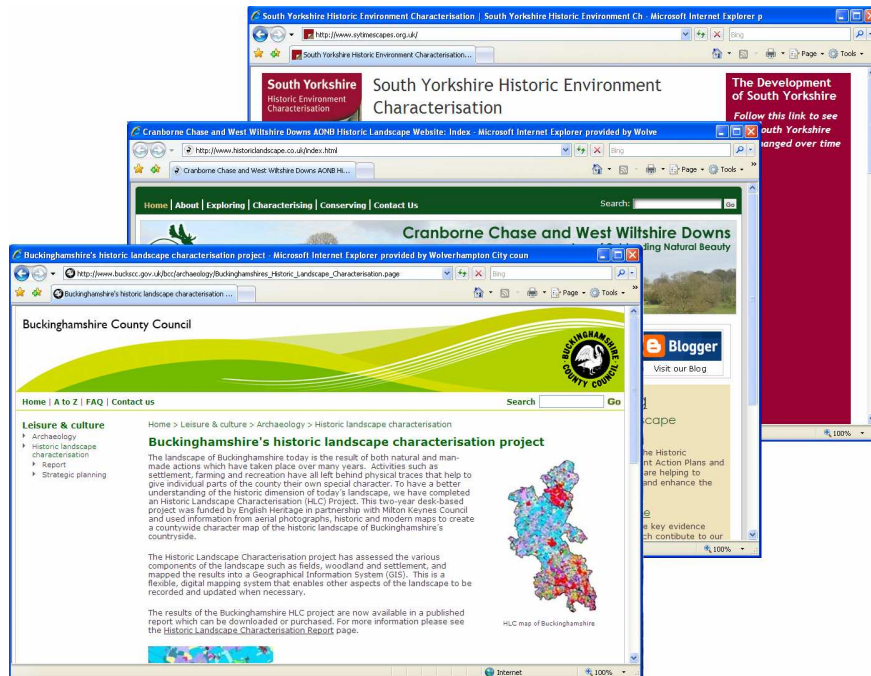


HLC on the Web

A review for English Heritage of current provision for online access to the results of Historic Landscape Characterisation

July 2011



English Heritage Project 6088

Report by Paul Quigley

FOREWORD

This review of public web-based access to the results of HLC comes at a timely moment. The national 'county-level' HLC programme is approaching a first national coverage for England. The majority of Historic Environment Records in England now host a Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), or have access to one, or are in the midst of constructing their own. Reaching wide public and community audiences has always been a long-term ambition for HLC even though the use of HLCs in the planning and land management work of local authorities has generally taken more priority. There are already many examples of HLC results or products being available on the web, and this new review identifies some of the best but it also reveals the many further opportunities presented by the ever-growing functionality and ubiquity of web and online resources remain to be further exploited.

The project that produced this report was carried out for English Heritage by Wolverhampton City Council, one of the frontrunners in making its HLC accessible to wider publics online. We are very grateful to both Paul Quigley, the project officer, and Mike Shaw, the Black Country Archaeologist, for carrying out the reviews rapidly and efficiently. The review has also been greatly facilitated by the readiness of local authority staff to fill in (yet another) questionnaire and in many cases to provide further detailed information. We are very grateful for this help. A notable result of the survey is to demonstrate the great enthusiasm that exists within local government historic environment teams and in AONBs and National Parks for finding ways to make HLC available online to much larger audiences online.

The report identifies some of the obstacles that have so far restricted web access to HLCs, but it concludes with a number of recommended actions to strengthen networking, signposting and accessibility between individual HLCs and to encourage HERs to improve or establish online availability of their HLCs. It identifies a perceived need to create stronger interconnections and networking between HLCs that are on line as well as encouraging the creation of local HLC web pages. It does not recommend imposing a central standardisation that might fit badly with the locally-sensitive decentralised model that has evolved since the 1990s. Some of the recommendations are for action by English Heritage, some for consideration by ALGAO and some merely suggest simple action that individual HERs can take; none are complicated or costly. Individual HERs may simply gain ideas from other people's experience as set out in the report, which offers many pointers to ways to easily and quickly improve on existing web pages, particularly as local authorities develop ever more powerful web capabilities.

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July 2011

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I would like to thank English Heritage for supporting this investigation and the local government archaeologists and other professionals who gave their valuable time to contribute to the survey.

Executive summary

This report is the result of an investigation to establish the online availability of material relating to Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) and to discuss strategic options for the future development of online resources.

It shows that of the 49 HLC projects either completed or underway, 34 (69%) had an online presence in some form. Those that did not tended to be projects started either in the 1990s or after January 2010.

The investigation shows that organisations hosting HLC projects already have plans and aspirations to improve and expand online HLC material. There are also several innovative examples of HLC web pages to learn from. However there are improvements which could be made.

Our investigation recommends eight actions, covering three related issues: the need for continuing **evaluation** of the existing online resources; the need to improve the **interconnectivity** of online HLC material; and the need to inform the **future development** of both new and existing web resources.

In brief, we recommend that:

1. The collection of data on frequency of use and quality of online presentation should be actively encouraged;
2. Better information is needed on existing/potential users of HLC and their needs;
3. More links to local HLC web pages should be included on national websites;
4. In respect of (2), more use should be made of roll-over maps;
5. HLC web pages should link to neighbouring or related projects;
6. All websites of local authorities covered by an HLC should link to its web page;
7. The best examples of HLC content online should be promoted;
8. Good examples of websites with data of a similar type to HLC should be promoted among organisations hosting an HLC;
9. HLC material should be incorporated into local authority online interactive mapping facilities.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of 2010 English Heritage commissioned Wolverhampton City Council to carry out a review of current levels and types of internet access to the results of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC). We were also asked to look at how web-availability might be widened and enhanced. This is a first step towards being able to encourage wider use of HLC by public as well professional groups.

The background to the Review carried out in 2011 is described in Annex 1, extracted from the Project Brief. It was deliberately focussed on the existing availability on-line of outputs from the English Heritage-supported programme of HLC, which had not previously been catalogued.

The Review was conducted in two stages: a first stage to 'establish the current availability online of HLCs and future plans' by carrying out a rapid survey of the HERs that hold HLC projects that are

either completed or in progress; a second stage to consider the strategic options for future English Heritage and HER activity in respect of the presentation of HLC online.

This report has two parts:

Part 1 presents the results of a brief **web search** for online results of HLC projects and a **questionnaire survey** of those Historic Environment Records (HERs) that hold HLC results. It takes stock of the existing HLC resources which are available online and identifies some of the influences on future online availability.

Part 2 discusses the advantages and disadvantages of a range of approaches to using the internet, drawing on experience of existing HLC projects, HERs and a selection of other comparable spatial databases.

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PART ONE

1. Methodology

The methodology used in this part of the Review included a **web search** followed by a **questionnaire survey**.

Both the web search and survey were based on lists of contacts provided by English Heritage. These were contained within an Annex to the Project Brief¹ and subsequently-provided lists². The total number of HLC projects included in these lists was 59³ and the number of contacts points within organisations was 67.

The numeric relationships between HLC projects and the organisations (almost always Historic Environments Records – referred to as HERs) which host their results were not always straightforward. In general each HLC was matched with a single host organisation but eight HLCs were held by more than one organisation, notably Avon HLC and North Yorkshire HLC held by four and five respectively. In some cases this has been the result of local government reorganisation and the associated fragmentation of HERs since the HLC was completed.

There were also cases where a single organisation was host to data from more than one HLC.

For the purposes of the survey, these complications were compounded by the fact that there might be more than one officer responsible for the maintenance of an HLC and its presentation by a particular organisation.

In order to clarify these relationships a **database** was created to represent them and to manage the results of the review.

An initial introduction to the Review was emailed to each of the contacts and they were invited to confirm that they were still

the appropriate person to complete a questionnaire. This resulted in some clarification of relationships between HLCs and organisations (as well as of any changed email addresses). The information held in the database took this into account and at the time of the questionnaire survey in January 2011 it contained details of 55 HLC projects⁴ and 65 host organisations.

The HLC projects were at different stages of completion, and the database recorded their status shown in Table 1.

