



Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers: Scotland

Strategy 2025-2028

The frontline of heritage protection: empowering local authorities to safeguard Scotland's heritage

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Visit www.algao.org.uk/Scotland

1 Introduction

- 1.0.1 The historic environment is fundamental to understanding who we are, where we have come from, and defining the landscape in which we live. The remains found in Scotland connect us all to the past. This connection shapes our sense of identity and belonging, enhancing our wellbeing. Our historic environment is dynamic and constantly changing through natural processes, development, land management, and climate change. The resource however is finite, and only approximately 16% of the known assets are protected through legal designations. As such, it falls to the members of ALGAO: Scotland to oversee the protection and management of the vast majority of the historic environment.
- 1.0.2 The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) was originally formed in 1996 to represent all archaeologists working for local authorities and national parks in England and Wales (with representatives from N Ireland) following earlier groupings of Associations of County Archaeological Officers and District Archaeological Officers from the 1970s onwards. Local government archaeologists in Scotland were represented by a separate organisation, the Association of Regional and Island Archaeologists (ARIA). In June 2006 ALGAO formally merged with ARIA to become a fully UK-wide organisation - ALGAO:UK. National organisations continue with ALGAO:Cymru, ALGAO:Scotland and ALGAO:England who manage matters for their respective nations.
- 1.0.3 Membership is granted to all local authorities who have the appropriate professional archaeological services. The local authority is represented by a professional archaeologist whose primary responsibility is to advise that authority, principally through the planning process, on conservation and management of the archaeological resource, and who has been nominated by that authority to represent it for voting purposes. It should be stressed that it is the local authority itself who is the member of ALGAO, not individual staff members.

1.1 Vision Statement

- 1.1.1 It is the vision of ALGAO: Scotland that the benefits gained from Scotland's unique historic environment should be available to those who live, work in and visit the country, and that the value of these resources, and the need to protect and enhance them for future generations through sustainable management, is understood. This vision for ALGAO: Scotland can be summarised as:

'Our vision is to aim to provide the best sustainable management of the historic environment of Scotland for the benefit of all, both now and in the future.'

1.2 About this Strategy

- 1.2.1 The key remit and responsibility of ALGAO: Scotland members is to undertake the job of understanding, evaluating, safeguarding, and promoting the historic environment within their respective Local Authority regions. This involves partnership working across a diverse range of bodies including national agencies, academic institutions, public and private sector bodies, landowners, community groups and individuals. The core of ALGAO: Scotland's work is based around the sustainable management of the historic environment within the planning process.
- 1.2.2 This Strategy shows where the work of ALGAO: Scotland contributes to Scottish Government National Outcomes, and their related national Strategies and Action Plans for the historic environment. The Strategy is primarily an ALGAO: Scotland working document to help manage and deliver key priorities and outcomes for its members. The Strategy also provides opportunities to improve efficiency, participation and collaboration with key stakeholders and partners and embed best practice in the delivery of the work which the members undertake.

