 2001
61. No. of Urgent Works notices served in 2001
62. No. of conservation area character appraisals adopted in 2001
63. No. appeal statements prepared/contributed to by conservation specialists in 2001 (include written reps, public inquiries & informal hearings)
64. No. of times expert evidence given at public inquiries/informal hearings by conservation specialists in 2001
65. No. of grant applications processed (offers) in 2001/02:
- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| S.57 (Local authority) | |
| S.80 CAPS | |
| HERS | |
| THIS | |
| Others (specify) | |
66. No. of bids prepared/contributed to by conservation specialists for external funding in 2001/02 (include all bids with a conservation focus and please state type e.g. HERS, THI, SRB, ERDF etc.)

67. Please indicate specific work areas in which conservation staff are involved and whether the amount of time spent has changed over the last three years.

Area of Work	Normally undertaken?		Change over the last three years		
	Yes	No	Decreased	No change	Increased
Development Control					
• Pre-application advice					
• Vetting of incoming applications					
• Advice to DC colleagues on live LBC/CAC applications					
• Conservation advice on other applications (i.e. planning/ adverts)					
• Processing of live LBC/CAC applications					
• Negotiation with applicants					
• Post-decision – discharge of conditions/S.106 agreements					
• Post-decision – follow up monitoring – prosecution/enforcement					
• Input into CA advisory committees					
• Urban design/architectural design advice					
• Writing briefs for building recording					
• Archaeological advice					
• Parks and Gardens advice					
• Appeals/public inquiries (preparing/giving evidence)					
• Input into Diocesan Advisory Committees					
• Responses to ecclesiastical exemption notifications					
Policy/Strategic					
• Input into statutory development plans					
• Conservation policy/SPG, e.g.barn conversions, shopfronts					
• Conservation Plans					
• Development briefs for historic areas					
• Conservation area appraisals					
• Conservation area designation					
• Conservation area regeneration strategies					
• Input into cultural strategies					
• Input into community strategies					
• Developing best practice/performance standards (e.g. Best Value)					
• Responding to government consultation on emerging legislation					
• Management/business planning					
Care of the resource					
• Annual 'State of the historic environment' report					
• Buildings at risk surveys & updates					
• Follow up on BAR action (advice to owners/enabling)					
• Repairs/urgent works action (including CPO & direct works)					
• Supporting work of building preservation trusts					
• Advice to owners on repairs & maintenance					
• Grant aid					
• Preparing bids for external funding (e.g. HERS, THI)					
• Conservation area enhancement					
• Building recording/analysis/research					
• Maintaining historic environment records (e.g. database, photos)					
• Advice on care of LA owned buildings (asset management)					
• Dealing with spot listing cases					
• Establishing Article 4 directions in historic areas					
Education/Promotion/Outreach					
• Talks to local groups/amenity societies					
• Promotional leaflets/newsletters					
• Award schemes					
• Exhibitions/events					
• Councillor training					
• Officer training (colleagues)					
• Environmental education (talks & information for schools/colleges)					
Personal & Professional Development					
• CPD (attendance at conferences and short courses)					
• Career development (leading to recognised qualification)					
• Management training					
• Professional roles, e.g. IHBC committee					

68. Please indicate the approximate proportion of time conservation staff currently spend on each of the following broad work areas and how this has changed over time. Please also indicate the proportion of time you feel that should be spent on these work areas if different.

