

Implementing the Heritage Protection Reforms A Second Report on Local Authority Staff Resources

Produced by English Heritage, the Association of Local Government
Archaeological Officers and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation
August 2010

I Executive Summary

1.1 The August 2010 report shows that historic environment staffing provision in local authorities has continued to decline since the last report in July 2009. In the 15 months between the 2008 surveys undertaken by ALGAO and IHBC and the equivalent surveys in 2010 the numbers of staff who deal with archaeology has fallen by 4%, and those who deal with building and area conservation by 6.9%, giving a combined reduction for all local authority historic environment staff of 5.9%. The numbers of historic environment staff, however, are still slightly higher than in 2003 when broadly equivalent figures were first collected.

1.2 As it is likely that the current proposals for reductions in funding for the public sector will result in further staff cuts, any such decline must be seen as additional to previous reductions in staffing, reducing capacity and the provision of historic environment services.

2 Introduction

2.1 The purpose of this document is to report on historic environment staff numbers in local authorities in 2009/10 and compare these with earlier data. A previous report (the 2009 report), based on research in 2008, *Implementing the Heritage Protection Reforms: A Report on Local Authority and English Heritage Staff Resources*, is available at http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Implementing_HPR_-_Staff_Resources_20090507152928.pdf?1276613130.

2.2 This report updates the position from last year's report on the change in staffing resources for the historic environment in local authorities in the light of fresh data collected in early 2010, and compares this 2010 data with past comparable data (2003, 2006 and 2008 data sets) and gives some analysis¹. It should be noted that, whereas the interval between the 2006 and 2008 surveys was 24 months, the interval between the 2008 and 2010 surveys was 15 months.

¹ As noted in the 2009 report, the figures for building conservation staffing contained in the LACPS 2003 and in the later surveys are considered broadly equivalent, as there is a little doubt as to whether the figures in LACPS 2003 were collected in an equally robust way to the 2006, 2008 and 2010 figures. See *Implementing the Heritage Protection Reforms: A Report on Local Authority and English Heritage Staff Resources*, EH/ALGAO/IHBC, May 2009, note 15.

2.3 English Heritage staff resources working with local planning authorities on planning-related and grant-aid work have not been reassessed for this report as there has broadly been no change since the 2009 report.

2.4 This report has been produced jointly by English Heritage with the Association of Local Government Officers (ALGAO), which is the forum representing archaeologists working for local authorities and national parks, and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), which is the professional body for building conservation practitioners and historic environment experts many of whom are in local government.

2.5 The structure of local government in England continues to evolve and there are 35 (9%) fewer local authorities in 2010 than there were at the time of the 2008 survey. The implications of these changes are covered in Appendix I. There are also growing numbers of formal and informal expertise-sharing arrangements between authorities. These are also discussed in Appendix I.

3 Local authority staffing provision

3.1 In early 2010 there were 1086 full time equivalent (FTE) historic environment members of staff in local authorities in England. This comprised 701 staff working on building and area conservation and 385 archaeological staff.

3.2 These figures are for both permanent and temporary, full time equivalents. The posts are those for which a related professional or academic qualification is required and for other staff, not fully qualified, who are engaged on equivalent work. Administrative staff are not included. Time spent directly managing staff is counted, as it has a direct consequence for the management of the historic environment. The management time of the head of a historic environment team is therefore included but that of the head of a group which includes the historic environment team is not.

3.3 The data was collected by ALGAO and IHBC. ALGAO has been keeping figures on local government archaeological staff resources on an annual basis since 1998; IHBC has also produced figures in 2006 and 2008, with broadly equivalent figures available from the Local Authority Conservation Provision Survey of 2003. Although there is more data for the archaeological resource, this report looks at the years for which both archaeological and building conservation data is available. These are 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2010.