Table 1:
HLC projects by status

Status	Number of HLC projects
Completed	40
In progress	9
Not started	6
Total	55

a) The web search

Two approaches were taken to searching for any existing web content arising from HLC projects. In the first instance use was made of the search facility within the website of each of the host organisations. In general, the keyword used was 'characterisation'. So, for example, entering this keyword into the search facility of the website of Cambridgeshire County Council produced a list of results, the first of which was the URL included in the database and in Annex 3.

¹ 'List of HLC projects at October 2010' comprising listed 41 HLC projects and 50 associated Historic Environment Records.

² These were provided on 21st December 2010 and 20th January 2011.

³ This included two HLC projects for the Chilterns and Colne Valley, both of which are hosted by Buckinghamshire County Council (in addition to the HLC for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes).

⁴ These 55 projects comprised the 59 listed by English Heritage with the exception of Cambridge (city), Norwich and Oxfordshire, which have yet not been covered by an HLC project and for which no contacts were provided. It also excludes Greater London which has been the subject of a rapid characterisation but not a full HLC project.

In addition to the results produced in this way, web content was also identified through a more general search engine⁵. In general this part of the search was based on the name of the HLC project and the words 'HLC' or 'Historic Landscape Characterisation'.

b) The questionnaire survey

A questionnaire was drafted and piloted with four organisations⁶. The final version of the questionnaire (reproduced in Annex 2) was sent out to 58 contacts by email in January 2011 and respondents were given thirteen working days to respond. After 9 working days an email reminder was sent to those contacts who had not yet responded.

2. Results

The results of the web search covered 51 HERs⁷ which might have had an online HLC. Of the 58 questionnaires sent out, 36 responses were received, a response rate of 62%.

The discussion of the results which follows is organised into sections (a) to (g). Section (a) draws on information from both sources (i.e. the web search and the questionnaire survey) while the remaining sections are based solely on the questionnaire survey.

a) The existence of a web presence (both sources)

Of the 36 questionnaires returned, 21 (i.e. 58%) indicated in their answer to Question 1 that results from their HLC are online.

However the web search located 28 organisations for which there was an HLC with an online presence of some kind. This higher number is accounted for by the fact that a small number of organisations with an online HLC did not respond to the survey and, among those who did, some

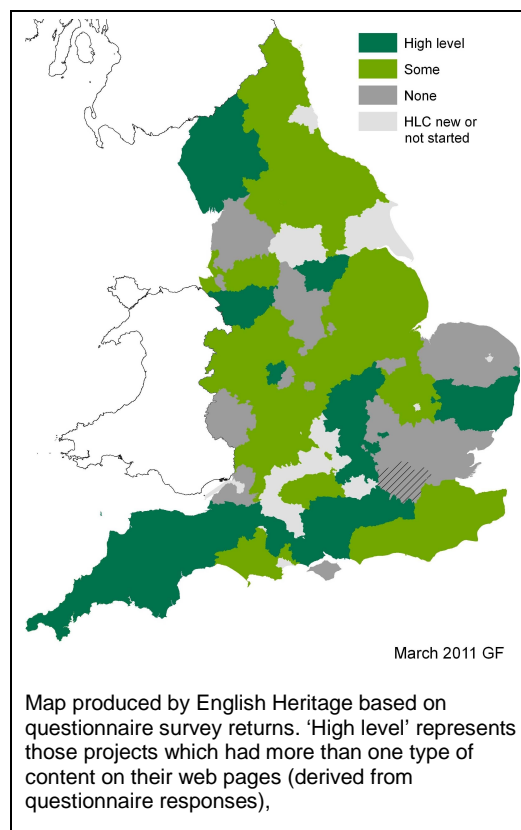
responded negatively to the question 'are any results from the HLC online?' when in fact the HLC did have some web presence.

When both sources are taken into account, 31 organisations are connected with an HLC which is online in some way.

In terms of HLC projects, as many as 69% had an online presence, that is 34 of the 49 that were completed or in progress at the time of the Review. The 34 associated HLCs are illustrated in Figure 1 and listed in Annex 3.

For comparison, 46 HERs (about half of the total) are available online in some form: i.e. a smaller proportion than for HLCs, although most HERs which have a web presence have also made their data available in a searchable format.

Figure 1:
HLCs with an online presence
(Based on web search and the questionnaire responses from 36 organisations)



⁵ In this case Google.

⁶ In the event, two of these did not respond in time for their responses to be taken into account in the final drafting of the questionnaire.

⁷ HERs which were added to the list of contacts after the date of the commission were not included in this part of the research.

A number of HERs mentioned more than one URL when asked about the location of their online content. The HLC projects associated with these host organisations are listed in Table 2.

The largest proportion of websites hosting HLC information is those maintained by local authorities. Overall, 'gov.uk' domains accounted for 78% of all URLs identified.

Table 2:
HLCs accessible from more than one web page
(Based on questionnaire responses from 36 organisations)

HLC	Number of different locations
Black Country	3
Bucks & Milton Keynes	
Chilterns	3
Colne Valley	
Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs	3
Cheshire	2
Cornwall	2
Devon	2
Hampshire	2
Northamptonshire	2
South Yorkshire	2
W Berks & N Wessex	2
Warwickshire and Solihull	2

Annex 3 lists all the locations identified of HLC resources online. In a small number of cases only a general domain is provided rather than the address of a particular web page—these are cases which have come to light via the questionnaire returns and the respondent has not provided the full URL.

b) The nature of the web presence (based on the questionnaire returns)

Table 3 details the pattern of responses to the questionnaire on this point. The most common items presented online are textual introductions to HLC and/or to the project, together with maps based on HLC results. Other content commonly presented included a user guide or method statement and reports of the project.

A small number of respondents also highlighted other material which had been presented online. In Shropshire for example HLC results are integrated with the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the county and this can be viewed via links from the HLC pages. For the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire AONB⁸ HLC, online results include information about Historic Environment Action Plans⁹.

Table 3:
HLC resources online by type
(Based on 21 questionnaires returned from respondents who indicated that their HLC had an online presence)

Method	Number of questionnaire responses
Textual content	15
Maps	13
Descriptions of landscape character	10
A user guide/ method statement	10
Reports of the project	8
Database/GIS	8
Links to other HLCs	5
Newsletters/leaflets	3

⁸ Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

⁹ www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/projects/heaps.htm

Six HLC projects had been presented using interactive maps. These were:

Cornwall¹⁰
 Cranborne Chase/Wiltshire Downs¹¹
 Devon¹²
 Northamptonshire¹³
 South Yorkshire¹⁴
 Surrey¹⁵

The presentation of HLC using interactive maps is discussed further in the Conclusions of Part One.

c) Encouraging and measuring use of online resources

(based on the questionnaire returns)

Where use of these online resources is encouraged it is most commonly via talks/presentations and emails. Printed media is used less often and no record has been found of social media having been used to promote the use of HLC material. Table 4 details these results.

Almost a third of all respondents (6 of 21) indicated that the use of online resources has not been encouraged in any specific way.

Seven respondents were aware of links to their HLC webpages from sites other than their own. Some of these were national sites such as www.english-heritage.org.uk (mentioned by Buckinghamshire, Cheshire, Cranborne Chase, and Shropshire) and www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba115/ontheweb.shtml (mentioned by Cranborne Chase). Others were links within regions or within areas covered by particular HLC projects such as:

www.sheffield.gov.uk/syas (to South Yorkshire);
www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/landscape (to Cranborne Chase)
www.emgin.co.uk (the East Midlands Green Infrastructure Network, to Northamptonshire)

Table 4:

Methods used to encourage use of HLC resources online

(Based on 21 questionnaires returned from respondents who indicated that their HLC had an online presence)

Method	Number of questionnaire responses
Talks or presentations	12
Emails	11
Printed media	5
Social media	0

A third of respondents who indicated that their HLC had an online presence also said that a record was kept of the frequency of visits to their HLC web pages.

d) Obstacles to making HLC resources available online

(based on the questionnaire returns)

The majority of respondents mentioned at least one obstacle to presenting HLC resources online. In contrast, fifteen of the respondents (40%) did not identify any particular obstacle while seven (almost 20%) said that there were none.

Of the obstacles in the prompted list (results for which are detailed in Table 5), 'the format of the HLC results has made their presentation online difficult' was selected most often. Respondents also gave more detail on the obstacles they had encountered—these responses are listed in Annex 4 (in no particular order). Many of the latter echo the obstacles listed in Table 5, and several mention unfinished or unsuitable results as being an issue.