Key Work Areas	Approx. % time spent		How has time spent changed over the past three years?		
	Actual	Ideal	Decreased	No change	Increased
Development Control					
Policy/strategic					
Care of Resource					
Education/Promotion					
Personal & Professional Development					
TOTAL	100%	100%			

Best Value/performance monitoring

69. Does the authority collect data against performance indicators for its conservation service? 1.Yes 2.No
70. If 'yes' state frequency of collection
71. Does the authority undertake surveys of customer satisfaction for its conservation service? 1.Yes 2.No
72. If 'yes' state frequency of surveys
73. Has the authority adopted Best Value Performance Standards for its conservation service? 1.Yes 2.No
74. If 'yes' please specify what these are for:
 DC casework 1.Yes 2.No
 Policy 1.Yes 2.No
 Grants 1.Yes 2.No
 Buildings at risk 1.Yes 2.No
 Others (specify)
75. What is the date of the first review?
76. Has Best Value improved the way in which your authority delivers its conservation service? 1.Yes 2.No 3.N/A
77. If the authority has unitary status did it prepare a management plan for conservation services as specified in the DNH 1995 guidance? 1.Yes 2.No

Quality of conservation service and internal/external relationships

Please grade the quality of relationships that conservation specialists in your authority enjoy with various internal and external parties. Try to be as honest and objective by circling the most appropriate description. Your answers will be treated in confidence.

Rating scale: 1. Very Good 2. Good 3. Fair 4. Poor 5. V. poor 6. No significant contact/not applicable

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 78. | Relationships with planning colleagues | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 79. | Relationships with other local authority departments with statutory responsibilities: | | | | | | |
| | Building Control | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Environmental Health | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Fire Officer | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Highways | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Other (specify) | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 80. | Relationships with other local authority services | | | | | | |
| | Archaeologists | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Economic Development | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Housing | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Estates | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Access (disabled) | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Other (specify) | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 81. | Relationships with elected members | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 82. | Relationships with external bodies | | | | | | |
| | English Heritage | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | CABE | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Regional Govt | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Parish/Town Councils | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Heritage Lottery Fund | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Diocesan Advisory Committees | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Public utilities (gas, water, electricity) | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Other (specify) | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 83. | Relationships with voluntary sector | | | | | | |
| | National Amenity Societies | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Local Amenity Societies | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Building preservation trusts | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Local residents groups | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| | Other (please state) | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 84. | Relationships with owners | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 85. | How would you rate the quality of conservation service offered by your authority? | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |

86. How would you rate the status accorded to specialist conservation advice, ie is the advice from conservation specialists given a high priority in determining applications? 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.
87. How would you rate your own authority's commitment to conservation of the historic environment? 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

General comments

If you would like to make any additional comments not covered by the questionnaire please use this space.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE –
THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE PROVIDED WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS
ESTABLISHING A BROADER PICTURE OF CONSERVATION PROVISION BY
LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Appendix C – Sample of telephone questionnaire

LA Name:	
LA Address:	Name of person answering questions: Job Title: Tel No.:
Q3. Type of Authority: 1. Unitary 2. Metropolitan 3. District 4. London B 5. National Park 6. County	
Q35. Does your authority have conservation specialist posts*? Yes/No If yes, how many (FTE)? Has this changed over the last 3 years? Increased No change Decreased	
Q36. Are conservation staff in a specialist team?	
Q38. In which local authority service area does the conservation service sit?	
Q50. If no specialist staff who gives advice? 1. DC staff 2. Policy staff 3. County Council 4. Consultants 5. Other (specify)	
Q51. Who processes LBC/CAC applications? 1. Conservation specialists 2. DC staff with advice from specialists 3. DC staff	
Q23. Does the authority operate its own historic building grant programme (i.e. solely funded by the authority under S.57 1990 Act)?	
Q26. Does the authority currently contribute to jointly funded/partnership historic building grants programmes under S.80 1990 Act? - CAPs - HERS - THIs - Other (Specify)	
Any general comments No. LBs: No. CAs:	

* For the purposes of this survey the definition of ‘conservation specialist’ is somebody whose primary responsibility is to provide expertise with regard to listed buildings, conservation areas and the historic environment as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and PPG15.

