Research Strategy for the Roman-Period Historic Environment

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English Heritage Thematic Research Strategies

**Research Strategy
for the
Roman-Period Historic Environment**

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SUMMARY

1. The Thematic Research Strategy for the Roman Period is one of a suite of strategies outlining what more we need to know about specific themes and subjects in order to address English Heritage's objectives. The present draft has been revised to align it with English Heritage's Corporate Plan for 2010-2015[1] and the National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP),[2] which forms a key part of the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

2. The Strategy is primarily intended to serve English Heritage's needs by identifying research which underpins corporate objectives. However, English Heritage works in close partnership with many other organisations, and the Strategy has therefore been developed through a review of current Research Frameworks (see Appendix 1) and a targeted consultation process to ensure it reflects, as far as possible, the concerns and views of all those engaged in understanding and protecting our Roman-period heritage.

3. Dissemination and implementation of the Strategy is intended to ensure the effective use of English Heritage resources by directing support to the most critical aspects of Roman-period research within the context of NHPP. It provides a framework for the study of prehistory that will contribute to the understanding, enjoyment and protection of the Roman-period Historic Environment.

4. The document sets out the need for a Research Strategy for the Roman Period and relates this to the threats facing our Roman-period heritage. Amongst other things, it locates the strategy within the wider English Heritage research agenda, identifies key research Topics for the present Corporate Plan period, provides guidance on establishing research projects and criteria for prioritising them, and explains how the Strategy will be reviewed and updated.

5. The Strategy is arranged in two main sections:

Part 1 outlines the place of research in English Heritage, sets the Thematic Research Strategies within this corporate framework, and explains how they will be implemented and refreshed.

Part 2 presents the Thematic Research Strategy for the Roman-period historic environment and explains the underlying principles that have led to the identification of six Critical Priorities:
*   Identifying and understanding vulnerable site types to support Protection and Management of Change
*   Holistic approaches to Roman-period landscapes
*   Understanding key transitions
*   Unlocking the potential of unpublished data
*   Responding to changes in our climate and countryside
*   Getting the most out of the data

and three 'Secondary Drivers':

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[1] http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/who-we-are/corporate-information/corporate-strategy/
[2] http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/national-heritage-protection-plan/plan/

- Understanding human interactions with the environment
- Approaches to the Roman period within commercial archaeology
- Raising Awareness of recent research across the Sector and engaging the public

along with two underpinning actions intended to 'Enhance the Research Environment'

- Securing key archives

- Building partnerships beyond England

Research Topics addressing these themes and priorities will contribute to providing the evidence base for better understanding and protection of the resource, inform mitigation of the threats to vulnerable site types, support skills and processes, enhancing HERs and other heritage databases, and achieve greater public appreciation of Roman-period remains. Appendix 2 gives details of 21 Topics, mapped against NHPP Measures.

Finally, guidance is provided on establishing research projects consistent with MoRPHE[3] guidelines.

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[3] http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/morphe-project-managers-guide/

A Thematic Research Strategy for the Roman-period historic environment

PART ONE: THE CONTEXT OF RESEARCH AT ENGLISH HERITAGE

PART TWO: THE ENGLISH HERITAGE THEMATIC RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR THE ROMAN-PERIOD HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

APPENDICES

PART ONE

The Context of Research at English Heritage

1   Introduction to English Heritage research policy

The value of England's historic environment is acknowledged in many Government programmes and has been set out most recently in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*,[4] which emphasises its importance to our cultural heritage and its contribution to key policies such as sustainable development. English Heritage exists to identify, protect and promote nationally significant aspects of the historic environment. These functions are underpinned by a broad spectrum of research activity, which falls into a number of categories described by the Frascati definitions[5], covering basic research, applied research and experimental development.

Research carried out or supported by English Heritage is directed towards achievement of the organisation's aims and objectives, as set out in the **Corporate Plan** for the period 2011–2015[6]. The strategy is built around the concept of the 'heritage cycle' (Fig. 1).

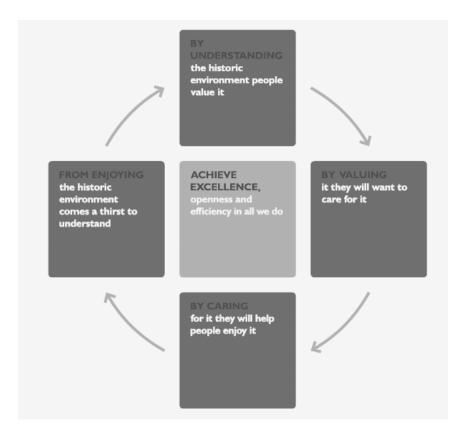*Figure 1   The Heritage Cycle diagram*

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[4] DCLG, 2010; see http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5
[5] see *SHAPE 2008: A Strategic Framework for Historic Environment Activities and Programmes in English Heritage*, p 96
[6] *English Heritage Corporate Plan 2011/2015* (English Heritage, 2011)

The five high-level aims for the plan period are to:

1. Identify and protect our most important heritage (Understanding)
2. Champion England's heritage (Valuing)
3. Support owners, local authorities and voluntary organisations to look after England's heritage (Caring)
4. Help people appreciate and enjoy England's national story (Enjoying)
5. Achieve excellence, openness and efficiency in all we do (Excellence).

The first of these aims is addressed in detail by the **National Heritage Protection Plan** (NHPP)[7], which provides a framework to ensure more effective protection of the historic environment, bringing together work by English Heritage and other partners within the sector. The NHPP will frame much of English Heritage's research activity in the period ahead; it is organised as a number of *Activities* grouped under eight *Measures*:

1. Foresight
2. Threat: assessment and response
3. Understanding: recognition and identification of the resources
4. Understanding: assessment of character and significance
5. Responses: protection of significance
6. Responses: managing change
7. Responses: protecting and managing English Heritage historic properties
8. Responses: grant aid for protection.