¹⁰ <http://mapping.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/>

¹¹ <http://195.49.180.76/dorsetexplorer/?version=ccwwd>

¹² <http://gis.devon.gov.uk/basedata/viewer.asp?DCCSevice=hlc>

¹³ www.mrpenvironmentalcharacter.org.uk/

¹⁴ www.sytimescapes.org.uk

¹⁵ www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/lookupwebpagesbytitle_rtf/surrey+interactive+map

Table 5:
Obstacles to making HLC resources available online
(Based on 36 questionnaires returned)

Method	Number of questionnaire responses
Format of the HLC	8
Costs	4
Inflexible or slow	2
Finding a suitable website	1

Table 6:
Respondents with plans for future development of online access to HLC
(Based on 36 questionnaires returned)

	With future Plans	No future plans
Already Online	15	6
Not Online	12	2
TOTAL¹⁶	27	8

e) Future development
(based on the questionnaire returns)

Three quarters of respondents indicated that they had aspirations and plans for future development of online access to their HLC results. As many as 27 of the 36 respondents replied positively to this question, including 12 HERs with no current online presence. Table 6 shows the distribution of responses in this regard.

When asked to describe their future plans, respondents offered the details catalogued in Annex 5. A common theme within these plans was the possibility of integrating HLC material with a more general local authority online mapping facility (either existing or forthcoming). Eight of the 27 responses in this category mentioned this as an intention.

In several cases plans to expand representation of the HLC online were dependent on the parallel development of an online HER resource (five of the 27 responses mentioned this link with the HER).

f) Other uses of HLC development
(based on the questionnaire returns)

Almost half of respondents named another way in which HLC results had been used to support public outreach. Seventeen (of 36) respondents offered a short description in response to this question and many of these refer to HLC results being the basis of presentations, talks, guided tours and publications. A range of other uses were mentioned, such as community landscape assessments and community archaeology initiatives—these can be seen in the full responses which are reproduced in Annex 6.

g) Ways in which online access to HLC could be improved
(based on the questionnaire returns)

A small majority of respondents (20 out of 36) offered some comments and suggestions in response to the open question of how access to HLC online could be improved. Although the responses varied considerably (they are reproduced in full in Annex 7), a number of themes reoccur.

One common idea is to create a national web portal of some kind or to use an existing website to link to existing HLC projects. This idea was mentioned in different forms by half of the respondents. Suggestions varied from hosting all HLC data in a single location on the one hand

¹⁶ One 'don't know' response was received.

to providing links to locally hosted sites on the other. Suggestions for building an HLC portal from an existing website mentioned Heritage Gateway, English Heritage, Archaeology Data Service and the National Monument Record as possibilities.

Other ideas mentioned included better general promotion of HLC and its uses; integration of HLC with other similar datasets; and improved interactivity with HLC resources online.

3. Conclusions to part one

This investigation has surveyed the output from English HLC projects which are available online.

a) Summary of results

It has found that more than two thirds of HLC projects (34 of 49) which were part of the survey are represented on the web in some way.

The majority of host organisations have incorporated textual content and/or maps into their presentation of their HLC project online. However only a minority (8) have made a project report available online and interactive maps were a feature of only 6 websites.

The majority of respondents had tried to encourage use of their online HLC results—largely via talks or presentations and emails.

When asked about obstacles to the presentation of HLC results online, the format of the results themselves was a commonly highlighted problem.

A large majority of the HERs responding to our survey had plans for the future development of their online presentation of HLC. In several cases these plans depended on use of a wider online mapping facility provided by a local authority, or on the development of online access to an HER.

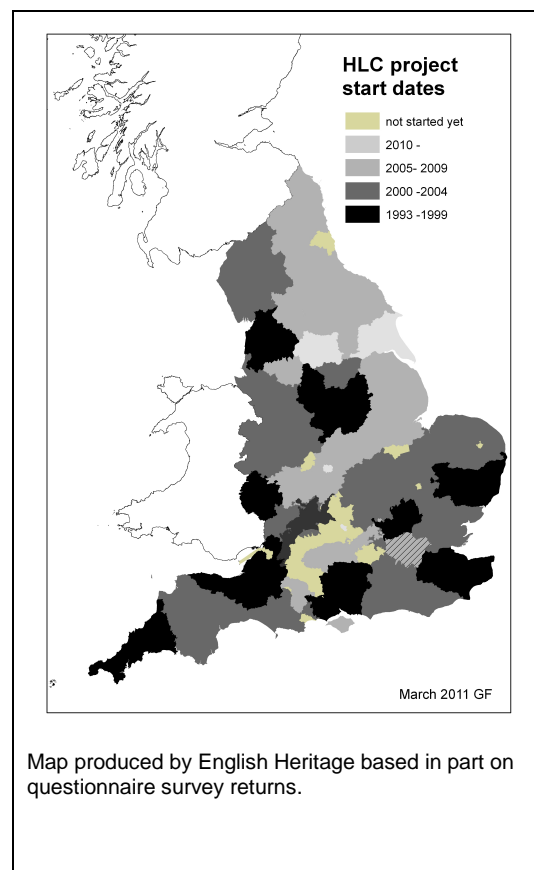
b) Factors influencing online presence

The information held in the **database** associated with this Review allows us to consider the pattern of circumstances

which may have influenced the results of our investigation.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the online presence of HLC projects appears to be partly dependent on their start date as detailed in Table 7. The range of start dates of HLC projects is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2:
Broad start dates of HLCs



In general more recent projects tend to have an online presence. This includes nine out of every ten projects that started in the first decade of the 21st century (25 out of 28).

Projects which are not online are those recently started (four projects) and those from the 1990s or early 2000s (eleven projects).

Table 7:
HLC projects online by start date
(based on both web search and
questionnaire survey results)

Start date of HLC project	HLCs started	HLCs online	% online
1999 or earlier	17	9	53%
2000-04	17	14	82%
2005-09	11	11	100%
2010 or later	4	0	0%
Total	49	34	69%

This pattern is also reflected in the response rate to the questionnaire survey: recipients hosting projects which started in the 1990s or early 2000s are less likely to have responded.

HLC projects which are neither represented online nor among our respondents are particularly concentrated in the East of the country. Three HLC projects in this category are in the East of England (Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Norfolk), while two more (Derbyshire and The Peak District HLCs) are in the East Midlands.

The East of England and East Midlands are also among the Regions with a below-average proportion of HLC projects online, as shown in Table 8.

The extent to which HLCs are represented online may also be influenced by the type of organisation which has been hosting the project. In proportion, County Councils on the whole for example have a good record of making HLCs available online. But National Parks and Unitary and District Councils have not fared so well in this regard. HLC projects which might have been affected by this include North Yorkshire and Exmoor which are now hosted by District or National Park authorities.

Table 8:
HLC projects online by region
(based on both web search and
questionnaire survey results)

Region	HLCs started	HLCs online	% online
North East	2	2	100%
South West	8	7	88%
North West	5	4	80%
South East	10	8	80%
West Midlands	7	5	71%
East Midlands	7	4	57%
Yorks & Humber	4	2	50%
East of England	6	2	33%
Total	49	34	69%

c) Factors influencing online content

Although the majority of respondents to our survey were able to answer positively to our question about the presence of their HLC online, the range of content presented was in many cases quite limited.

Of the respondents who described the type of content which was online (a total of 18), two thirds were only able to select four types of content or fewer from our prompted list of types (and half of these could only name one item).

Perhaps tellingly, some of the broadest range of content was presented on websites which had been constructed away from the archaeological planning function webpages, which are more generally the host for HERs and HLCs. Two examples of this included Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB (which identified eight types of content) and South Yorkshire (seven types of content).

Six of the 34 projects online (listed in Section 2b, page 5) included interactive mapping as part of their online content. Five of these provided it through an existing facility of a County or Metropolitan Council, as shown by Table 9. In this sense local government websites appear to have been able to offer a facility which others have not.

It also appeared, however, that this innovation might have a regional bias: three of the six HLCs which maintain online interactive maps are in the South West region (these being Cornwall, Devon and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire AONB).