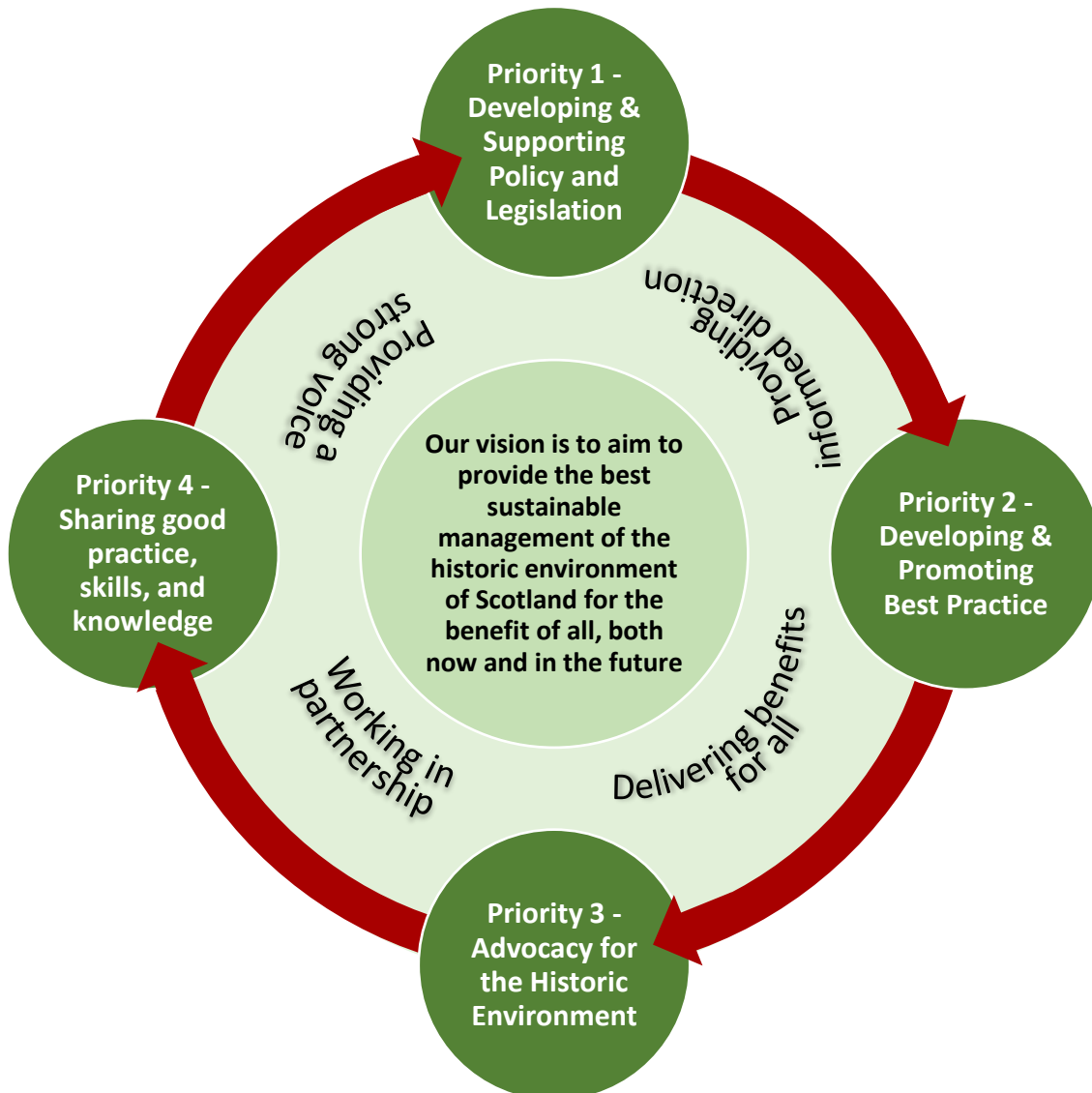
1.2.3 The document provides a structured approach to the work of ALGAO: Scotland over the next three years. Through the period of the Strategy there will be a requirement to consider the challenges of our changing environment and the changing needs of our stakeholders and individual member organisations. These challenges will include not only the effects of climate change, but also the financial pressures within the public sector, the increase in the use of Artificial Intelligence, and the increasing threat of cyber-attacks.

2 Guiding Principles

2.1 In working towards the vision of this strategy, ALGAO: Scotland will be guided by the following overarching principles:

- I. We must provide a strong voice for Local Authority archaeology services, to promote and strengthen their key role in the protecting the historic environment.
- II. We must ensure that the benefits of archaeology are available and accessible to all.
- III. We must protect and manage the historic environment, while considering the effects of climate change.
- IV. We must work collaboratively across the sector, and beyond.

2.2 Visualising ALGAO: Scotland’s strategic priorities:



3 Strategic Drivers

<p>Scottish Government Purpose</p>	<p>To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all, increase wellbeing of people, create sustainable and inclusive growth, reduce inequalities, and give equal importance to economic, environmental, and social progress</p>							
<p>Scotland’s key National Outcomes tied to the historic environment</p>	<p>Communities We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe</p>	<p>Environment We value, enjoy, protect, and enhance our environment</p>	<p>Culture We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely</p>	<p>Health We are healthy and active</p>	<p>Economy We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive, and sustainable economy</p>	<p>Education We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society</p>	<p>International We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally</p>	
<p>Scottish Government key National Plans, Policies & Strategies for the historic environment</p>	<p>Our Past, Our Future – The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland Scotland’s Archaeology Strategy</p>							
<p>ALGAO: Scotland</p>	<p>Historic Building Recording Guidelines Delivery of Public Benefit and Social Value for Archaeology in the Planning Process Guidance for Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment</p>	<p><i>Supported by individual Local Authority ALGAO Member Projects, and ALGAO: Scotland’s roles within the Treasure Trove Process, and the Police Scotland Protocol for the Chance Discovery of Human Remains</i></p>					<p>National Planning Framework 4 Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 Heat in Buildings Strategy Historic Environment Policy Scotland Planning Advice Note 2/2011</p>	<p>Culture Strategy for Scotland Volunteering Action Plan Making Things Last: a circular economy strategy for Scotland Future Skills: Action Plan Fair Work Strategy HES Skills Investment Plan Scotland Outlook 2030</p>