3.4 The national trend in employment in specialist historic environment services shows that there was an overall loss of nearly 68 FTEs between the last two surveys of 2008 and 2010. This is made up of a loss of almost 52 conservation officer FTEs and almost 16 archaeological FTEs during the 15 months 2008-2010, compared to the loss of almost 64 FTEs for building conservation and just over 6 FTEs for archaeology for the 24 months 2006-8. These figures translate into an overall reduction between 2008 and 2010 of 5.9%, with a reduction of 6.9% for conservation officers and 4.0% for archaeological staff. These follow a 5.4% overall decrease between 2006 and 2008 with a 7.4% decrease in conservation officer FTEs and a 1.5% decrease in archaeological FTEs. The number of historic environment

FTEs in local authorities are continuing to fall and the rate of decline could increase in future.

3.5 The longer term trends are shown in the graph below and show a peak reached in 2006 with subsequent falls for both building conservation and archaeology, with the fall-off being particularly marked for the former.

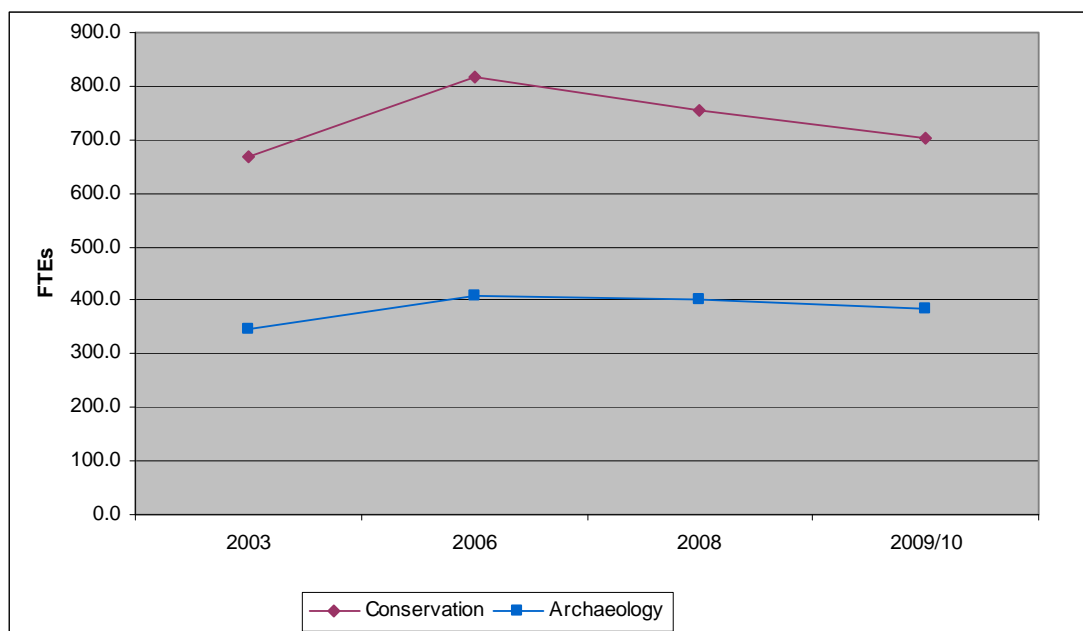


Table 1 – Changes in Building Conservation and Archaeological FTE staff numbers between 2003 and 2009/10

3.6 The reduction in the number of local authorities between the most recent survey and 2008 has meant that comparing the national average FTE staff resource per authority is not straightforward. Table 2, below, shows the national averages for the three samples up to 2008. The change in the base number of local authorities in 2009/10 means that data is not comparable and a new data sequence has to be started from this year. The new unitary authorities in place from April 2009 meant an overall reduction in number of local authorities by 35. Due to the reduction in the number of authorities the national average for building conservation per authority shows an increase of 0.03 to 1.94FTE, with a similar increase for archaeology of 0.06 to 1.07FTE; and the overall average has increased by 0.1 to 3.01FTE per authority.