Table 9:
Online interactive HLC mapping and the providing organisation

HLC Project	Organisation providing mapping
Cornwall	Cornwall CC ¹⁷
Cranborne etc.	Dorset CC
Devon	Devon CC
Northants.	River Nene Reg'l Park
S Yorkshire	Rotherham MBC ¹⁸
Surrey	Surrey CC

Annex 8 provides a brief description of webpages which might be included among the most useful of those currently presenting HLC online.

d) Future plans

The results of the questionnaire survey in particular show that host organisations (or at least the responsible officers within them) are not only open to new possibilities for making HLC more available online but also enthusiasm and practical ideas as to how this might happen.

This enthusiasm provides a positive basis on which to start our discussion of how best to achieve broader and better accessibility and use of HLC in the future.

¹⁷ CC=County Council.

¹⁸ MBC=Metropolitan Borough Council.

PART TWO

4. Objectives

Building on the survey results set out in Part 1, this discussion sets out to consider strategic options for the future presentation of HLC online. It is based on the assumption that the objectives for the future in this regard should be to **extend** the geographic coverage of online resources and to **increase** the popularity and usability of the material presented.

From the point of view of English Heritage, the sponsors of HLC, there are a number of roles which could be fulfilled to support movement towards these objectives. For the purpose of this discussion we will consider three which are not necessarily mutually exclusive:

1. the encouragement of the growth of HLC online in its present decentralised, local form;
2. the creation of an improved central portal or hub to local online HLCs, without creating a consistent central database;
3. the creation of a centralised location for online HLC resources.

Before we reach conclusions on these possibilities however, we will consider what guidance we might take from evidence available to us.

5. Lessons from the evidence

a) The extent of online content

It is very probable that, left on its current trajectory, the growth of the online presence of HLC in its present decentralised form will continue to expand.

We can support this conclusion from the survey results by pointing to the fact that almost all of the HLC projects that started this century (which for English local government might effectively be regarded as the age of the internet) have an online presence. Any newer ones might therefore reasonably be expected to join them.

We can also point to the intentions and aspirations mentioned above (Section 2e) for host organisations to add their HLC to their websites for the first time or to expand its presence.

This then leaves the question of whether anything can be done to accelerate and strengthen this tendency, for example by overcoming obstacles to online expansion which might otherwise be insurmountable, or to steer the development of HLC online in a more productive and/or coordinated direction.

b) Usage statistics

Within the current decentralised model of hosting HLC content online, we clearly need to maximise our collective ability to draw on good practice and learn from any mistakes. A potentially invaluable source of information to support this process is held in the usage statistics not previously widely shared between host organisations.

As reported above (Section 2c) a third of the survey respondents who indicated that their HLC had an online presence also said that a record was kept of the frequency of visits to their web pages.

This record represented seven host organisations holding nine HLC projects (Buckinghamshire hosts three projects). All but one of these were able to provide usage statistics and Table 10 presents a comparison of the results.

There are qualifying factors which should be kept in mind when making direct comparisons between these figures. At the lower end (in terms of usage): Cheshire has recently experienced a re-organisation of its local government structure and otherwise its usage may have been higher; Warwickshire has yet to put its project report online and this should see an increase in traffic to its sites; similarly the content on the Chiltern HLC web page is limited.

Table 10:
Measured usage of selected HLC web pages
 (Visits only – downloads excluded)

HLC	Web domain	Quarter ending				Total
		Apr 10	Jul 10	Oct 10	Jan 11	
<i>South Yorks.¹⁹</i>	<i>sytimescapes.org.uk</i>	4,611 ²⁰	N/a	N/a	6,791 ²¹	11,402 ²²
Cranborne ²³	historiclandscape.co.uk	446	319	345	455	1,565
Black Country ²⁴	ADS ²⁵	714	466	196	140	1,516
Colne Valley ²⁶	ADS ²⁷	244	260	460	291	1,255
Bucks. ²⁸	bucksgov.uk	355	198	287	309	1,149
The Chilterns ²⁹	bucksgov.uk	114	81	78	61	334
Warwickshire ³⁰	warwickshire.gov.uk	22	38	89	63	212
Cheshire ³¹	cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	37	79	37	43 ³²	196
Warwickshire ³³	Time trail ³⁴	24	33	33	20	110

(Italicised text indicates that these figures may not be directly comparable with some others in the table)

¹⁹ Figures supplied by South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.

²⁰ Figures for one month in this quarter are not available.

²¹ Figures for one month in this quarter are not available.

²² If figures had been collected for the missing months of this sequence and they had been of a similar level we could expect this total to be more than 34,000 – twenty times as many as the next most visited site. However these figures appear to include visits generated by automated web crawlers and may not be comparable with at least some of the other data in the Table.

²³ Figures for Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty were supplied by the AONB.

²⁴ The source of the figures for the Black Country is http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/old_access/feb10-apr10/accessstats.html.
http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/blackcountry_hlc_2009.

²⁵ The source of the figures for Colne Valley Park is http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/old_access/feb10-apr10/accessstats.html.

²⁶ http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/colne_eh_2007.

²⁷ Figures for the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes HLC were supplied by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

²⁸ Figures for the Chilterns HLC were supplied by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

²⁹ Figures supplied by Warwickshire County Council.

³⁰ Figures supplied by Cheshire Shared Services.

³¹ This represents the results for November and December 2010. Figures for January 2011 were not available at time of writing.

³² Figures supplied by Warwickshire County Council.

³³ <http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/>.

Further up the Table, the Black Country ADS (Archaeology Data Service) archive performs better in facilitating direct downloads of individual reports than visits to its introductory page³⁵. In addition, the data from South Yorkshire appears to include visits generated by automated web crawlers³⁶ and may not be comparable with at least some of the other data in the Table.

Lastly, it might also be worth considering the relative population size of these areas in so far as they represent potential 'markets' for HLC information. The metropolitan areas of South Yorkshire and the Black Country both have populations which exceed a million, while the counties Buckinghamshire, Cheshire and Warwickshire all have populations of more than half a million. By contrast, the populations of the areas covered by the Cranborne Chase and Chilterns HLC projects are much smaller.

Taking into account all of these qualifications, it does appear that a pattern nevertheless appears to emerge from the results. It is one in which local government websites, and particularly their archaeology pages, have not been as successful at promoting HLC results as websites less closely associated with the local planning aspect of archaeology.

It is also perhaps not a co-incidence that the organisations represented at the top of this list are also among those who are able to cite other websites which refer and link to their own (such as Buckinghamshire, Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire AONB and South Yorkshire, see Section 2c on page 6 of this report).

The large variation between the recorded usages of the web pages of different HLC projects may also draw us to another conclusion. Leaving aside the distorting effects of web crawlers, the variation does suggest that many of the sites which are currently receiving only low levels of usage might also be brought to achieve the frequency of use of the projects in the top half of Table 10.

Admittedly some of this improvement might depend on a level of new investment (although we do not have financial information available, it does appear that several of those HLCs which appear towards the top of Table 10 have benefited from expenditure on their web pages), but there may also be measures which could be taken which incur only relatively small costs.

Before we move on from the question of usage statistics it may be worth recalling that only seven of the 21 online HLC project hosts who responded to the survey reported that they keep a record of usage. There are at least 15 HLC projects online for which no usage statistics are available.

c) Accessibility

One aspect of the online presence of HLC projects that we have not so far considered has been the ease or difficulty with which content might be found by web users: in a sense, a measure of accessibility.

It might be pertinent to use any accessibility data alongside usage statistics to compare the performance of different web locations (and different types of location) in providing a 'shop window' for HLC projects.

One simple measure is the rank of the web pages in any Google search.

If we enter the term 'Black Country HLC' for example in a search engine, the proximity of the URL to the top of the resulting list might be viewed as a measure of the web page's prominence and accessibility.

Almost all of the web domains listed in Table 10 are returned at the top of the list of search results produced by entering the name of the HLC into Google ('Cranborne HLC', for example). There were three exceptions:

In the case of South Yorkshire, what might otherwise be called an HLC is termed a 'Historic Environment Characterisation' or HEC. In this case, the *sytimescapes* domain is only featured at the top of the search results if 'South Yorkshire HEC' or 'South Yorkshire Characterisation' for example are used as search terms.