In addition, a number of functions have been identified which can legitimately be described as directly supporting the NHPP but which do not fall directly within any of the Measures. These are grouped as five *Supporting Actions* linked to aims 2 to 4 of the Corporate Plan:

A. Establishing Value: ensuring that the public understand and agree that looking after our heritage is important both in terms of the economy of the country and the well-being of its people
B. Building Capacity: ensuring that the right skills exist and that the right tools and advice are available to those engaged in looking after our heritage
C. Local Empowerment: ensuring that the right systems exist for encouraging local communities to get involved in decision-making and in delivery of protection
D. Accessing Knowledge: ensuring that information management and knowledge transfer is as good as it can be so that what we learn can be used to its greatest benefit
E. Engaging with the Past: ensuring that as wide a range of people can and do enjoy the heritage which we are working so hard to protect, now and in the future.

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[7] *The National Heritage Protection Plan* (2011) - http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/national-heritage-protection-plan/

2 Thematic Research Strategies

Earlier drafts of the **Thematic Research Strategies** informed the development of the NHPP and the revised versions which respond to it will continue to guide its implementation. They provide more detailed analysis of key aspects of the historic environment, informed by sector research frameworks and the philosophies that underpin PPS 5 and English Heritage's **Conservation Principles**[8], set out the intellectual basis for English Heritage's research response to current threats and opportunities, and situate relevant research within the framework of the NHPP. The Thematic Research Strategies are complemented by a number of **Operational Strategies** which set out the threat-led responses to sector needs and specific conservation issues.

The Thematic Research Strategies are therefore primarily intended to serve English Heritage by identifying research which furthers corporate goals but, since English Heritage shares its responsibilities with many other agencies they also seek to express wider concerns and reflect views from the different communities engaged in understanding and managing the historic environment. The aim is to ensure that English Heritage research makes a difference to the protection and enjoyment of the historic environment, whether through new understanding, better support for partner organisations, wider public engagement or more effective conservation.

English Heritage will seek to implement the Thematic Research Strategies through supporting research programmes and projects in a number of ways. These include:

- Using English Heritage staff resources
- Using English Heritage's grants programmes for funding external projects
- Collaborating with universities and academic funding bodies (AHRC, EPSRC, ESRC, NERC)
- Assisting local authorities and local plans
- Working with Government agencies
- Working with developers and owners
- Working with amenity groups and societies
- Working with museums and the education sector
- Working with the voluntary sector
- Providing training to develop expertise and skills.

The publication of the Thematic Research Strategies is intended to encourage debate about priorities since the drivers for research will inevitably evolve as circumstances change. The exercise of a foresight function to anticipate threats and opportunities is essential to maintain the Strategies' relevance and their periodic refreshment will be informed by ongoing consultation and horizon-scanning to understand developing academic, conservation, planning and political trends, and identify the changing needs of the sector. The Strategies therefore represent iterative documents under continual review; on-line progress reports and updates will be provided on a regular basis. These will in turn contribute to reviews of the implementation of the NHPP.

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[8] *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (English Heritage, 2008)

PART TWO

The English Heritage Thematic Research Strategy
for the Roman-period Historic Environment

1   Introduction

The Roman period has been a prime focus for antiquarian and archaeological research in Britain for many centuries, and there is perhaps a view that 'we know it all'. However, much of that research was undertaken within paradigms dominated by simple oppositions: Roman and Native, military and civilian, highland zone and lowland zone. It is only in the last 20-30 years that Roman period archaeology in Britain has begun to recognise and grapple with the complexities that were obscured by these over-simple perspectives. This background and the too-familiar concept of a 'homogeneous Roman Britain' is now acknowledged to mask considerable variations and clear regional diversity. Despite those issues it is undoubtedly true that the Roman period provides many of our most immediately recognisable sites and cultural icons from the more remote past and is the only archaeological period included in the National Curriculum. Consequently it provides an accessible 'gateway to the past' to people from many backgrounds providing a both link to what has gone before while at the same time contributing to a current 'sense of place' and discussions around issue of cultural and ethnic diversity. In addition visible Roman-period remains and Roman-period museum displays represent key elements in many tourism and regeneration strategies.

2   The need for a Roman-period research strategy

The four cardinal points on the English Heritage 'heritage cycle' – understanding, valuing, caring and enjoying – depend heavily on high quality research which also provides the basis for 'achieving excellence'. Identification of significance and knowledge of value allow better decision making in conservation and management, and the presentation of new research findings is a powerful way of drawing in a wide audience to a better appreciation of the historic environment. Such informed decision taking is fundamental to both PPS5 and *Conservation Principles* [9] and also to developing sustainable designations. Perspectives on values change continually, and it is vital to present the historic environment through new thinking on what is important and why. English Heritage's lead role depends on its policies being up-to-date and based on the latest research findings.

Research is most urgently needed where there are significant gaps in knowledge and where change to the historic environment is anticipated. Whilst Roman-period archaeological deposits are subject to a similar range of pressures as the rest of the historic environment, some of these pressures have a disproportionately large impact. Roman period deposits in modern towns, in common with those of later intensely urbanised periods, are particularly vulnerable to modern development

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[9] Department for Communities and Local Government, *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (2010); *Conservation Principles: policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment*

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either directly, or through dewatering or other impacts from off-site activities. In the countryside Roman sites and deposits, like those of other periods, are subject to impacts from infrastructure and other development projects, current farming practices and changes in agricultural regimes, as well as other damage outside the planning process, such as and coastal and other erosion.