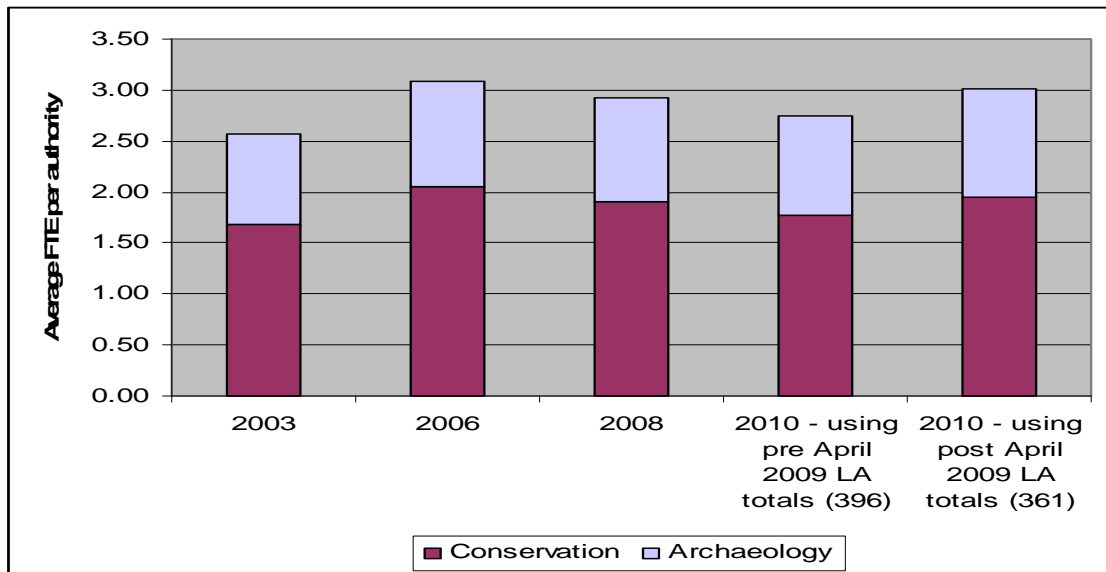


Table 2– Average Historic Environment FTEs available to Local Authorities, 2003 – 2010. There are two columns for 2010, one using the pre-April 2009 number of Local Authorities and one showing the post April 2009 number of local authorities, a reduction of 35 authorities in total.

3.7 The regional proportions of the overall total resource have not changed as much, one region compared to another, as the overall resource has declined. Only the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber saw any increase, the rest saw relative declines. This is illustrated in more detail in Tables A3 and A4 in Appendix 2.

Archaeology

3.8 The regional picture for archaeology over the past four surveys shows variation between regions (Table 3 below). East; Yorkshire and Humberside; London and to a lesser extent West Midlands show a reduction from high points in 2006. South West, East Midlands and North West record their high points in 2008 and then a recent reduction. The South East is the only exception to the trend and shows an increase for the last year after a reduction in 2008.