In the case of the Black Country, the ADS website is only fourth in the list of search

³⁵ Downloads from the ADS archive of the Black Country HLC totalled 8,500 over the period which is the basis of Table 10 – many of these were made without visiting the archive introduction page.

³⁶ Web crawlers are programs which browse the web in a robotic way.

results, preceded by two references to the HLC project on the Wolverhampton City Council website, and also a news story about the project on Heritage Gateway which in turn refers readers to the ADS website³⁷.

In the case of Warwickshire, the 'timetrail' domain occupies the first two slots, while 'warwickshire.go.uk/hlc' is ranked fourth.

In general it can be said that, provided that the web user is familiar with the terms 'Historic Landscape Characterisation' or 'HLC' it is relatively easy to locate the results of particular projects.

This appears to be true at least for the content represented by the projects listed in Table 10 and the types of web domain they represent (whether this is 'created for purpose' sites—such as *sytimescapes* and *historiclandscape*, Archaeology Data Service archives, or local government web pages). However, it is clear that 'Historic Landscape Characterisation' and 'HLC' are quite technical terms and their currency among a wide audience will be limited.

That said, within the scope of this project it has not been possible to test the effectiveness of other combinations of search terms and it is possible that using simpler, less technical phrases such as 'historic landscape' might also bring useful results.

d) Other open-ended comments by survey respondents

We mentioned that it might be important in the context of this review to consider the direction in which HLC online content might develop. Consideration of this question can draw on the responses by respondents to the survey question about future plans (summarised in Section 2e and detailed in Annex 5).

One trend referenced in these results is the integration of HLC material with other available material through generalised (mostly local authority) online mapping facilities. Nine host organisations mentioned this as an intention or aspiration, all but one of which already had

some HLC content online. Were these organisations to realise their intentions, they would be added to the six HLCs which already have interactive mapping facilities (listed in Section 2b). Four of these existing interactive mapping facilities are based on a local authority website.

In order to properly judge the potential of this particular way of presenting HLC material we would ideally need usage statistics for those which exist already. Unfortunately this was not available at the time of compiling this report.

Aside from success in terms of numbers of visitors, there might also be an outstanding question of whether this approach gives enough contextual information to allow the user to draw out the full meaning of the relatively 'raw' HLC data.

The other commonly mentioned possibility for the development of HLC online was its presentation in the context of online HER data. This indicates that for many host organisations the HLC is considered to be an integral part of a wider set of historic environment information. This is a potentially important point in respect of the role of those national organisations that are responsible for encouraging online access to historic environment information.

Perhaps the other important conclusion to be drawn from the responses to our survey is that there is substantial support for some centralised online access to HLC results. As detailed above (Section 2g), at least half of organisations hosting HLC projects believe that the presentation of HLC online could be improved by greater co-ordination at a national level.

e) Examples of other websites

HLC produces a number of different types of outputs which can be made available online. These include: documents (in various file types) containing text and images; the images themselves (often of coloured maps); sequences of map images (which in some instances can be 'animated' to show landscape development); and polygons or areas within a GIS, together with an associated spatial database.

It is worth considering some examples of online presentation of other mapped and GIS-based information as this frequently

³⁷

www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/news/detail.aspx?ctid=101&id=5060.

offers a particular challenge for making HLC fully available online. These examples are from both inside and outside the heritage sector and they fall into two broad categories.

The first category is websites which present multi-layered, interactive area mapping. That is, they allow the user to make a selection of visible map layers to view with the purpose of showing how the landscape is divided into areas. This type of website would include the following five examples:

Historic Land-Use Assessment (Scotland)
<http://hla.rcahms.gov.uk/>

MAGIC (Multi Agency Geographic information for the Countryside)
<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Northern Ireland Environment Agency
<http://maps.ehsni.gov.uk/MapView/Default.aspx#>

Cartoplus Unitary Development Plans
http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/wolverhampton_2/wlvhmpn.htm

Soilscapes
<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>

The second category is websites which use maps as a means of selecting other types of content. That is, they allow the user to be directed to other text and/or images for example by selecting part of a roll-over map. This type of website would include the following six examples:

Natural England National Character Areas
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/areas/default.aspx

British Towns & Villages Network
www.british-towns.net/england_map_midlands.asp

Northern Ireland Environment Agency – Landscape Character Areas
www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/natural/country/country_landscape.shtm

Office for National Statistics Life Expectancy Maps
www.statistics.gov.uk/life-expectancy/lifemap.html

Historic Seascape Character Maps
http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/ehsliverpool_eh_2007/map-viewer.cfm

Lincoln Heritage Connect
www.heritageconnectlincoln.com

In fact, the last of these websites straddles both categories as it allows the user to both see how the landscape is divided and also be directed to content associated with particular areas of the map.

6. Conclusions: the drivers of success

We have referred to the current presentation of HLC online as having a decentralised local form, the first possible direction identified in section 4 above.

This in turn reflects the organisation of the programme of HLC itself, and contrasts with the approach taken by its nearest equivalent in Scotland for example, or England's Historic Seascapes programme (abbreviated to 'HSC') where a single national database is being produced that reflects the singularity of the new centralised marine planning system.

It has meant that the experience of presenting HLC online, while primarily based on local government websites, has included a diversity of approaches.

Our review has shown that in general some of the most successful examples of HLC web content have been hosted away from 'gov.uk' local authority websites. But it does not seem to follow that Council websites are necessarily poor hosts of HLC online. We have identified some successful examples of local government web pages: they host most of the online interactive mapping of HLC, and we know for example that County Councils have usually been better at getting HLCs online than other HLC hosts.

It seems perhaps that other factors are important in determining the success of efforts to present HLC online.

One of these appears to be **connectivity**. The most successful sites appear to include the ones which are able to identify links to their web pages and/or provide links themselves to other HLC projects (Buckinghamshire, Black Country, South Yorkshire for example).

So we might conclude that the decentralised approach to HLC on line will also require the presentation of HLC much more as **an interconnected network** of web pages (including the improved central

portal identified in the second potential direction in Section 4 above), not just a set of web pages isolated from each other. This would enable HLC web pages to operate together whilst still maintaining separateness and sensitivity to local requirements. It would also mean that each website would raise the profile of HLC and in return benefit from that general increase in awareness.

But there is also an opportunity to reach beyond an audience of heritage professionals and planners—as sites such as *sytimescapes* and *historiclandscape.co.uk* have clearly shown. It is not clear however that many HLC hosts yet know precisely who their users are, and what audiences they are reaching. There is room for further work to explore this so that increased web availability can be better-targeted.

Overall we need to build on existing success in the **future development** of the online presence of HLC projects—past, present and future. In particular other HLC projects should be encouraged to develop online presentations which use the best of the latest technology but perhaps more importantly take as their starting point the potential of characterisation to appeal to wider audiences with an interest in landscape development and history.

There are also perhaps some lessons in this Review in the apparently different local and national attitudes towards the future development of HLC online locally

and nationally. We know from our survey that for many of those HERs which are the curators of HLCs, they view the development of HLC online as being an integral part of the process of making the HER available online. This seems to differ from national initiatives in respect of historic environment information which so far mainly overlook the potential of HLC material.

Successful future development will in any case depend on a greater collective awareness of what works and what does not work. In order to foster the growth of this awareness the **evaluation** and self evaluation of efforts so far—in particular the collection and circulation of usage statistics—should be actively encouraged.

On the question of decentralisation or centralisation itself, there appears to be little spontaneous support at this stage for the third direction mentioned in Section 4 above, which would be a single website to integrate HLCs for England (or wider parts of it) into a single dataset in the way which the Scottish approach does and as the English HSC will, via ADS. It is clear from our survey however that there are ways to connect the various components of this decentralised web, without necessarily imposing national standardisation on the localist mosaic, in order to facilitate use across borders; organisations hosting HLC projects also believe that a **central web ‘portal’** or perhaps more accurately, ‘hub’ to HLC projects is a necessary step to improving access to HLC overall.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the recommendations cover a number of different broad issues which have emerged from the Review. These are: the need for **evaluation** (including the measurement of usage); the **interconnectivity** of HLC online content; and the **future development** of the presentation of HLC results online.