The tangible nature of many Roman sites, with stone built structures and readily recognisable finds makes them particularly attractive to community archaeology and other local research projects. However, in addition to this welcome interest in our Roman-period heritage, the range and potential value of Roman-period metal finds makes this period's sites and deposits particularly attractive to illegal activities such as illicit metal detecting ('Nighthawking').

This Research Strategy is an iterative document that has been developed in consultation with colleagues inside English Heritage and from the wider Sector and draws on the Regional, and other, Research Frameworks funded by English Heritage.[10] The priorities identified represent only some of the challenges faced by the Roman-period Historic Environment, but should allow key questions to be addressed that impact on the sustainability and understanding of the Roman-period resource. The document will be reviewed and formally revised on a rolling basis, but colleagues are encouraged to submit comment and proposals for revision at any time.[11] It must be clear that the Strategy seeks to identify *priorities* where English Heritage, primarily in the context of the National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP), may be able to make a positive difference and therefore cannot highlight all of the issues that impact on the Roman-period historic environment, or rightly concern practitioners in the field.

The presumption that the Roman-period is well-understood provides one of the most compelling reasons for objective modern research – almost without exception every investigation of Roman-period deposits and landscapes either challenges our preconceptions or adds new understanding of the character, complexity and diversity of Roman-period settlement in Britain. This is equally true of the rural landscape as it is of Roman-period urban centres and smaller settlements. The long-standing 'understanding' of Roman Britain based on the rigid classification of sites, and a belief that once classified all that was required was the elucidation of detail for individual sites,[12] means that there is much to be discovered about the evolution and character of settlements of all forms and sizes. From a more nuanced approach new views on what is significant will emerge to shape attitudes to preservation, mitigation, display and presentation of the Roman-period resource. Change to the Historic Environment is constant and inevitable, both through planning and through environmental, social, cultural and economic developments. In all circumstances there is a need for good understanding of the extent and nature of the Roman-period historic environment and of the values that are attached to it by different

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[10] http://www.algao.org.uk/Association/England/Regions/ResFwks.htm. See also Appendix 3.
[11] Please see contact details at the end of the document
[12] For example: 'Hadrian's Wall ... has long ceased to matter as a major historical problem', R E M Wheeler, 'Review of the Journal of Roman Studies vol L (1960) Jubilee Volume', *Antiquity*, 35 (1961), 159 – a view readily countered by developments summarised in: D J *Breeze J Collingwood Bruce's Handbook to the Roman Wall* (14th edn) 2006 and discussions advance in: P Bidwell (ed0 *Understanding Hadrian's Wall* (The Arbeia Society 2008).

constituencies. Research should be designed to inform the management of change, to develop English Heritage policy on conservation, and to engage a wide audience in considering the interest and importance of the historic environment in this process. Among the range of likely outcomes are additions and changes to the coverage provided by designation as new light is thrown on significance; better integration of the historic environment into the planning process; and enhanced public awareness and enjoyment of the Roman-period historic environment.

3 Identifying priorities; threats and opportunities

The Historic Environment Sector is going through a period of considerable change and unprecedented pressures including: proposed changes to planning policy, the potential impact of the 'Localism' agenda and the reduction in funding to all areas of the public sector, as well as facing-up to the need to improve heritage protection practice[13], and mitigate the impact of reductions in capacity in Local Authority heritage services.[14] English Heritage has responded to the inherent challenges that these circumstances represent by developing and publishing the NHPP,

While the potential difficulties of maintaining initiatives to enhance historic environment planning have received considerable attention, such as concerns regarding the possible dilution of PPS 5 priorities and objectives[15] in the proposed Planning Policy Framework and the difficulties that could flow from 'aggressive localism', opportunities may be forthcoming too, such as greater local engagement with the historic environment of all periods. Buried archaeology of all periods poses particular challenges of presentation to the general public, but building on the publication of the National Heritage List[16] and online access to HER data[17] may provide opportunities for local people to recognise and engage with their buried past.

Against this background of challenging changes to funding and structures the Historic environment Sector is facing with continuing, and apparently growing, pressures as a result of the impact of climate change, changes in agricultural practice, cropping regimes and the nature of rural society. Where responsibility can be assigned of these issues and their impacts it often lies with Government Departments and Agencies whose primary mission is not related to the historic environment.

This Strategy has been revised to ensure that Roman-period issues are adequately reflected in the delivery of NHPP outcomes and are integrated into the wider work of English Heritage whether in relation activities on our own estate, or in the advice

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[13] Although the *Draft Heritage Protection Bill* (HMSO, 2008) was not introduced to Parliament, English Heritage remains committed to taking forward its key provisions (see http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/designation/heritage-protection-reform/achievements-to-date/).
[14] see http://www.archaeologists.net/southport
[15] Such asPolicy HE12: Policy principles guiding the recording of information realted to heritage assets, where the presumtion is that developer-funded mitigation fieldwork should contibute to improving understanding of heritage assets, rather than mere 'preservation by record.'
[16] http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/
[17] http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/

and funding we provide to others. The underlying principles at work in the identification of research priorities for the Roman-period historic environment are:

1. The consideration of the vulnerability of different aspects of the resource in the face of anticipated change,
2. The needs of communities in relation to tourist potential, engagement with the resource and sense of place, and
3. The vulnerability of sites and deposits to accidental and deliberate destruction or looting.

Vulnerability may be expressed in different ways.

