

A fourth report on Local Authority Staff Resources

Produced by English Heritage, the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation
August 2012

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the beginning of 2012 there were 909¹ full-time equivalent (FTE) historic environment specialists providing advice to local authorities in England. This comprises:
 - 568 FTEs working on building and area conservation and
 - 342 FTEs providing archaeological advice.
- 1.2 These figures represent a continuation of a downward trend that began in 2006 which has seen numbers fall by over 25% in overall historic environment advice. This breaks down into:
 - a drop of 16% in archaeological advice (including Historic Environment Records Officers), and
 - a drop of 31% in conservation advice.
- 1.3 In the past 12 months:
 - the number of archaeological specialists advising local authorities in England has fallen by 3% and
 - the number of conservation specialists has fallen by 6%.
- 1.4 As the number of specialist advisers continues to decline, numbers of planning application decisions have remained relatively steady over the last two years (see *figure 3*). The past year has seen a small drop of 1% in planning application decisions.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This report compares the levels of historic environment staff resources in local authorities in the early months of 2012 with those available since 2003.

¹ Numbers may not sum consistently due to rounding

- 2.2 This report has been produced by English Heritage in partnership with the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), which is the forum representing archaeologists working for local authorities and national parks and advising on all aspects of the historic environment, and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), which is the professional body for building conservation practitioners and historic environment experts, many of whom work in local government.
- 2.3 The data collected for this report is not limited just to those FTEs directly employed by a local authority, and so reflects the advice provided via the variety of different models of service. These alternative models include buying in advice from other organisations, such as neighbouring authorities.
- 2.4 This report updates the position recorded in its predecessor report (published in August 2011) on the changes in levels of expert staffing resources in local authorities and includes data available on the numbers of planning application decisions and Listed Building Consent decisions for 2011/12. The source of that data is the Department for Communities and Local Government (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningbuilding/planningstatistics/statisticsplanning/>) and it covers the 2011/12 financial year.