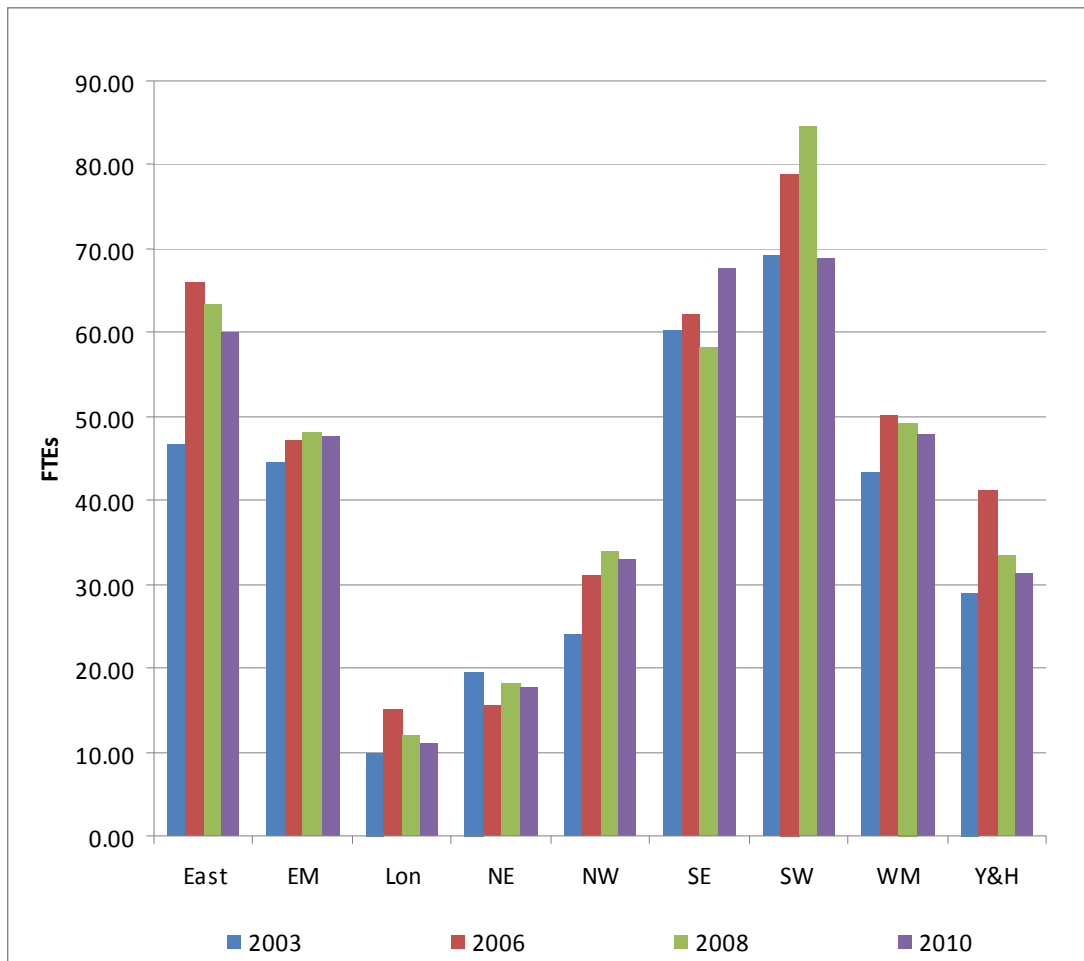


Table 3 – Table showing regional provision for archaeology

3.9 With the exception of the North East and, by the smallest of margins (0.3 FTE) the South West, all of the regions record a rise in FTEs between 2003 and 2010.

Building Conservation

3.10 Building conservation, as last year, follows a different trajectory from archaeology. The headline figure for FTEs in local authority employ remains almost twice the number of that for archaeologists due to designation and development control responsibilities, regeneration activities and the generally wider remit for building conservation, as well as the larger numbers of statutory duties on planning authorities relating to historic building and area conservation.