Appendix D – List of authorities returning full questionnaires

Allerdale Borough Council
Amber Valley Borough Council
Arun District Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Barking & Dagenham London Borough Council
Barnet London Borough Council
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Bath & NE Somerset Council
Bedford Borough Council
Bexley London Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Blaby District Council
Bolsover District Council
Boston Borough Council
Bradford City Council
Brent London Borough Council
Bridgenorth District Council
Brighton & Hove City Council
Bristol City Council
Bromsgrove District Council
Babergh District Council
Burnley Borough Council
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cambridge City Council
Canterbury City Council
Caradon District Council
Carlisle City Council
Castle Point Borough Council
Chelmsford Borough Council
Cheltenham Borough Council
Cherwell District Council
Chester City Council
Chorley Borough Council
Christchurch Borough Council
City of York Council
Congleton Borough Council
Corby District Council
Corporation of London Council
Cotswold District Council
Council of Isles of Scilly
Coventry City Council
Craven District Council
Dartmoor National Park Authority
Daventry District Council
Devon County Council
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Dover District Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
East Cambs District Council
East Dorset District Council

East Hants District Council
East Herts District Council
East Lindsey District Council
East Northants District Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Eden District Council
Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Enfield London Borough Council
Epping Forest District Council
Erewash Borough Council
Essex County Council
Exeter City Council
Fareham Borough Council
Fenland District Council
Forest of Dean District Council
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Gloucester City Council
Gosport Borough Council
Gravesham Borough Council
Greenwich London Borough Council
Guildford Borough Council
Hackney London Borough Council
Hambleton District Council
Hammersmith & Fulham Metropolitan Borough Council
Hampshire County Council
Harborough District Council
Haringey London Borough Council
Harrogate Borough Council
Harrow London Borough Council
Hartlepool District Council
Havant Borough Council
Herefordshire Council
High Peak Borough Council
Hillingdon London Borough Council
Hinckley & Bosworth
Hounslow London Borough Council
Huntingdon District Council
Hyndburn Borough Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Islington London Borough Council
Kennet District Council
Kerrier District Council
Kettering Borough Council
Kingston up.Hull City Council
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Lake District National Park Authority
Lambeth London Borough Council
Lancashire County Council
Lancaster City Council
Leeds City Council
Leicester City Council
Leics County Council

Lewes District Council
Lichfield City Council
Lincolnshire County Council
Liverpool City Council
Macclesfield Borough Council
Maldon District Council
Malvern Hills District Council
Mansfield District Council
Melton Borough Council
Mendip District Council
Merton London Borough Council
Mid Devon District Council
Mid Suffolk District Council
Milton Keynes Council
Mole Valley District Council
N.Yorks Moors National Park Authority
New Forest District Council
Newark & Sherwood District Council
Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Norfolk County Council
North Cornwall District Council
North Devon District Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
North Norfolk District Council
North Shropshire District Council
North Yorks County Council
Northampton Borough Council
Northampton County Council
Northumberland County Council
Notts County Council
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
NW Leics. District Council
Oswestry Borough Council
Oxford City Council
Peak District National Park Authority
Penwith District Council
Plymouth City Council
Preston Borough Council
Purbeck District Council
Reading Borough Council
Redcar & Cleveland Council
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Richmondshire District Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Rochford District Council
Rother District Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Rugby Borough Council
Rushmoor Borough Council
Rutland County Council
Rydale District Council
Salisbury District Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Sedgefield Borough Council
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Sevenoaks District Council
Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council
Slough Borough Council
Somerset County Council
South Somerset District Council
South Bucks District Council
South Derbyshire District Council
South Hams District Council
South Holland District Council
South Kesteven District Council
South Lakeland District Council
South Norfolk District Council
South Northants District Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
South Staffordshire District Council
Southend-On-Sea Borough Council
Southwark London Borough Council
St Albans City Council
St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Stafford Borough Council
Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Stratford upon Avon District Council
Stroud District Council
Suffolk County Council
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Sunderland City Metropolitan Borough Council
Surrey County Council
Surrey Heath Borough Council
Swindon Borough Council
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Tamworth Borough Council
Tandridge District Council
Taunton Deane Borough Council
Tendring District Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Tewkesbury Borough Council
Thanet District Council
Thurrock Borough Council
Torbay Borough Council
Tower Hamlets London Borough Council
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Tynedale District Council
Vale of the White Horse District Council
Vale Royal Borough Council
Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Wandsworth London Borough Council
Warrington Borough Council
Watford Borough Council
Waveney District Council
Waverley Borough Council

