

21st-century challenges for archaeology

A project undertaken by Historic England and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

During 2017 the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, in partnership with and funded by Historic England, will be convening discussions and workshops on important issues within the archaeology sector in England.

Six topics are currently proposed:

- New models for archive creation, deposition, storage, access and research
- Professional standards and guidance - who sets them and what are they for?
- Designation and management of the archaeological resource in the context of a changing planning system
- New models for local curatorial services: potential future roles for local authority archaeology services and Historic England
- Synthesis of information from developer-funded investigation to create new historical narratives
- Challenges for archaeological publication in a digital age

In 2015 the sector celebrated the 25th anniversary of the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance 16 *Archaeology and Planning* (1990). PPG16 initiated far-reaching changes, not only in the way that the archaeological resource is protected and managed, but also in the structure of the sector itself. Planning Policy Statement 5: *Planning for the Historic Environment* (2010) subsequently drew together for the first time government policy across the whole of the historic environment, giving a new emphasis to public benefit and prompting the Southport initiative. The Southport Group's report, *Realising The Benefits Of Planning-Led Investigation In The Historic Environment: A Framework For Delivery* (2011), represented a first review of professional practice post-PPG16 and looked forward to a new policy context, one that was soon superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework which provides the current overarching policy context for much archaeological work.

At a time when the legislative and policy framework is again changing rapidly, and the gains as well as the dis-benefits of post-PPG16 arrangements have become apparent, it is time to look forward to the key challenges of the next 25 years. Continuing reductions in public sector funding affecting both Historic England and local government, and the challenges arising from the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, provide the current backdrop to our discussions. Meanwhile, the private sector faces great opportunities as well as challenges in capacity, skills, and training against the anticipated high demand for skilled professional archaeologists generated by planned large infrastructure projects and other development.

A brief review of progress on the initiatives proposed by Southport and of the changed context since that optimistic time has been commissioned and is now available as *What about Southport? A report to ClfA on progress against the vision and recommendations of the Southport Report (2011), Taryn Nixon 2017.*

Discussions around around the six topics listed above are being facilitated in on-line discussions and in workshop settings. The outputs from the online discussions and the workshops will be made available for comments, before being drawn together into a report early in 2018. It is hoped that the recommendations can be further discussed and tested at the ClfA conference in April 2018.

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