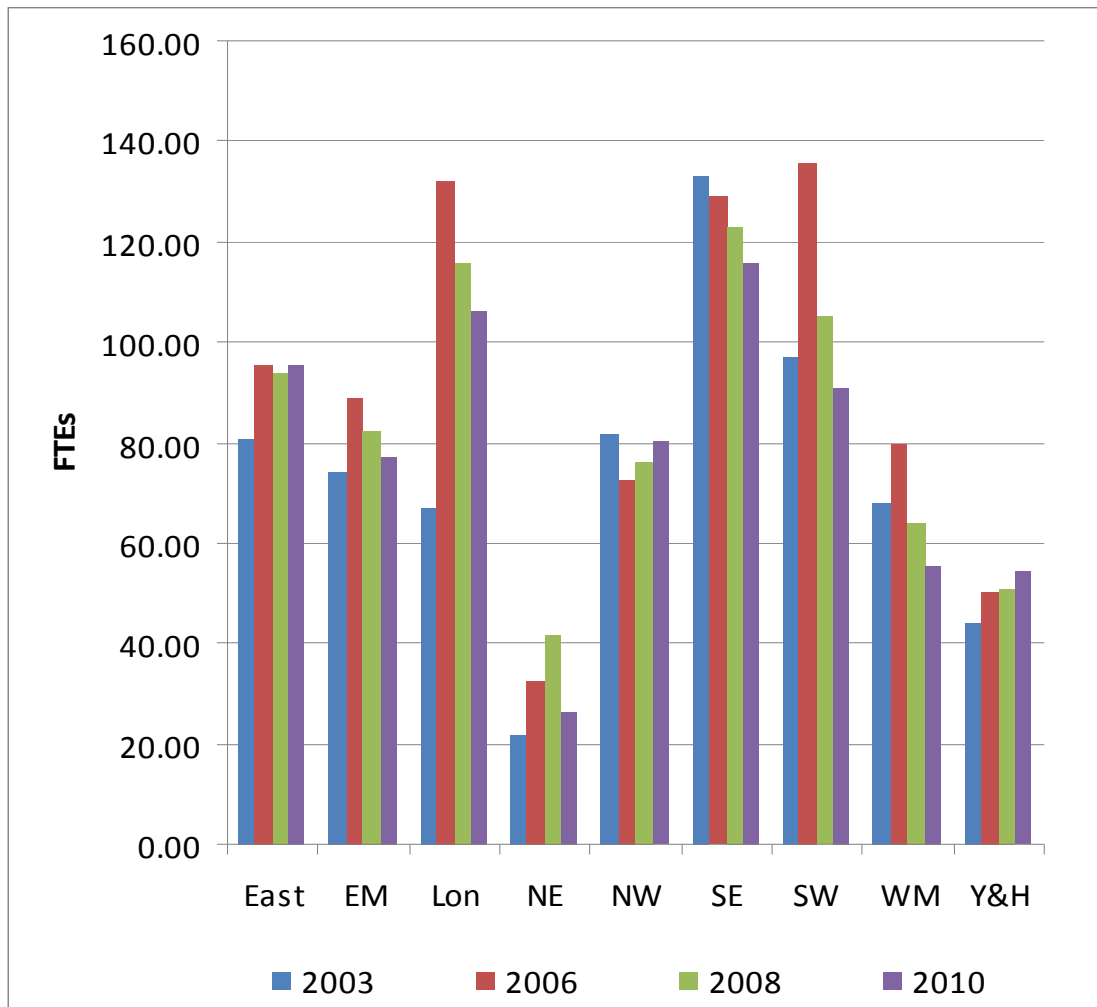


Table 4 – Table showing regional provision for building conservation

3.11 Table 5 shows the changing picture for building conservation. Only one region has seen a consistent decline from 2003, the South East. East and North West show small increases in the past year and North East a decrease after consistent increases. London, the North East and the South West have shown particularly large fluctuations, all now resulting in large relative declines. With a couple of exceptions, there has been a consistent decline in each region since the highpoint in 2006.

3.12 The biggest declines in the past year have been in the South West, South East and in the North East (the latter from a low base, making it especially damaging). Both London and West Midland regions lost 8-9 posts and East Midlands over 5 posts. The only increases were in the North West (nearly 4 posts), in Yorkshire and the Humber (3.4 posts) and in East Anglia (1.6 posts).

Local Authority Historic Environment activity 2008-9

3.13 Last year’s report used the available data collected by Communities and Local Government (CLG) on numbers of planning permissions, listed building consents and conservation area consents as proxy indicators to be set against the overall levels of activity. It is accepted that these measures don’t capture the full range of historic

environment activities but in the absence of specific targeted indicators they are the only national datasets available².

3.14 CLG reports annually on the numbers of planning applications decided (Appendix 2, Table A6). Table 5 below shows that staffing levels have fallen as planning applications have fallen, albeit with some time-lag. With the caveat mentioned above as to the relationship between staffing and numbers of planning permissions, it is interesting to note that planning applications decided peaked in 2004/5, before historic environment staff began to decline in numbers in 2006/7.