West Dorset District Council
West Lancs District Council
West Lindsey District Council
West Oxfordshire District Council
West Somerset District Council
West Sussex County Council
West Wiltshire District Council
Westminster City Council
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Wiltshire County Council
Winchester City Council
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Woking Borough Council
Wokingham Council
Worcester City Council
Worthing Borough Council
Wychavon District Council
Wycombe District Council

Appendix E – Sample selection of comments

COMMENTS FROM LACP SURVEY

Filling in the survey

“Sorry for the late return. I had asked our finance section to return the form direct to you...Apparently it has been lying around in their office for the last 6 weeks.”

Note attached to short survey forwarded after 16 weeks: “Sorry but ‘onest gov, I’ve never set eyes on the questionnaire before. I guess that the world has a reprieve for 19 years until the asteroid reported on the morning news hits! Thank God I’ll be retired by then!”

Staffing

“Attracting new staff (young and old) is proving more and more difficult.”

“BV Inspectors concluded ‘2 star service, likely to improve.’ Subsequently both staff have moved on and as yet their posts have not been filled...”

“Recruitment and retention of staff, both DC and Conservation Specialists, has reached crisis point in London, yet councils have proved unable to prioritise or resource adequately these services. This is in stark contrast to the level of public support for conservation.”

“Too few staff and too little time to accomplish all the tasks we have to cover, hence becoming demoralised and de-motivated, hence development pressures rule the day.”

Attitudes

“A lot of the information in this questionnaire was very difficult to obtain which is indicative of the lack of communication/organisation within our department. The fact that I have filled this form out in secret is the result of the fact that I work for a narrow minded, cynical and disillusioned department who feel isolated and undervalued and consequently do the bare minimum to get by. The result is a department which under-achieves and does not seize the initiative but merely acts as a reactive force.”

Answer to Q.12. No. of Historic Battlefields: “Nil (apart from Council Offices!) “

“Conservation (Heritage Service) is taken for granted – it just happens. The attitude of ‘we have a historical environment’ goes without recognition that it needs ‘managing’ and professional staff to do it. Councillors/chief officers see heritage as an ‘asset’ for tourism etc. but it is mostly a negative factor (LB/CA and Archaeology) to development and growth, and hence given little weight in decision making process or financial allocation, especially to its own property portfolio.”

“Where there is an economic determinant to redevelopment having high priority – conservation is a nuisance to be overruled. At other times support can be good.”

Resources

“Like many authorities our conservation department is under-resourced and not well managed. It is an uphill struggle and frustrating because we could do so much more. P.S. It had better be confidential!”

“Increasing paperwork resulting from complexity of bid preparation....and the fact that LB applications appear to have doubled over the past year mean that less specialist staff time is being spent on site and more in endless committee meetings on the hundred and one ‘strategies’ and initiatives resulting from partnership consultations!!”

“Under resourced and over worked!”

“This authority has severe financial problems and does not really understand the importance of funding for its most important asset.”

“The areas of work these officers concentrate on ...are often reactive rather than pro-active...”

“Constant fire-fighting rather than positive, pro-active projects.”

“X has been successful in securing external funding, but only at the expense of other mainstream conservation work.”

“Conservation appears under-resourced when compared with some more fashionable activities such as Best Value.”

“Applications up dramatically.”

“Development control over-load”

“Unprecedented number of planning applications”

“The council expects the service to fulfil a much wider role than that of dealing with historic buildings and areas. Urban design, environmental improvements and public art, regeneration and community engagement are all areas of work that are becoming increasingly significant. Unfortunately there isn’t a realistic appreciation on the part of Council of the resources needed to carry this out”

Cuts

“...the loss of the ‘carrot’ of grants from the LPA has significantly diminished the conservation of the historic environment service provided by the Council.”