Evaluation - On the question of the measurement of usage, we recommend that:

1. the collection, scrutiny and comparison of data relating to the **frequency of use** and quality of presentation of HLC material online (including via local authority online interactive mapping facilities) should be actively encouraged; English Heritage should take a leading role in coordinating this but other organisations (such as ALGAO) could also play a part;
2. an investigation should be commissioned into the existing and potential users of HLC outputs and their needs;

Interconnectivity - In order to improve the interconnectivity of HLC web pages, we recommend that:

3. **links** to all HLC web pages should be included on the websites of national organisations with an interest in heritage, in particular English Heritage, and HLC web pages should reciprocally link to national web pages; in this way an active hub can be created;
4. **searching** for HLCs should be spatially-enabled, for example by being based on a **roll-over map** image, allowing the user to quickly identify the location and extent of individual online HLC projects..

5. English Heritage should **circulate lists of links** to HLC web pages to host organisations and encourage the inclusion of links to (at least) neighbouring and related projects in any existing and new HLC web pages;
6. **All local authority** websites for areas wholly or partly covered by an online HLC project should include a link to the appropriate HLC(s) ;

Future Development - On the question of the future development of the presentation of HLC results online we recommend that:

7. the most innovative and inspirational examples of 'local' HLC content online should be promoted by English Heritage, but other organisations (such as ALGAO) could also play an important part in promoting best practice;
8. examples of websites which present data of a similar type to that held by most HLC projects (such as those listed in Section 5e) should be promoted by English Heritage, but other organisations (such as ALGAO) could also play an important part in promoting best practice;
9. local authorities should be encouraged to include HLC as part of their **corporate online interactive mapping** facility where one exists, ensuring that adequate interpretative information is presented with it in order to allow users to fully appreciate the meaning of HLC material

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Annex 1: Excerpt from the Project Brief

1. Summary

The national Historic Landscape Characterisation (hereafter HLC) programme has accelerated from small beginnings in 1993-94 and is now approaching complete national coverage. The contexts within which the HLC approach evolved have changed over the years, including in the technological sphere. Public access to HLC results in many parts of the country is now possible, but in a variety of different ways, and technical advances in use of online spatial data will offer new avenues for the next decade. EH wishes to review the current state of HLC resources online and identify options for taking further steps to co-ordinate and facilitate greater public accessibility.

2 Aims, Objectives and Scope

- a) The Review aims to establish the current availability online of HLCs and future plans by carrying out a rapid survey of the c 50 HERs that hold the 41 separate HLC projects that are either completed (37) or in progress (4) as of October 2010 (see Annex).
- b) A secondary aim during the survey will be to collect initial basic data on the extent to which, and ways in which, HLC results have been used for other types of public outreach. This might form the springboard for subsequent EH reviews, but will also inform the conclusions of the present review
- c) The project will also make an overview of other similar (i.e. not necessarily HL or even HE) online resources and web pages that exist (similar to HLC in terms of spatial functionality, level of complexity, size of data files, degree of interactivity or interrogate-ability)
- d) The project report will identify options and make strategic suggestions for how EH and HERs might be able to expand the accessibility online of HLC databases and results, including but not restricted to ADS, which because of its general inaccessibility to ordinary people and remoteness from the curation (including future enhancements) as opposed to the archiving of HLC data may not offer a not the full solution)

3 Business Case

HLC has been a key EH priority for over 15 years. In that period, resources and reviews have been focussed on methodological development (subject to formal review in 2002), on embedding it in HERs and planning practice, and on exploring and promoting a diversity of practical heritage management focussed uses (subject to formal review in 2003). Less effort has so far been spent on the public face of HLC. There is however plenty of anecdotal evidence for significant use of HLC in public participation programmes, for other forms of outreach and as a support for early attempts to create structures in LPAs for participative planning. More relevant to this present review, the steady evolution of web-linked technologies has enabled many HERs to create appear on the web. The approach (by c2014) of a first comprehensive national coverage of HLC flags up the need for a review of where this process has reached in order to signpost future more co-ordinated development. This present small review will be a first step in capitalising on HLC as a public resource of significant social value.

Annex 2: Survey questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Online



The information provided via this questionnaire will be used to identify ways in which the access to HLC results online can be improved.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE GREY BOXES.
PRESS TAB TO PROGRESS THROUGH THE QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1: YOUR HLC PROJECT

Name of HLC Project:	Write the name of your HLC here
Year project started	<input type="checkbox"/> 1999 or earlier; <input type="checkbox"/> 2000-04; <input type="checkbox"/> 2005-2009; <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 or later
Year project completed (or due for completion)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1999 or earlier; <input type="checkbox"/> 2000-04; <input type="checkbox"/> 2005-2009; <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 or later
Name of Historic Environment Record:	Write the name of your HER here

SECTION 2: RESOURCES CURRENTLY ONLINE

Question 1. Are any results from the HLC named above available online? (Select an option from the drop-down box)	<input type="text"/> If your answer was 'no' or 'Don't know' go to Question 7 in Section 3 below
Question 2. Which resources are available online? (Select one or more of the tick boxes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Textual content introducing HLC/the project <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter(s)/leaflets about the HLC project <input type="checkbox"/> Link(s) to other HLC projects <input type="checkbox"/> Report(s) of the project <input type="checkbox"/> Descriptions of landscape character <input type="checkbox"/> A user guide and/or method statement <input type="checkbox"/> Map(s) produced using HLC data If so, are these maps interactive? <input type="checkbox"/> The HLC database or GIS (all or part) <input type="checkbox"/> Any other resource (please describe below) <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know If you have selected 'Any other resource' please describe it briefly: Write a description here
Question 3. Please write the domain name(s) of the online resources <i>e.g. wolverhampton.gov.uk</i> (Write one or more domain names)	Write a domain name here Write a domain name here Write a domain name here

<p>Question 4. In what way(s) are the use of these online resources encouraged? (Select one or more of the tick boxes)</p>	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Via leaflets, posters or other printed media <input type="checkbox"/> Via emails <input type="checkbox"/> Via social media <input type="checkbox"/> Via talks or presentations <input type="checkbox"/> In a way not listed above <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know </div> <p>If you have selected 'In a way not listed above' please describe it briefly: Write a description here</p>
<p>Question 5. Do any links exist to your HLC resources on websites other than those listed in answer to Question 3? (Select an option from the drop-down box)</p>	<div> <input type="text"/> </div> <p>If your answer was 'yes' please write the domain name(s) here: Write a domain name here Write a domain name here</p>
<p>Question 6. Is any record kept of the frequency with which the online HLC resources are viewed or downloaded? (Select an option from the drop-down box)</p>	<div> <input type="text"/> </div>

SECTION 3: BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE

<p>Question 7. Have you encountered any particular obstacles in making HLC resources available online? (Select one or more of the tick boxes)</p>	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the format of the HLC results has made their presentation online difficult <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it has been difficult to find a suitable website to host the results <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the website we have been using is inflexible and/or slow in updating its content <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the costs involved have prevented more online access to the results <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, but it is not listed here <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know </div> <p>If you have selected 'Yes, but it is not listed here' please briefly describe the most important obstacle: Write a description here</p>
<p>Question 8. Do any plans (however informal) exist for the future development of online access to resources from your HLC? (Select an option from the drop-down box)</p>	<div> <input type="text"/> </div> <p>If your answer was 'yes' please briefly describe the plans: Write details of any plans here</p>

<p>Question 9. Have HLC results been used to support any other forms of public outreach? (Select an option from the drop-down box)</p>	<div></div> <p>If your answer was 'yes' please briefly describe one way in which HLC has been used: Write a description here</p>
<p>Question 10. Please add any further comments you might have on how access to HLC resources online could be improved</p>	<p>Write any comment here</p>

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please return the completed form by email to paul.quigley@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