- Some sites or types of monument are directly threatened by large-scale planned or natural change; for example, major regeneration projects, linear schemes such as motorways and pipelines, coastal erosion and flooding all pose threats to historic fabric and deposits

- Some sites or types of monuments are so poorly understood that they are particularly vulnerable to piecemeal development that threatens adequate understanding due to the often disjointed and small-scale nature of archaeological mitigation required under planning legislation – Roman-period suburbs and cemeteries being prime examples

- Some types of site, particularly smaller rural sites and those in coastal locations are vulnerable to government-sponsored activity, including the impacts of agri-environment schemes, nature conservation initiatives and, potentially, proposals for managed retreat in the face of coastal inundation

- Some aspects of the Roman-period resource are both particularly vulnerable to accidental or deliberate damage and at the same time and poorly understood nationally. Key examples are: late Roman and early post-Roman deposits; early less robustly-built phases of sites that are dominated by later stone structures; and the virtually invisible marine resource, such as wrecks

Proposals for research will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Relevance to NHPP priorities and supporting activities, and:
- Is the resource at risk? If so, how vulnerable is it?
- Is the resource of high significance?
- Does existing information and knowledge provide a sufficient basis for effective management of change?
- Is there potential to widen appreciation of the importance of the resource?

Failure to qualify on these criteria will not automatically mean that proposals will not be considered for support as there will always be the potential for nationally significant unexpected discoveries, but assessment of risk, significance and existing knowledge introduces a means of identifying which areas of research qualify as immediate priorities.

The identification of research priorities for English Heritage has both a sector-wide context and internal drivers. English Heritage has supported the production of Regional Research Frameworks which have provided detailed assessments on a region-by-region basis of the priorities for future research,[18] and this evidence has informed the development of the present strategy for Roman-period research. The primary focus of the Strategy is on research[19] that relates to NHPP Measures 1-4, although contributing to appropriate statutory or other Protection (Measure 5) and providing exemplars that inform the Management of change are key outcomes that will also flow from research. 'Non-Research' activities, which it is acknowledged are important to the sustainability and management of the historic environment, public engagement and participation, are covered by other documents and initiatives from English Heritage[20] and other organisations.[21] Proposals for change to the Heritage Protection system have focused English Heritage attention on the priorities for designation and the need to take a more strategic approach to this activity, and these have been taken into account in the present strategy. In addition, internal consultation with professional groups and advisory panels on early drafts of this paper and on subject specific papers has tested the suggested priorities against perceptions within English Heritage of where the greatest needs lie. The Strategy will also inform those seeking to undertake research for which management considerations are not necessarily the primary drivers, such as community groups and academic institutions.

Within the NHPP the importance of the Foresight and Historic Environment Intelligence Activities holds good for all aspects of the Historic Environment, but in common with other areas the Roman Period will have particular vulnerabilities and hopefully opportunities to enhance management and sustainability that will require period-specific knowledge and research and consequently Sectoral and inter-agency formal and informal communication will have a crucial role. The supra-national aspects of Roman Period research, understanding and management, most graphically illustrated by the transnational Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site,[22] require communication to extend to colleagues and partner organisations in other parts of the UK and the former Roman Empire.

4   Critical Research Priorities for the Roman-period historic environment

The following research priorities have been identified as those which will most directly support English Heritage's strategic aims and address the threats and

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[18] http://www.algao.org.uk/Association/England/Regions/ResFwks.htm See also Appendix 3
[19] As sunnarised in the Frascati Definitions of Research as adopted by English Heritage (see *SHAPE 2008: A Strategic Framework for Historic Environment Activities and Programmes in English Heritage*, p 96). Non-Research activities
[20] For example se the HELM website - http://www.helm.org.uk/ and the Professional pages of the English Heritage website - http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/
[21] For example the Environment Agency documents relating to Environmental Stewardship - http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/sectors/32763.aspx and the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Your Heritage' programme - http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/yourheritage.aspx
[22] http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/430

opportunities identified above. These are informed by relevant regional and other research frameworks and English Heritage corporate priorities, which currently include: The National Heritage Protection Plan, Conservation Principles,[23] Heritage Protection Reform,[24] Heritage at Risk,[25] planning policy reform and marine planning practice.[26]

It is anticipated that priorities will evolve as, NHPP develops, external circumstances change and as research findings fill the most significant gaps in knowledge. Continuing discussion, both internally within English Heritage and externally with the sector, will allow new priorities to be identified, especially where they can be seen to anticipate need (NHPP Foresight).

Something should be said at the outset about the environment within which English Heritage operates. English Heritage rarely supports excavation, which is now principally developer-funded under the terms of PPS 5, exceptions to this occur when there is a compelling and clear management need. In most cases that need will be a result of: threats outside the planning process (NHPP Measure 8); issues arising from the management and presentation of the English Heritage estate (NHPP Measure 7); or issues relating to the management of the designated, or potentially suitable for designation, archaeological resource (NHPP Measure 4). This will continue to be the case. Concerns with respect to the value and academic contribution of developer-funded archaeology may be addressed in part by developing mitigation proposals and excavation strategies with the principal research questions identified by the Regional Research Frameworks in mind, and the emphasis within PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment will encourage approaches which place the gaining of new knowledge as a clear public benefit above that which sets out primarily to provide a record of destroyed evidence. Inevitably, however, contributions to research agenda are likely to be, in most cases, limited by the scope of most developer-funded excavations.