“The last two years has seen a period of decline of staff and funding. Also a reduction of status of manager from 2nd tier to 3rd”

“Until 2000 this authority had a specialist conservation and design team. Now broken up as a result of reorganisation. All grant budgets and conservation area enhancement budgets cut. Staff have left or retired early due to cuts. No replacements.”

“Over the last eight years the section has suffered cuts in staff from 5 to 2... The profile of the section has also declined with a greater emphasis on ‘regeneration’ of the brownfield sites being given more weight.”

“Much depleted, from a team of 4 down to 1! No pro-activity, reactive work only.”

“Our historic building grant programme has no money and is moribund.”

“Over 5-10 year period the large conservation/design team of 5 with significant grant funding has been reduced to a 1 man team with zero funding. Immense pressure keeping pace... nearing retirement, no replacement in sight.”

“Very overworked – resources cut but workload increases.”

Structuring

“We are currently being ‘restructured’ (again)... May be better, may be worse.”

“Within Strategy and Regeneration we have a number of people with conservation expertise and interest.... This also helps staff to develop and progress their careers without risking being side-lined into a specialist post labelled conservation officer”

“The 3 ½ FTE Conservation Officers are also Regeneration Officers in a plural sense. We always have a Conservation hat on and a Regeneration hat on. We find this much more efficient of staff time...”

“The provision of conservation advice is still considered to be a bolt-on specialised service to the normal planning service and there is an unfortunate tendency to split the conservation resource between teams thereby reducing its possible effect.”

Performance Indicators

“Best Value - Conservation is seen as a bolt-on to the planning section therefore no real targets or assessment criteria have been formulated apart from the number of CA Appraisals carried out per year”

“Best Value has been done. We do everything that the government expects, but do not do conservation!”

“The ‘eight week scenario’ – approve at any cost, sod the quality/feel the quantity and achieve national/local performance indicators - wins the day!

Conservation Officers

“All too often a conservation adviser is seen as a semi-detached official working to his/her own agenda.”

Partnership schemes

“Comments such as ‘There are too many conservation areas’ or ‘Its only a grade II Listed Building – only the outside matters’ are still too frequent and there is a long way to go before conservation and its benefits are generally accepted. The partnership working encouraged in HERS schemes has proved successful in achieving conservation objectives with wide ranging support.

Room for improvement?

From an authority with 250 Listed Buildings and 14 Conservation Areas but no conservation staff and no specialist advice: “Very few applications – Development Control handles everything!”

And some praise!

“Dear Philip...As questionnaires go, not a bad attempt.”

Appendix F – IHBC Areas of Competence

INSTITUTE OF HISTORIC BUILDING CONSERVATION

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

(Outline of Skills, Knowledge and Experience required to fulfil requirements of Institute Membership.)

1. Philosophy

Appreciation of the social, cultural, political, aesthetic, economic and environmental values that underpin current conservation policy and practice.

To be fully conversant with currently prevailing national and international principles and philosophies of conservation including guidelines adopted by ICOMOS, B.S.I. and other recognised bodies.

2. Legislation/Policy

Thorough knowledge of the legislative and policy framework for the conservation of the historic environment, its formulation locally and nationally, and awareness of other relevant legislation and policies.

To be able to provide advice and guidance on all current legislation and central government advice affecting the protection of the historic environment to employers, clients, public, other professionals and statutory and non statutory organisations.

To be able to advise and negotiate in connection with applications for listed building, scheduled monument and conservation area consent and planning permission and other statutory consents.

To have a working knowledge of other legislation insofar as it affects the historic environment including the Building Regulations, Town Planning and Highways legislation.

To be able to act as the employer's/client's expert witness as appropriate at appeals, public inquiries or court hearings.

To be able to appreciate the status and application of differing types of policy documents.

To be able to draw up, implement and monitor conservation policies and strategies in the context of either local or national frameworks and to be able to advise on the conservation implications of other policies.