4.1 Priority 1 – Developing & Supporting Policy and Legislation

<p>Priority 1 – Developing & Supporting Policy and Legislation</p>	<p>ALGAO:Scotland will work in partnership across the sector to ensure that policy and legislation is appropriate for the sustainable management of the historic environment. This will help deliver the transition to net zero.</p>
<p>Intended Outcomes</p>	<p>Outcome 1 Appropriately curated and maintained Historic Environment Records are given statutory status within Local Authorities</p>
	<p>Outcome 2 Management of the historic environment, including the role and remit of ALGAO:Scotland member local authority services, is embedded in national legislation, policies, plans, and local policies and plans</p>
	<p>Outcome 3 The historic environment is considered in decision making processes, resulting in improved understanding, conservation, protection and management of the historic environment</p>
	<p>Outcome 4 The carbon footprint of ALGAO:Scotland members is reduced</p>
<p>Actions to be undertaken to deliver this priority</p>	<p>Action 1 Develop a Business case for statutory status for HERs</p>
	<p>Action 2 Develop a route plan to achieve statutory status for HERs, including gathering cross-sector support and developing a costed plan for implementation</p>
	<p>Action 3 Ensure, where appropriate, representation is made during the drafting and writing of local, regional, and national policies and legislation</p>
	<p>Action 4 Ensure decision makers are given appropriate advice regarding the historic environment, and the role local authorities have in the management and promotion of it</p>
	<p>Action 5 Undertake regular strategic liaison meetings with key partners, e.g. Historic Environment Scotland, Treasure Trove Unit</p>
	<p>Action 6 Seek opportunities to engage and collaborate with biodiversity/natural environment colleagues and organisations to realise joint benefits of managing the historic and natural environments</p>
	<p>Action 7 Review the carbon footprint of ALGAO:Scotland members and develop recommendations to reduce that footprint where possible</p>

Priority 2 – Developing & Promoting Best Practice

Priority 2 – Developing & Promoting Best Practice	ALGAO:Scotland will work in partnership across the sector and with those external to the sector, as appropriate, to ensure that the best outcomes and benefits for the historic environment are achieved. This will help empower resilient and inclusive communities and places.	
Intended Outcomes	Outcome 1	Provide clear guidance documentation where a need to do so has been identified
	Outcome 2	Best practice is disseminated and promoted on a regular basis
	Outcome 3	An improved, robust process is in place from when assemblages are found to when they are archived
Actions to be undertaken to deliver this priority	Action 1	Identify gaps where archaeological best practice is not being undertaken, or there is a lack of guidance over what best practice should entail
	Action 2	Review the ALGAO:Scotland Building Recording Standard and update to bring it in line with the latest ALGAO guidance documentation
	Action 3	Finalise and implement the Before the Museum Project for Archaeological Assemblage Standards and for the Museum Processing Fee
	Action 4	Develop, support and implement Archaeological Regional Research Frameworks for the whole of Scotland
	Action 5	Members will promote and monitor standards, and work with partners to ensure these are delivered

Priority 3 – Advocacy for the Historic Environment

Priority 3 – Advocacy for the Historic Environment	ALGAO:Scotland will promote the understanding that the historic environment is an integral part of the wider environment, and that managing it proactively brings numerous positive benefits that align with national and local plans / policies. This will help build a wellbeing economy, contribute to tourism, and help address the impacts of climate change.	
Intended Outcomes	Outcome 1	Member local authorities provide properly funded historic environment services
	Outcome 2	Wider availability of archaeological data at a regional level
	Outcome 3	Improved partnership working to realise the benefits the historic environment offers

Actions to be undertaken to deliver this priority	Action 1	Lobby local authorities and provide support to affected member services where resource reductions are proposed
	Action 2	Undertake an audit of HER accessibility, services and standards
	Action 3	Support member authorities with no online presence to develop projects to make their HERs accessible and available online
	Action 4	Gather, assess and interpret data and intelligence to enable analysis and trends to be identified
	Action 5	Support the work of Scotland's Strategic Archaeology Committee
	Action 6	Develop and support partnership working with Archaeology Scotland at both a strategic and a local level
	Action 7	Support the delivery of projects that develop sustainable Heritage Tourism across Scotland