Brief details are given below of research priorities and their relationship to NHPP Activities. It is anticipated that each NHPP Activity may be addressed through a number of individual projects addressing different aspects of the subject and given the nature of NHPP many of the Activities and projects will be multi-period in their coverage. There is scope within each priority for projects which have as their primary aim the provision of new understanding, the application of new knowledge to conservation practice, the development of new ways of managing the Roman-period historic environment, or the engagement of a wider audience in understanding, valuing, caring for and enjoying our Roman-period past. The six key priorities are identified on the basis of sectoral discussion; reviews of existing Regional and other Research frameworks, with a further six topics identified as being important (termed Secondary Drivers' – Section 5 – below). Many projects will embrace more than one of these objectives. The key priorities are set out in tabular

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[23] *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (English Heritage, 2008)
[24] In response to the *Draft Heritage Protection Bill* (HMSO, 2008)
[25] see http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/har
[26] http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/index.htm

form in Appendix 2, which indicates potential research projects and links these to strategic aims and the Corporate Research Strategy.

4.1 Identifying and understanding vulnerable site types to support Protection and Management of Change (Topics 1, 2) (NHPP Measures 3 and 4, supporting Measures 5 and 6)

Elements of the Roman-period historic environment, such as villas and public buildings in the core-areas of major towns are readily recognised and relatively easily understood within the context of an established literature and are also easy to justify for designation or protection within the planning system. Other types of site, perhaps because of location or constructional characteristics, are less obvious, particularly to the non-specialist, and consequently present challenges in terms of presentation and justification for designation or adequate consideration in the planning process. However, it goes without saying, that an adequate understanding of the Roman, or any, period is predicated on adequate knowledge of the fullest possible suite of site types etc, as is the creation of an adequate and representative body of statutorily protected sites.

4.2 Holistic approaches to Roman-period landscapes (Topics 3, 4, 5) (NHPP Measures 3 and 4, supporting Measures 5 and 6)

There are three key sets of issues at a landscape scale, firstly the need to overcome various gaps and biases in current knowledge of the distributions of sites, secondly the need to understand better the landscape context of known sites and thirdly the recognition of regional diversity. Each aspect is critical in order to address the requirements of policy and management initiatives such as Historic Landscape Characterisation, Conservation Principles and Heritage Protection Reform. However, it is recognised that landscapes are rarely single-period and in seeking to understand Roman-period landscapes it is axiomatic that research will take in pre- and post-Roman aspects of the landscape, both as features in their own right but also as elements that can influence (pre-Roman) or be influenced by (post-Roman) features.

4.3 Understanding key transitions (Topics 6, 7, 8) (NHPP Measures 3 and 4)

Although Roman-period studies has long had a clear chronological framework this has to some extent lead to assumptions and under-researching of issues relating to, particularly, the beginnings of interaction between Britain and the Roman Empire and the interface between the Late Roman and Post-Roman periods. The complexities of early contacts are now being recognised[27] and approaches to identifying fifth-century sites and deposits suggested.[28] Despite this both extremes of the Roman period are still poorly understood. Approaches that look back to the Iron Age and beyond the early fifth century to explain both the transitions and individual site histories are required. Almost equally obscure are aspects of the transition of 'Early'

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[27] For example J Creighton, *Britannia. The Creation of a Roman Province* (2006)
[28] H E M Cool 'The parts left over: material culture into the fifth century', in T Wilmott & P Wilson (eds) *The Late Roman Transition in the North: Papers from the third Roman Archaeology Conference, Durham 1999*, British Archaeological Reports British Series 299 (2000), 47-65

to 'Later' Roman Britain and particular issues of chronology with respect to the third century.

4.4 Unlocking the potential of unpublished data (Topics 9, 10, 11) (NHPP Measure 4)

Recent work by Richard Bradley for prehistory[29] and others including, for the Roman period, Cotswold Archaeology and Mike Fulford[30] and Dominic Perring[31] have demonstrated the value of academic engagement with the results of commercial archaeology buried in 'grey literature', but there remains much to do in this respect. In addition there are many key sites pre-dating PPG16 that remain unpublished, and amongst students there has been a decline in primary research work on archives and museum collections. Many archives and collections still await basic cataloguing but have enormous potential as either self-contained projects or parts of larger research programmes.

4.5 Responding to changes in our climate and countryside (Topics 12, 13, 14) (NHPP Measure 2 in support of Measures 5 and 6)

Current research suggests climate change will have a major impact on the historic and natural environment of Britain in the coming decades. This will have both direct aspects, in the form of e.g. sea level rise or changing weather patterns, and indirect aspects such as changing land-use to grow biofuel crops, deep-cultivated crops such as potatoes, or greater visitor pressure if more people choose to take holidays at home. All of these will affect the conservation and management of Roman-period sites and landscapes; targeted research will be an important aspect of understanding the problems and finding solutions.

4.6 Getting the most of the data (Topics 15, 16) (NHPP Supporting Action B)
The is a clear need to utilise approaches common for prehistory and the early medieval studies to develop analyses that more fully exploit data sets and allow greater understanding of individual sites. The wealth of material culture from many Roman-period sites is too often regarded as a problem – witness the cursory treatment of it in many commercial grey-literature reports – rather than an untapped resource of immense potential. Similarly the adoption of the widest possible suite of appropriate scientific techniques can only enhance the resulting data sets and the understanding that flows from them. Similarly the unparalleled investment in fieldwork prompted by PPG 16 (now PPS 5) has led to massive increase in data of immense potential, but within the constraints of developer funding there has been relatively limited incorporation of that data in works of synthesis.[32]

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[29] R Bradley, *The Prehistory of Britain and Ireland* (2007)
[30] Cotswold Archaeology *Assessing the Research Potential of Grey Literature in the Study of Roman England Stage 1 Report* (http://csweb.bournemouth.ac.uk/aip/aipintro.htm) and M Fulford and N Holbrook 'Assessing the Contribution of Commercial Archaeology to the Study of the Roman Period in England, 1990-2004', *Antiquaries Journal* 91 (2011), 323-45
[31] D Perring *Town and Country in England. Frameworks for Research* (2002)
[32] See M Fulford 'The Impact of Commercial Archaeology on the UK Heritage', in B Cunliffe (ed) *History for the Taking? Perspectives on Material Heritage* (2011) which develops themes from The Roman Grey Literature Project (see note 30)

5 Secondary Drivers

A second level of priorities identifies or important areas of research that will be considered for inclusion to 'add additional value' to projects initiated under the Critical Priorities identified in Section 4 (above) where circumstances and resources allow.