4. Technology

Sound knowledge of building construction of all periods, the characteristics of structures, the nature and properties of building materials and appropriate methods of repair and alteration of historic fabric.

To be able to advise on appropriate methods for the repair and maintenance of historic buildings including advising on specialist repair techniques and the availability of materials and skills both locally and nationally.

To be able to advise on the physical and chemical characteristics of building materials and causes of decay.

To be able to assess and monitor the condition of buildings, diagnose defects and to specify and prioritise proposals for their repair; maintenance and enhancement.

To be able to undertake both rapid and more detailed assessments of building condition, including Buildings at Risk Surveys.

To be able to audit and monitor the general condition of fabric within whole areas with a view to formulating strategies for action.

To be able to advise on new and developing techniques in conservation and their practical implications.

5. History

Sound knowledge of the development of the historic environment including the remains of previous periods and cultures, historic buildings and settlements, works of engineering, parks, gardens and other elements of the historic landscape.

To be able to assess the significance of sites, structures, buildings and areas and carry out both visual and archival research and make recommendations based on such assessment.

To be able to advise on the special importance and the suitability for designation, listing, scheduling or other means of protection of the above features.

To be able to assess the significance and impact of development proposals on the above features.

6. Finance/Economics

Understanding of the process for the procuring of buildings and facilitating development including finance, valuation, cost planning contracts, with specific reference to historic buildings and areas.

To understand the process by which decisions are made on investments in conservation projects and the factors affecting such decisions. Specifically, familiarity with the workings of the property market and methods of valuation.

To be familiar with contractual aspects of conservation work including differing forms of contract, costing of conservation works and VAT.

To be familiar with the principles of regeneration, the bodies responsible for it and of sources of funding which can be used for the repair of historic buildings and the ability to seek and use resources effectively.

To be able to promote or generate investment in the historic environment from both public and private sources and to maximise grant opportunities.

To be able to advise on conservation grant availability and be fully conversant with the administration of grant schemes for the repair and enhancement of historic buildings and areas.

To be familiar with, and able to advise on, the range of available funding schemes not specifically aimed at conservation including:

National Lottery
European Funding
Central Government Regeneration Budgets
and other partnership schemes.

7. Research/Recording/Analysis

Ability to carry out or commission research, analysis and recording of the historic environment, and to maintain records accordingly.

To be able to advise on appropriate techniques and levels of recording required for historic buildings or sites affected by development proposals, and identify the most appropriate bodies or individuals to undertake such work.

To be able to undertake rapid and emergency recording of buildings and groups of buildings affected by development proposals including archival research.

To be able to plan, prepare and execute a programme of detailed recording of structures and sites affected by development proposals, including photographic and graphic representation using conventional drawing techniques and/or CAD.

8. Design/Presentation

Ability to analyse and evaluate quality of design, existing and proposed, of buildings and areas, and present the results of such analysis in a way understandable to both professional and lay audiences.

To have a detailed appreciation of the principles of townscape and urban design and to be able to undertake analysis accordingly.

To be able to communicate design concepts in three dimensions by means of sketching, conventional drawing techniques and/or CAD.

To be able to promote high standards of design of individual buildings or areas by:

- * drawing up and implementing schemes
- * preparing design guidance/briefs

To be able to prepare schemes of enhancement including streetworks and landscaping schemes.

9. Practice

Awareness of the wider context of conservation, including knowledge of and ability to interact effectively with all bodies and individuals who have a significant role to play in the field.

To be familiar with the roles, responsibilities and potential of all bodies and individuals within public, private and voluntary sectors who have a significant Heritage Management role.

To be able to establish and maintain good contact with and seek specialist advice from other organisations and individuals both within and outside the conservation field and inform others of the availability of such advice.

To be able to interact and negotiate effectively with all groups and individuals with an interest in the historic environment including community and amenity groups, elected representatives, clients, applicants and officials.

P R Grover
June 1997