Priority 4 – Sharing Good Practice, Skills, and Knowledge

Priority 4 – Sharing Skills, and Knowledge	ALGAO:Scotland will actively engage with members to ensure they are supported and have mechanisms in place to exchange knowledge and skills. This will help ensure our organisation has the right skills and is more resilient, along with the communities it serves.	
Intended Outcomes	Outcome 1	Member local authorities continue to share best practice, skills and knowledge with each other.
	Outcome 2	Consistency in responses and proportionate mitigation requirements for archaeology in the development management process across Scotland
	Outcome 3	Better understanding of, and engagement with, the historic environment by communities
Actions to be undertaken to deliver this priority	Action 1	Maintain ALGAO:Scotland email network
	Action 2	Conduct regular ALGAO:Scotland member meetings
	Action 3	Identify and promote CPD opportunities for members as they occur
	Action 4	Review Standard Planning Condition wording for those Conditions relating to archaeology
	Action 5	Support local communities in the development, practice and enjoyment of community archaeology and associated projects
	Action 5	Promote the work of members e.g. through social media, articles, presentations
Action 6	Review and update Scottish section of ALGAO:UK website	

5 Measuring Success

In the table below is a summary of the evidence that will be used by ALGAO: Scotland to inform whether we have been successful in achieving the intended outcomes of this strategy.

Priority	Outcomes	Sources of Evidence
Developing & Supporting Policy and Legislation	Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Case for Statutory HERs • Route Plan for achieving Statutory HERs
	Outcome 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular liaison meetings with key stakeholder organisations • Consultations participated in
	Outcome 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations participated in • Partnership working established with key biodiversity stakeholders
	Outcome 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended Plan for reducing Carbon Footprint
Developing & Promoting Best Practice	Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of gaps in current archaeological guidance for best practice • Peatland Standard for Scotland includes section on historic environment
	Outcome 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated ALGAO:Scotland guidance on Building Recording issued • Archaeological Regional Research Frameworks are in place for the whole of ALGAO Scotland
	Outcome 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented Before the Museum Project outcomes, including Assemblage Standards and Museum Processing Fee
Advocacy for the Historic Environment	Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of archaeological service provision in local authorities
	Outcome 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of HER accessibility, services, and standards • ALGAO:Scotland Annual Surveys • Updated Landward Ltd Report on Archaeology in Planning
	Outcome 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership and Aim Lead of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy • Strategic partnership established with Archaeology Scotland • Development of a pilot 'Archaeo-Tourism' Framework
Sharing Skills, and Knowledge	Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALGAO:Scotland Email Network • Two annual ALGAO:Scotland meetings • Two annual HER Forum (Scotland) meetings • Updated Scottish section of ALGAO:UK website
	Outcome 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review report on 'Recommended Wording for Standard Archaeological Planning Conditions'
	Outcome 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition to OASIS and DES of public engagement stats • Delivered partnership projects focusing on community engagement • Celebrate 20 years of ALGAO Scotland via public benefit deliverables, i.e. popular publication

6 ALGAO:Scotland Members' Key Statistics

28 Local Authorities

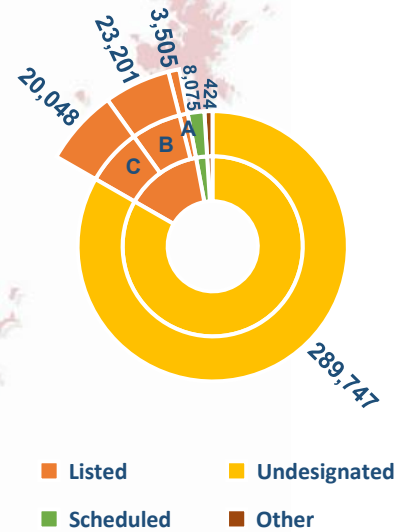
c.20 Full Time Equivalent Archaeologists



Maintaining 345,000 Historic Environment Records



Managing 97% of Scotland's known heritage



Each year, **c.24,000** Planning Applications monitored

Each year, **c.4,200** Planning Applications assessed in detail

Of these **c.1,800** each year require archaeological mitigation

Generating each year:
c.480 Building Surveys
c.1,000 Excavations and Watching-Briefs
c.210 Other Surveys

Each year, **c.700** Forestry Applications assessed

Each year, **c.450** Utility Applications assessed

For every **£1** spent on local authority Archaeology Services, **£15** is generated for the local economy