Annex 3: Website addresses of HLC resources

	Black Country
1	http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/
2	http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/landscapes-and-areas/characterisation/historic-landscape-character
3	http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/environment/land_premises/conservation/archaeology/hlc.htm
	Bucks & Milton Keynes
4	http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/Buckinghamshires_Historic_Landscape_Characterisation.page
5	https://ubp.buckscc.gov.uk/
6	http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/Chiltern_Historic_Landscape_Characterisation.page
	Cambridgeshire (ex city)
7	www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/leisure/archaeology/historic/record/projects/herhlc.htm
	Cheshire
8	www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/visiting/heritage/archaeology/archaeology_planning_advisory/historic_landscape_character.aspx
9	www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
	Chilterns
10	https://ubp.buckscc.gov.uk/
11	http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/Buckinghamshires_Historic_Landscape_Characterisation.page?
12	http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/Chiltern_Historic_Landscape_Characterisation.page?
	Colne Valley
13	https://ubp.buckscc.gov.uk/
14	http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/Buckinghamshires_Historic_Landscape_Characterisation.page
15	http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/Chiltern_Historic_Landscape_Characterisation.page
	Cornwall
16	www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=22352
17	http://mapping.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/ (Open to the folder called 'Landscape Assessment' to view the HLC layer).
	Cotswolds AONB
18	www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3135
	Cranborne Chase & Wiltshire Downs
19	www.historiclandscape.co.uk
20	www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/outstanding/history_conserving.htm
21	http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/projects/heaps.htm
	Cumbria and the Lakes
22	www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/countryside/historic-environment/histlandcharacter.asp
	Devon
23	www.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment
24	www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/historic_environment/landscapes/landscape-characterisation.htm
	Dorset
25	http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home
	Durham and Darlington
26	www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=6665
	Gloucs & Wye AONB
27	www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3135
	Greater Manchester
28	www.gmau.manchester.ac.uk/projects/hlc.htm

Annex 3 (continued)

	Hampshire
29	http://www3.hants.gov.uk/landscape-and-heritage/historic-environment/historic-landscape.htm
30	http://www.hants.gov.uk/landscape/index.html
	Kent
31	www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/wildlife_and_landscapes/landscapes/historic_landscapes.aspx
	Leicestershire
32	www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/historyandheritage/archaeology/historic_landscape_characterisation.htm
	Lincolnshire
33	www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/archaeology/lincolnshire-historic-landscape-characterisation-project/
	Merseyside
34	www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/mol/mas/historic_characterisation_project.asp
	N Yorks & ex-Cleveland
35	http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3087
	Northamptonshire
36	www.rnrpenvironmentalcharacter.org.uk/
37	www.rnrp.org
	Northumberland
38	www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=1629
	Nottinghamshire
39	www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/heritage/researchprojects.htm
	Shropshire
40	www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment.nsf/open/3752F7151ABFD814802576C5004D50D6
	Somerset and Exmoor
41	www.somerset.gov.uk
	South Yorkshire
42	www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/urban-design--conservation/archaeology/hec
43	www.sytimescapes.org.uk
	Staffordshire
44	www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/HistoricEnvironment/HistoricLandscapeCharacterisation
	Suffolk
45	http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/Archaeology/LandscapeProjects/HistoricLandscapeCharacterisation.htm
	Surrey
46	www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/lookupwebpagesbytitle_rtf/surrey+interactive+map
	The Sussexes
47	www.westsussex.gov.uk/living/planning/the_county_plan/west_sussex_character_project/historic_landscape.aspx
	W Berks & N Wessex AONB
48	www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=12848
49	www.westberks.gov.uk/HL
	Warwickshire and Solihull
50	www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hlc
51	http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk
	Worcestershire
52	http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/archaeology/information-and-advice/rural-historic-environment/hlc.aspx

Annex 4: Unprompted obstacles to making HLC resources available online

(Based on 36 questionnaires returned)

Obstacle

- The HLCs were amongst the first to be undertaken in England. They had to be digitised in GIS and their texts linked and presented in an easily understood and accessible fashion.
- Also limiting factor is finding the time to make it presentable
- Currently unifying HER; HLC will be part of new structure.
- *****shire HLC was an early GIS product pre dating common web use, and has proved difficult to get interactive mapping as a result.
- HLC considered not of a standard appropriate for circulation - requires revision.
- HLC currently under review to (*ends mid sentence*).
- It's been difficult to get the mapping online
- OS map license
- Still at early stage of project and haven't yet attempted to make the HLC available online.
- The cost of its development and production was an issue but, not an insurmountable one. However, although it has been recognised as an exemplar and is extremely useful, funding for its maintenance and updating is not currently available.
- The HLC is an early one, and there are significant areas in which the data is flawed. Making flawed data available online has not been a priority. I have been unable to find sufficient resource to enable us to address the data and revisit the project, and I have tried.
- The project report is still in final production. Also, we have approached the ADS in January 2010 re hosting the database and report in due course and they made a bid to EH for a digital archiving grant, but as yet we have had no response to this request.

Annex 5: Plans for future development of online access to HLC

(27 responses based on 36 questionnaires returned)

Plans for future development:

- General desire that it is a 'good thing' but not seen as a priority.
- Further digitization and online access via **HER**
- Our **authority** is due to roll out new online mapping software (LocalView Fusion from ESRI UK), which will give us an enhanced capability to make GIS data available online.
- To add to **councils online GIS** system in the least. Preferably extending this to a separate sub website (though not sure this doable under current County internet policies) Would like to make it HTML and put on website that way (rather than (or even as well as) GIS) but also onto CD rom to take out to schools in some form but this really would need a whole new extra funding bid....
- Will be making the full report and some more maps available on the above domains in the next few months. Would like to add the HLC GIS data and detailed records also but not sure when or how.
- Hope to use better **Council mapping** to have a section devoted to historic environment data including HLC
- Potential future web delivery' is included as one of the 'Overall Products' in the HLC project design document. However, no more detailed plans exist at the time being.
- future online access would be in tandem with proposals for future online access to **HER**
- A number of projects have updated the parts of the original HLC and these will be used to update the mapping available on the website. The discursive texts will also be updated to ensure they have photos included and can be read out of context of the HLC as a whole.
- Intend to put a comprehensive version of the **HER online** of which the HLC will be, hopefully a part.
- Will be added to our **local plans online web site** this year.
- There are general plans to make **HER** information available online and the HLC will be part of those plans.
- See answer to Q7 above (The project report is still in final production. Also, we have approached the ADS in January 2010 re hosting the database and report in due course and they made a bid to EH for a digital archiving grant, but as yet we have had no response to this request.)
- Produce report on web-readiness of information.
- Some data from the HLC will be available online but its exact format is still under discussion.
- Ongoing promotion and the building up of links.
- It is proposed that the HLC GIS data is made available online; either as an interactive map-based function which could be interrogated through a suitable web-site interface; or through hosting the downloading of multi-layer PDFs of particular areas (e.g. land-blocks of set dimensions, such as 10km x 10km blocks) or of user-specified areas. There could be options to turn off or on particular layers on screen or the ability to select particular layers to be included in the downloaded multi-layer PDF.

- *****shire County Council has an **established online GIS portal**. Currently, the county Landscape Character mapping and Tithe and Inclosure mapping projects are available via this interactive resource. This established model will be used to disseminate the HLC mapping and data following completion of the project in November 2011.
- To get the HLC mapping online via the **Authority's Internet Mapping Service**.
- Nothing definite - it is desirable. The reports from the EUS are going online so it would be good to do something more for the HLC.
- As part of an **online, integrated landscape** resource.
- HLC is being incorporated into a **wider project** that is intended to place info online.
- Period based resource assessments and research agendas will be available online.
- Informal - would hope to get interactive map available in long term on web.
- Planning to expand textual and photographic descriptions of HLC types. Also plan to widen web access to the whole **HER**, including HLC.
- It is proposed to provide access to a interactive HLC website linked to a wider online environmental resource. Similarly the existing web introduction will be updated with access to the full report for download.
- It is intended to provide access to PDF text and the potential to put mapping on is being investigated.