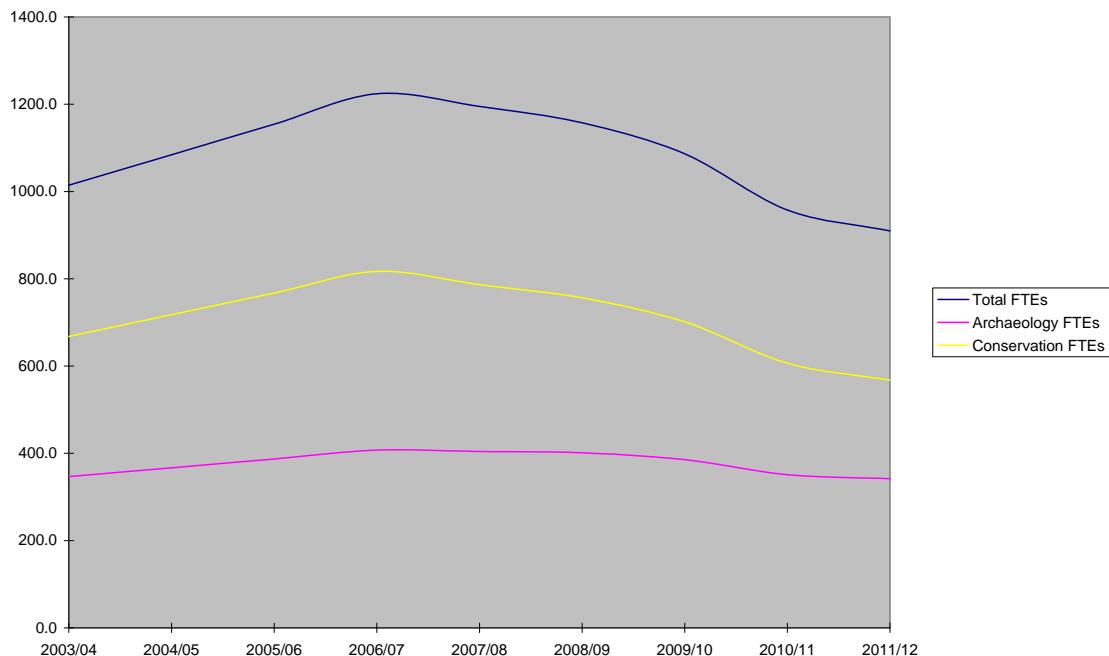
3 Local authority specialist provision

- 3.1 In early 2012 there were 909 FTE historic environment specialists providing expert advice to local authorities in England. This was made up of 342 providing archaeological advice and 568 providing advice on building and area conservation.
- 3.2 These figures are for permanent, temporary, and consultancy full-time equivalents. The posts are those for which a related historic environment professional or academic qualification is required and for other staff, not qualified, who are engaged on equivalent work. Administrative staff are not included. Time spent directly managing staff is counted, as it has a direct consequence for the management of the historic environment. The management time of the head of a historic environment team is therefore included, whereas that of the head of a group which includes the historic environment team is not.
- 3.3 The data was collected by ALGAO and IHBC. ALGAO has been collecting figures on local government archaeological staff resources on an annual basis since 1998; IHBC has also produced figures in 2006, 2008 and 2011, with broadly equivalent figures available from the Local Authority Conservation Provision Survey of 2003. Although there is more data for the archaeological resource, this report looks at

the years for which both archaeological and building conservation data is available. These are 2003, 2006, 2008, 2009/10, 2011 and 2012.

- 3.4 The data shows there was an overall loss of nearly 48 FTEs between the survey this year and last year's survey. This is made up of a loss of nearly 39 FTEs providing conservation advice and a loss of over 9 FTEs providing archaeological advice (see *figure 1*).

Figure 1 Conservation, archaeological and total expert advice expressed as FTEs



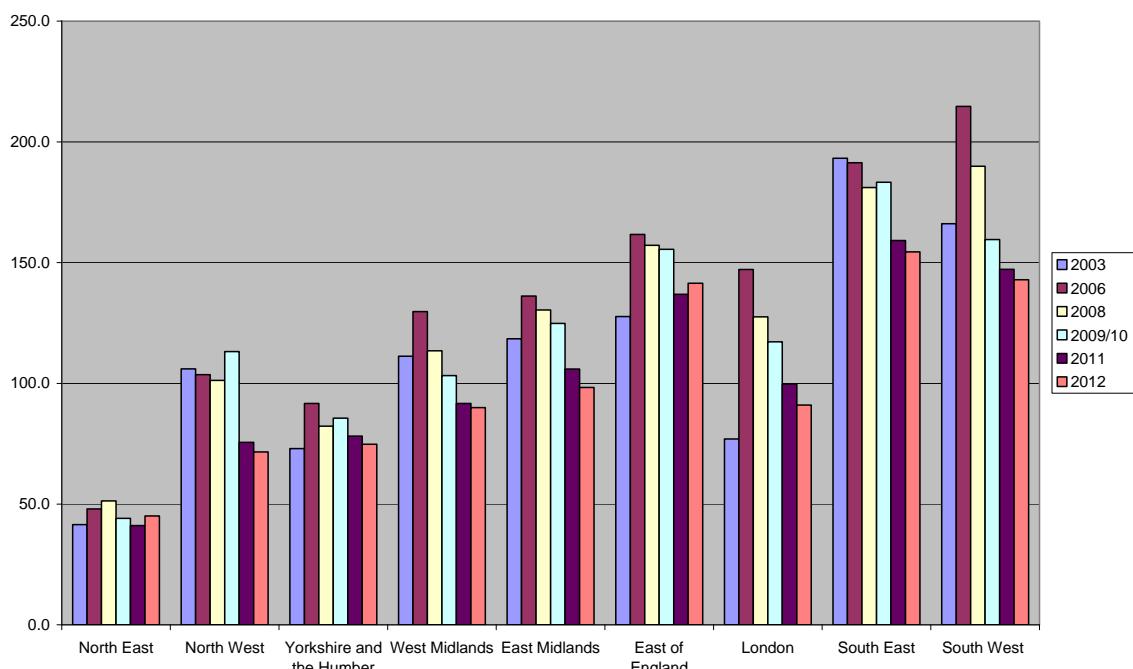
NB For the benefit of a clearer graphical representation, in Figure 1 the totals 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2007/08 have been extrapolated as data was not available for those years.