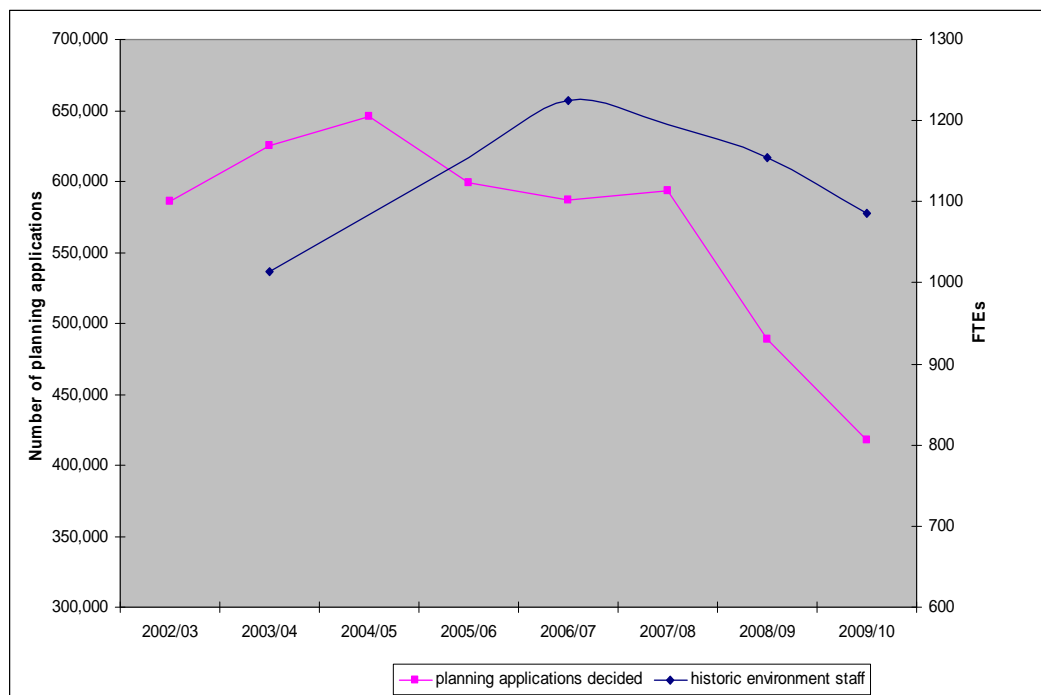


Table 5 – Changes in planning application activity plotted against local authority historic environment staffing levels

3.15 The figure below compares the regional proportions of the overall national staffing picture against the numbers of heritage assets (listed buildings and scheduled monuments).

² Local authority historic environment staff spend time on outreach and advice, on grants and related repair and maintenance issues, on regeneration and on place-making, on their input into policy matters within planning departments, on heritage at risk, on data gathering, on the development of Historic Environment Records, on archaeological investigation and interpretation, and on enforcement,