Annex 6: Use of HLC for other forms of public outreach

(17 responses based on 36 questionnaires returned)

Use of HLC

- Included in talks to students, used to inform other studies, e.g. National Character Areas.
- Preparation of community landscape assessments and in support of local landscape initiatives run by the Shropshire Hills AONB.
- While it is incomplete - I was able to help an undergrad with his dissertation (which was on HLC) and currently inputting towards an HLF landscape community bid. Had opportunity to comment on things within the council too.
- HLC been used in workshops on parish planning. HLC data helped to define Historic Environment Character Areas and Zones, which then led to the creation of documents designed for general public - www.westberks.gov.uk/HECZ.
- Talks and guided tours.
- Used in a monograph on field systems in East Anglia - E Anglian Archaeol 125
- HLC is used regularly to provide students and researchers with a landscape context for specific studies.
- In connection with FEPs and other management plan processes
- Article in British Archaeology Lectures
- Our HLC Officer has delivered a number of public presentations to community groups and led two guided walks for a community group and AONB team using the working results to interpret the evolution of key local landscapes in Worcestershire.
- Data has been supplied for use in parish plans and parish level LCA.
- HLC and HER have been integrated to produce Historic Environment Assessments for specific District Councils as baseline data for the LDFs - the Districts have put these results online so technically are publicly accessible.
- Green Infrastructure, talks to local societies/parish councils - Chilterns landscape conference x2. + Too many to list
- Not directly although the same base line data was used to inform the Rockingham Forest Assessment, which is better suited to community outreach. However, our HLC has been used to inform public enquiries and planning decisions at strategic and local level.
- FEPs, village design and parish plan initiatives, landscape character assessments (at different scales), presentations and publications
- 1. Publication of a Phase 2 report of higher level analysis as an occasional paper of the Devon Archaeological Society. 2. Two Landscape based community archaeology projects.
- Consultation in relation to regional park for Charnwood Forest. Input into regional landscape characterisation by Natural England.

Annex 7: Ways in which online access to HLC could be improved

(20 responses based on 36 questionnaires returned)

Suggested improvements:

- We have recently had two bids for **funding** to improve access/uptake of our data fail. The first was a bid to the HLF for a public outreach initiative. We passed Stage 1 but failed Stage 2 because the regional office of English Heritage withdrew their match **funding** support for the project. We were then working with the regional office of English Heritage on an alternate proposal, to encourage uptake by our local authority partners. We have recently learnt that the offer to fund a temporary post to enable this has been withdrawn, as Regional Capacity Grants have been reduced.
- Seeking **funding** from English Heritage for further work on HLC
- I think the only way to do this effectively would be to have a **national** website which could host HLC data (or alternatively by enhancing the **Heritage Gateway**)
- While it is the responsibility of each council to put them online I guess, the HLC projects are really only funded in order to complete the HLC itself. So if no further **funding** is available they become white elephants if there is no-one left to promote them. Perhaps an EH project (I suggest EH as HLC has been their brainchild) could be to host some platform from which all HLC can feed in? i.e. a main website which has coverage of all HLCs??? Problems with different technologies used to undertake HLC though I guess.
I think there has to be a greater push at **creating awareness of HLC overall** - until then any online resources are going to be limited in scope as there will not be the audience.
I think **making the HLCs interactive online** - so able to zoom in etc and look at areas, look at different maps produced. I know GIS online is ideal for this but for some people with slow connections/computers this can be off-putting. Hence my suggestion above of making it HTML based hyperlinked jpegs etc...which are that bit quicker. Although I accept there has to be a tradeoff between how fast something loads and how much you can interrogate the data. To be honest i haven't thought much past the idea of it as i have no idea if it's feasible in reality!!
I've spoken above more about the geographical online representation - however i think there is greater need for awareness of what HLC IS and **how it can be used** rather than just a 'here it is have a play' . the 'Using HLC' publication was great and I've used it a lot to get the idea of HLC uses over to people in policy and planning as well as members of the public - perhaps somehow taking that publication and it's ideas, updating them and making them available online (not as a PDF download but as webpages if you see my point)? perhaps for each council - I mean with specific examples from within that county as to uses of that particular HLC (one would hope there are such examples)
Like I say it seems some councils have the HLC as a GIS layer online but with no explanation of what the HLC and how it can be used.
- We need to do more outreach with HLC, but not sure how. It would be good to have a **central** website of HLC data, projects, HLC GIS data. Maybe we could use the **Heritage Gateway**? Now with it's proposed fancy mapping!
- HLC was carried out for an AONB consisting of parts of 3 other counties in addition to all of ***** - we can't comment on online accessibility of other local authorities' data. Could perhaps be a **central** place (via **Heritage Gateway** or NMR) where all datasets could be stored?
- include HLCs on **Heritage Gateway**
- **Links** from EH and from other HLCs in the same region

- Access to HLC might be improved if it were possible to load the results onto a popular portal such as the **Heritage Gateway**.
- HLC only recently completed and options not really investigated as yet so sorry I've not been able to provide much input.
- The Current page about Historic Landscape Characterisation on the **EH website** needs expanding/updating. As HLC reaches national coverage it would be appropriate to have a roll over map, with a short description of each HLC (date, coverage, complexity and author) with web links further sources of information. Most HLCs are not available to browse online - we were able to put up ours pigging backing existing local plan map software for very little money.
<http://195.49.180.76/dorsetexplorer/?version=ccwwd>
- Eventually, I believe a **central** web gateway with summary information and links to county HLCs might be useful to streamline access. Perhaps via **Heritage Gateway** or a similar site hosted by EH.
- **Make more HLCs interactive** although this will require more **funding** resources to accomplish it. HLCs to be integrated with other spatial datasets, e.g. biodiversity, geology etc. To form part of a suite of data.
- It was never intended that it should replace the **HER** as it seeks to characterise rather than provide information about all known sites. However, online access to the HER as well, particularly as a complementary package, would greatly enhance its wider use.
- Have a completed project!
- Co-ordinate access **nationally** perhaps through ADS. Not ever going to be a priority in my authority. No money and little interest.
- Its availability and use via GIS is good. Its availability via the web is poor and **not interactive** and this could be greatly improved. However, I would like to see a greater emphasis **on how to use HLC** and to make more people aware of its relevance to a wider range of endeavours, its uses and accessibility. In addition the current HLC is an early example and needs to be reviewed to reflect current practice.
- Could link from a **national** map on **Heritage Gateway**
- If we had been able to resource re-doing the characterisation (and I think it will need doing again - rather than trying to fix) then we would have got it online somehow. With **budget cuts** meaning significant staff reductions, this now unlikely to happen.
- Critical issue is to ensure the data can be accessed at a relevant scale (obviously this will depend upon the enquiry/enquirer) and in an accessible format. Work is required to make **compatible adjacent datasets**. Consideration should be given (to) **the core user groups** to establish likely demands upon data and to attempt to facilitate its delivery.

Annex 8: Six useful examples of HLC online

(In no particular order)

Name of HLC / URL / Description
South Yorkshire / www.sytimescapes.org.uk/ A purpose-built website created to provide access to the HLC results. Probably the most visited of any HLC project online. The site includes 'time slices' of landscape development and the possibility of viewing the HLC data in an interactive map provided by Rotherham ³⁸ .
Buckinghamshire / www.buckscc.gov.uk ³⁹ / Possibly the best example of an HLC project hosted within a local authority website. Together the HLC pages hold one of the widest ranges of content and have the highest visitor count of any hosted on a Council website.
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty / www.historiclandscape.co.uk/ A visually interesting site presenting the 'history, landscape, timedepth' of the AONB. The site includes the possibility of viewing the HLC data in an interactive map provided by Dorset ⁴⁰ . With South Yorkshire, it appears to be the only other site to offer 'time slices' of landscape development.
Northamptonshire / www.rnrpenvironmentalcharacter.org.uk/ Unusual in its stylish presentation and in that it treats historic landscape character as part of a wider set of environmental data as part of 'Northamptonshire's Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite'.
Devon / www.devon.gov.uk/landscape-characterisation/ One of only two local authority websites in this group. Unusual in that it provides the facility to view the HLC in an interactive map but also provides a relatively simple link from the web pages explaining the background to the HLC.
The Black Country / http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/blackcountry_hlc_2009/ Essentially an archive of downloadable PDF reports (and GIS) arising from the project, it is nevertheless well used by the standards of HLC projects online.

³⁸

<http://roam.rotherham.gov.uk/planaccess2/planaccess.asp?language=english&startpanel=2&theme=Historic%20Environment%20Characterisation%20Project&Easting=442869&Northing=398364&zoom=75000&SymbolPointSize=noarrow>.

³⁹ The full URL is:

www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/Buckinghamshires_Historic_Landscape_Characterisation.page.

⁴⁰ <http://195.49.180.76/dorsetexplorer/?version=ccwwd>.