- 3.5 These figures translate into an overall reduction of over 25% since they peaked in 2006. That breaks down into a drop of 16% in archaeological advice, and a drop of 31% in conservation advice. *Figure 1* highlights that while there are variations in the numbers, the trends are consistent for both archaeological and conservation advice.

4 Regional breakdown

- 4.1 The regional breakdown of the data highlights a major feature of the impact of the recent local authority budgetary cuts – that their impact and how authorities have responded to them has varied from place to place.

Figure 2 FTE data broken down by English Heritage local office area (referred to as ‘regions’ in previous reports)

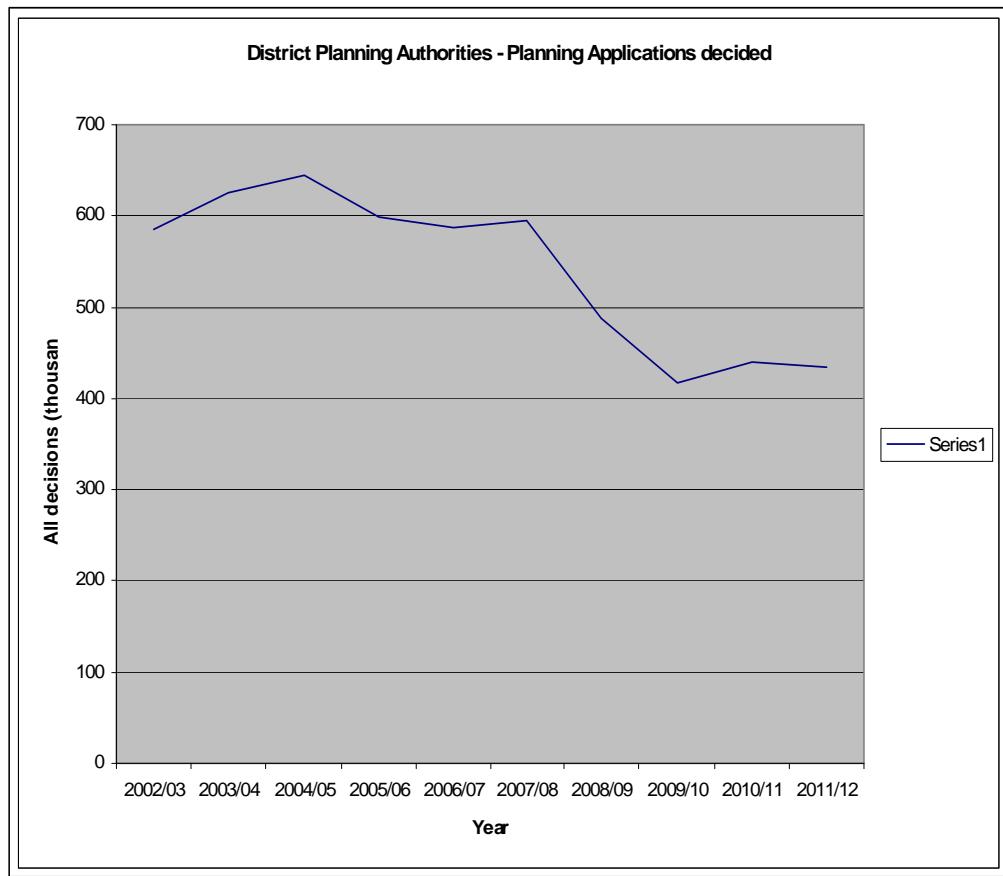


- 4.2 The breakdown shows that in some areas the national trend of a continuing decrease in FTEs is not followed, as numbers in the North East and the East of England have increased slightly over the last reporting period. By comparison the numbers in London and the East Midlands fell by 9% and 7% respectively.

5 Planning data 2011/12

- 5.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) planning data shows that the increase in planning application decisions seen in 2010-11 has not continued (see figure 3). Instead the most recent figures show a small decrease. In 2010/11 the increase was driven by increases in decisions in London, the South East and the East; in 2011/12 only London saw a slight increase with all other regions seeing decreases.

Figure 3 Number of planning applications decided over time



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