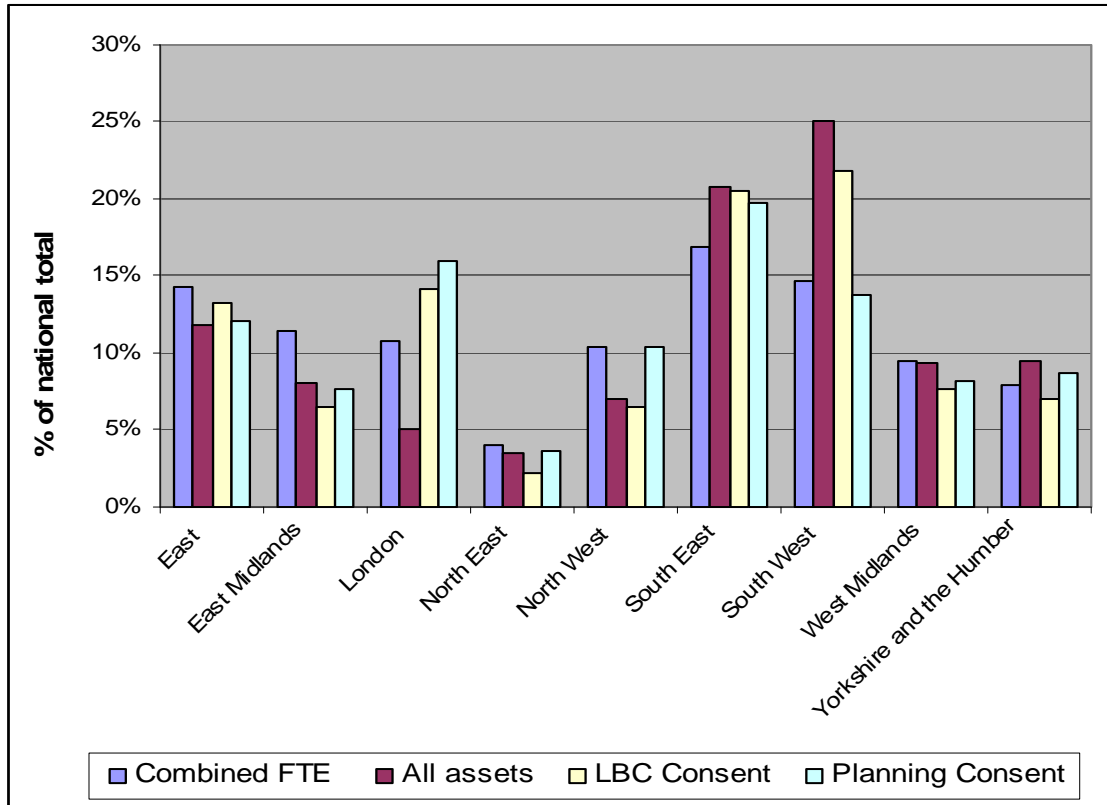


Table 6 – Relative regional proportions of FTE historic environment staff plotted against regional proportions of designated assets; Listed Building Consents and Planning Consents

3.16 Comparing the proportions of permissions and consents against staffing and assets gives a regional picture of potential stresses within the current local authority system. Again this is a partial analysis as it misses out, for instance, intangible factors completely, such as political support for the historic environment. It does, however reinforce the point that there are significant regional differences borne about by a combination of factors, some of which are presented here.

Reasons for changes in employment levels

3.17 There is little doubt that the main reasons for the changes from 2008 have been the impact of the economic downturn, the changes in authority structures and the continuing changes in local authority provision at a local level. But despite this it is very likely that the impact of the economic downturn on local authority staffing provision has yet to be fully felt. EH, ALGAO and IHBC are all concerned that any changes to structures should be fully considered in the light of their impact on delivery. The partner organisations intend to continue to collate figures for the future to measure impact on local authority staffing provision from and EH, ALGAO and IHBC are also continuing work on the duties, powers and responsibilities of local authorities for the historic environment.

3.18 The impact of changing structures of local government on staffing provision is not easy to quantify. There have been shared services, and services provided by one authority to another, usually by service level agreement, for many years. Indeed the

model of provision of building conservation advice to second-tier authorities from the upper tier (largely county staff advising local planning authorities) was very common though now much less so; archaeological advice, on the other hand, is still usually provided in this way. Other sharing arrangements appear to be more ad hoc but recommended models are given by Local Government: Improvement and Development at <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=6943687>. Thus shared Chief Executives, management structures and services, including conservation, can now all be found and they are becoming increasingly common, sharing between different authorities. The benefits and disbenefits will need to be analysed; in addition to efficiency savings, potential benefits may lie in the creation of a critical mass of expertise with a range of skills but efficiency savings may also lead to the dilution of existing skills, the reduction of useful tasks and the loss of direct personal contact with LPA staff. Appendix I contains some information on the varieties of change in local authority structures.