5.1 Understanding human interactions with the environment (Topic 17) (NHPP Measure 4)

There is a need to bring the environmental record and approaches up to standard in comparison of other Roman-period data sets. Advances in scientific methodologies and other new and relatively new techniques have the potential to revolutionise our understanding of key aspects of the Roman (and other) periods. Examples include the possibility of recovering environmental material from artefact-poor sites and its potential use as proxy data to inform understanding that would elsewhere rely on cultural material. Such data may have the potential to inform, or rewrite our understanding of societal development through and beyond the Roman period.

5.2 Approaches to the Roman period within commercial archaeology (Topic 18) (NHPP Measure 4)

Given the change in the balance of sources of funding for archaeological work following the implementation of PPG16 and now PPS5, worked funded as a result of planning conditions represents the major source of new data in the field. As Sectoral Lead EH is well-placed to influence the approaches adopted, by pioneering the application of new or under utilised techniques on Roman-period projects, developing and supporting new approaches to data capture and analysis and supporting CPD focussed on Roman-period issues for the profession.

5.3 Raising awareness of recent research across the Sector and engaging the public (Topics 19) (NHPP Measure 4, supporting Measures 5 and 6 and Supporting Actions A and F)

The value of research is much diminished if it is not disseminated properly, particularly if potential audiences are not encouraged to engage with the subject. Whilst aspects of the Roman Period may enjoy a higher profile in the public eye by virtue of the tangible nature of some remains and its inclusion in the National Curriculum (Key Stage 2) than some other aspects of the historic environment; much information in the public domain is dated and fails to reflect the full range of the subject. The importance of the less tangible, often totally buried, elements of the Roman-period resource, for example Roman-period suburbs and suburban and rural cemeteries, and the excitement implicit in accessing the data and developing understandings need to be better communicated, both to the general public and to the Government and other agencies. Academic courses, museum displays, and the policies of government agencies are almost all out of date in this respect. At the same time the commercial and curatorial sectors need to, as a matter of course, undertake appropriate research and dissemination that will inform both academic and popular understanding and also the development of policy. Community

Archaeology provides a means of developing direct engagement. Research designs need to encourage new ways of disseminating academic research and there is need for applied research aimed at establishing the best ways of engaging new audiences, whether in the field, schools, on the web, or at EH properties and events.

6 Enhancing the Research Environment

Whilst not 'research activity' in Frascati terms,[33] two 'supporting actions' are identified that seek to retain and enhance the research gain of previous and future investment in Roman-period research.

6.1 Securing key archives (Topic 20) (NHPP Measure 8)

Individual researchers and specialists often hold key data sets that they have accumulated over decades of research and which can represent an immensely important resource. While much may have been published through contributions to excavation reports and other publications, rarely has the full potential of the archive been realised through definitive publication of the accumulated knowledge. Such archives are vulnerable to loss following changes in the personal circumstances of researchers, or their death and represent resources that the sector can ill afford to lose. Equally the collapse of organisations can also leave archives vulnerable, again with the potential for there to be much unpublished, or partially published data, at risk.

6.2 Building partnerships beyond England (Topics 21) (NHPP Measure 4 and Supporting Action B: Building Capacity)

Given the supra-national nature of the Roman Empire it is essential to seek to understand Roman Britain in an Empire-wide context. While Roman Britain has a long history of research, too often that research has failed to recognise the reality that Britain was a small province, [34] on the edge of the Empire that was influenced by, more than it influenced what happened in the wider Roman World.

7   Establishing research projects

The publication of this strategy for research into the Roman-period historic environment is intended to indicate to the heritage sector those areas of the subject which are of primary concern to English Heritage within the context of NHPP. Approaches relating to collaboration in those areas are welcomed from the sector. Informal preliminary discussions can often help to develop cogent proposals for research: the primary point of contact:

Pete Wilson, Head of Research Policy (Roman Archaeology) (Tel: 01944-738861; email pete.wilson@english-heritage.org.uk)

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[33] See note 2.

[34] A province that was sub-divided into two and then four provinces, later becoming a diocese forming one part of the 'Prefecture of the Gauls'.

Guidance on developing a research proposal compatible with current guidelines (MoRPHE) is provided on the English Heritage website: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/funding/grants/grants-available/nhpcp/. Decisions on funding will be based upon the criteria set out in the NHPP and upon the importance of the proposal relative to other demands on English Heritage resources.

Appendix 1: Current Research Frameworks for the Roman-period historic environment

1 English Regional Research Frameworks
(* incomplete; ** currently under revision/review)

- *The Archaeology of South-West England: resource assessment and research agenda* (Somerset County Council, 2008)
- *The Undiscovered Country: <<Roman>> of the West Midlands* (Oxbow Books, 2007) [*resource assessment only; seminar papers at http://www.iaa.bham.ac.uk]
- *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: an archaeological resource assessment and research agenda* (Leicester University Press, 2006; draft documents at http://www.le.ac.uk)**
- *Shared Visions: the North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (Durham County Council, 2006)
- *Research and Archaeology in North West England. An archaeological research framework for north west England* (Archaeology North West, 2006 [resource assessment], 2007 [research agenda and strategy]; draft documents at http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)
- *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: an archaeological resource assessment and research agenda* (Leicester University Press, 2006; *draft strategy at http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/tpa/research/project3/index.htm)
- *The Archaeology of Yorkshire: an assessment at the beginning of the 21st century* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 2003 [*resource assessment only])
- *A Research Framework for London Archaeology 2002* (Museum of London, 2002)**
- *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties* (East Anglian Archaeology, 1997 [resource assessment], 2000 [research agenda and strategy]; http://www.eaareports.org.uk)
- *Revision of the Regional Research Framework for the Eastern Region* (East Anglian Archaeology, 2008) ; http://www.eaareports.org.uk/framework_revised.htm)**
- *An Archaeological Research Framework for the Greater Thames Estuary* (Essex County Council, 1999)**
- *Solent-Thames Archaeological Research Framework* (*draft documents at http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/archaeology/solent_framework.page?)
- *South East Research Framework* (*seminar papers at http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/heritage/south_east_research_framework.aspx)

2 Other Research Frameworks

- S James & M Millett (eds) *Britons and Romans: Advancing a Research agenda* (CBA Research Report 125, 2001)
- *The City by the Pool: assessing the archaeology of the City of Lincoln* (Oxbow Books, 2003; includes Lincoln Archaeological Research Assessment on CD-ROM)
- *England's Coastal Heritage* (English Heritage/RCHME, 1997)
- D Perring *Town and Country in England: frameworks for archaeological research* (CBA 2002)
- J Manley (ed) *The Archaeology of Fishbourne and Chichester. A framework for its future* (Sussex Archaeological Society, 2008)
- A D Chadwick *Research Agenda. The Iron Age and Romano-British Periods in West Yorkshire* (West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service, 2009)

(http://www.archaeology.wyjs.org.uk/documents/archaeology/Final-Draft-Iron-Age-Roman-West-Yorkshire-Research-Agenda.pdf)

- *Bedfordshire Archaeology - Research and Archaeology: resource assessment, research agenda and strategy* (Bedfordshire Archaeological Council, 2007 [aligned with Eastern Counties RRF])

- *Aspects of Archaeology and History in Surrey: towards a research framework for the county* (Surrey Archaeological Society, 2004)

- *Time and Tide: the archaeology of the Witham Valley* (Witham Valley Archaeological Research Committee, 2003)

- *Archaeological Research Agenda for the Avebury World Heritage Site* (AAHRG, 2001; http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/leisureandculture/museumhistoryheritage/worldheritagesite/aveburyarchaeologicalresearchagenda.htm)**

- *England's Coastal Heritage* (English Heritage/RCHME, 1997)

- **Maritime and Marine Historic Environment Research Framework* (draft documents at http://www.soton.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/maritime_research_framework.html)

- *Stonehenge World Heritage Site: an archaeological research framework* (EH and Bournemouth University, 2005; http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/9689)**

- *Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: an archaeological research framework* (Museum of London, 2004; http://www.conservancy.co.uk/page/Research-Frameworks/361/)

- *Dorset Coast Historic Environment Research Framework – Draft* (Wessex Archaeology, 2004; http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/marine/eh/dorset_coast)

- *Surrey Archaeological Research Framework* (Surrey County Council, 2006; http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Surrey+Archaeological+Research+Framework?opendocument)

- *An Outline Resource Assessment and Research Framework for the Archaeology of Worcester* (Worcester City Museums, 2007; http://www.worcestercitymuseums.org.uk/archaeo/res-framwk-v2_51.htm)

3 Site/Material Types

- *Metals and Metalworking: a research framework for archaeometallurgy* (Historical Metallurgy Society, 2008)

- *English Heritage Strategy for Wetlands* (English Heritage, 2002)

- *English Heritage Regional Environmental Reviews* (available as EH Research Department Reports; see http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/research-reports/)

4 Other Relevant Home Countries' Research strategies

- *A Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales* (http://www.archaeoleg.org.uk/intro.html)

- **Scottish Archaeological Research Framework* (draft documents at http://www.socantscot.org/scarf.asp)

Appendix 2:   Research Topics for the Roman Period (those prioritised in relation to the NHPP are in **bold**)

Topic	Selected areas for project development	Links to NHPP
THEME RM1 – Identifying and understanding vulnerable site types to support Protection and Management of Change		
1. Identification of sites/components of Roman-period sites that are under-represented in the archaeological record	• Identification of lacunae identified in Regional research frameworks and through other research • Identification of 'blank areas' and gaps in distributions • Identification of site components, eg in Roman towns, that are under-represented • investigating the development of routes, trackways and roads	Measure 3 – Understanding: Recognition/Identification of the Resource and Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance
2. Roman period suburbs and cemeteries	• Assessment of the resource and its significance and vulnerability	Measure 3 – Understanding: Recognition/Identification of the Resource and Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance
THEME RM2 – Holistic Approaches to Roman-period Landscapes		
3. Validation and upgrading of site distribution data	• addressing lacunae in basic mapping data for the Roman Period • utilisation/development of remote sensing techniques to identify 'hard to see' site types (eg cemeteries)	Measure 3 – Understanding: Recognition/Identification of the Resource
4. Landscape context of known sites	• Identification of landscapes associated with known sites • Integration and assessment of PAS and other surface-collected data with site data • palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological approaches to landscape	Measure 3 – Understanding: Recognition/Identification of the Resource and Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance
5. Recognition of Regional diversity in the Roman Period	• characterising and modelling occupation in different regions • understanding variations in the distributions of particular asset types • identifying ethnic & cultural diversity in the population of Roman Britain • understanding regional differences in artefact styles and economies • developing regional syntheses that move beyond 'Highland/Lowland' and 'Military/Civilian' concepts to build on the work of the 'Atlas of roman rural settlement in England', Wroxeter Hinterlands project and similar studies	Measure 3: Identification Measure 4: Assessment of Significance

Topic	Selected areas for project development	Links to NHPP
THEME RM3 – Understanding Key Transitions		
6. Iron Age to Roman	• develop data sets that allow a more nuanced understanding of the changes to, and continuity in the archaeological record in the first centuries BC and AD • refining chronologies associated with observed changes in the site-derived data and the artefact and ecofactual records • understanding the nature of cross-Channel contacts prior to AD 43	(Measure 3 – Understanding: Recognition/Identification of the Resource and Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance)
7. 'Early' to 'Late' Roman Britain	• recognising the evidence for '3rd-century change' • refining 3rd-century chronologies • refining and/or developing understanding the causes or impacts of change	(Measure 3: – Understanding: Recognition/Identification of the Resource Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance)
8. Roman to Post-Roman	• investigating the evidence for and character of change in the 4th century, with a particular emphasis on urban data sets • recognising, capturing and understanding 5th century data • refining/developing and testing chronological models	(Measure 3 – Understanding: Recognition/Identification of the Resource and Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance)
THEME RM4 – Unlocking the Potential of Unpublished Data		
9. Accessing grey literature	• building on the 'Roman Grey Literature' project use PPG 16/PPS 5 data and other sources to developing new interpretations and understandings and challenge existing orthodoxies	(Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance) (Supporting Action D: Accessing Knowledge)
10. Publication/dissemination of nationally significant backlog data from key sites	• analysis & dissemination of existing data sets that inform current priorities • adding value to current and new projects by integrating existing unpublished data	(Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance) (Supporting Action D: Accessing Knowledge)
11. Roman-period syntheses	• developing enhanced understandings using data from multiple sources: publicly-funded research, PPG 16/PPS 5 interventions, university and voluntary sector projects, PAS data	(Measure 4: Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance) (Supporting Action D: Accessing Knowledge)
THEME RM5 - Responding to changes in our climate and countryside		
12. Multi-agency approaches to conservation and monitoring of Roman-period sites	• research to support the protection of Roman-period sites in environmentally significant areas (e.g. SSSIs)	Measure 5: Responses: Protection of Significance

Topic	Selected areas for project development	Links to NHPP
and landscapes	• assessing and managing the Roman-period palaeoenvironmental resource • establishing protection priorities based on assessment of risk & significance	
13. Understanding the impact of changing climate and related land-use on Roman-period sites	• investigating and monitoring the impact of new crop regimes • responding to coastal change and shoreline management • investigating the impact of hydrological change on wetland sites	Measure 2: Threat Response Measure 3: Identification
14. Assessing risks to Roman-period sites and landscapes beyond climate change	• assessments of sites damaged by agriculture or biological action • assessing the impact of new development on Roman/multi-period landscapes • assessing the impact of recreational activities (e.g. caving and metal-detecting)	Measure 2: Threat Response Measure 5: Protection

THEME RM6 – Getting the most out of the data

Topic	Selected areas for project development	Links to NHPP
15. Innovative intra-site studies with respect to Roman-period sites and issues	• investigating the potential approaches from other periods or disciplines • investigating and trialling new and experimental scientific techniques • application of and assessment of differing dating techniques • application of and assessment of quantitative techniques • develop better understanding of environment and agrarian systems in the period of transition from the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age to the Early Roman Period	(Supporting Action B: Building Capacity)
16. Developing and testing survey techniques for Roman-period sites, landscapes and material	• application and testing of approaches to alluviated and colluviated landscapes • developing the use of LIDAR and laser scanning for Roman-period assets • developing applications of soil geochemistry	(Supporting Action B: Building capacity)

B – SECONDARY DRIVERS

THEME RM7 – Understanding Human Interactions with the environment

Topic	Selected areas for project development	Links to NHPP
17. Roman-period environmental context and change	• understanding the importance of environmental factors in the Roman-period occupation of England • investigating the impact of environmental factors on agriculture in Roman Britain	

THEME RM8 – Approaches to the Roman Period in Commercial Archaeology

Topic	Selected areas for project development	Links to NHPP
18. Raising standards	• using exemplars demonstrate the potential of commercial projects to contribute to key	(Supporting Action B: Building capacity)

Topic	Selected areas for project development	Links to NHPP
	national and regional research objectives • investigate the 'research benefit' of the application of appropriate innovate techniques in both fieldwork and analysis	
THEME RM9 – Raising Awareness of recent research across the Sector and engaging the public		
19. Widening access	• development of projects that engage the wider public with their Roman past • development of new approaches to dissemination to provide access to information on Roman-period discoveries, sites and finds to a range of audiences	
C – ENHANCING THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT		
20. Securing Key Archives	• opportunities to secure, order and makes accessible archives held in private hands or that are under threat due to changing circumstances	(Measure 8: Responses: Grant aid for Protection)
21. Building Partnerships beyond England	• developing opportunities to ensure that the Roman-period archaeology of England is informed by and integrated with the best research undertaken by colleagues working in the rest of the UK and on the wider Roman Empire	(Supporting Action B: Building Capacity)

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