3.19 Other reasons for the decrease in numbers over the past year will also include the impact of the decline in planning fee income (though this has an indirect correlation with the decline in planning applications) and the decline in grant-in-aid for local authorities. A table of reasons for changes in staffing at local authorities is set out below.

Reasons for loss of posts in local authorities	
The loss of entire services (sometimes more than one officer)	
An increase in a move towards generalism where planning managers feel that development control planners are capable of carrying out the conservation function without specialist training	
Loss in staffing taking core provision back to a single person or consultant	
The growing use of part-time staff	
General authority-wide budget and/or staffing reductions of 10% & 15%	
Conservation teams where each member has taken a cut in hours to retain the whole section and prevent one member of staff being made redundant	
A number of potential and proposed cuts into 2010 (especially at the end of the financial year)	
Reduction in use of consultants, especially for project work but also for day to day work	
General reduction in staffing in areas where unitary authorities have been set up, compared to the position prior to going unitary	
Loss of conservation voice in management, usually due to amalgamation of teams with other staff, alongside replacement with lower paid/more junior staff	

Table 8 - Reasons for loss of posts in local authorities

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The June 2009 Report gave four recommendations (progress to date in brackets):
- the need for further work on local authority duties, powers and responsibilities so as to provide a number of possible models for the effective delivery of historic environment services in local authorities (ongoing).
 - the carrying forward of further surveys on a regular basis (ongoing);
 - the need for a government statement re-affirming the importance of historic environment services in planning departments (partly met); and
 - the collection by Communities and Local Government of a wider range of figures concerning work on the historic environment (not started).

4.2 This report shows that historic environment staffing provision in local authorities has continued to decline, both in terms of those who deal with archaeology and, at a slightly higher rate, those who deal with building conservation. In comparison with the rate of loss between 2006 and 2008, the decline in the staffing resource has almost doubled with historic environment staff as a whole being lost to local authorities at an increasing rate.

4.3 With the reduction in funding for the public sector, local authority conservation staffing is likely to be under further pressure. While English Heritage, the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation do not consider that there is excess staffing which can be reduced, it is most important to note that any reduction in staffing to come will be on top of previous reductions. The current state of the historic environment staffing resource in local authorities is one of a general decline since 2006 and one which is currently accelerating. Although there are areas where the news is less disheartening, in some places the decline set in before 2006. So any reduction to staffing levels in future should take into account the fact that staffing levels have been falling since 2006.

Appendix I

Changes in local government provision since 2008.

5.1 The changes have come in two main areas:

- The continued move away from two tier local government provision, with the setting up of nine new unitary authorities to cover areas previously with two tier local government (Cornwall and Wiltshire (single county unitaries (SW); Shropshire (single county unitary, WM); Cheshire (two unitaries, NW); Northumberland and Co Durham (single county unitaries, NE); Bedfordshire (two unitaries, E of E).³

	Counties	Districts	Unitaries	National Parks	Total
2008	34	238	116	9	397
2009	27	201	125	9	362

Table A1 - Comparison between types and numbers of Local Authorities in 2008 and 2009

5.2 Areas where ad hoc arrangements between local planning authorities are being organised. The following are examples of sharing arrangements

- **Joint local authority management structure**
 - To date this has mainly affected lower tier authorities where there is a two tier arrangement. Several pairs of authorities currently have a single chief executive and increasing numbers have a joint management team. Further merging of the teams will then occur
- **Shared services**
 - Local authorities for a number of years have had formal and informal arrangements for the sharing of services. The formal sharing of services is now being actively encouraged by CLG and it's expanding into areas which in the past have been excluded, including planning and conservation services
- **Privatisation of services**
 - Many local authorities have experience of privatisation or outsourcing of services having gone through this for some service areas in the past. Building on this experience some local authorities are now looking to create private sector organisations where they have developed specialist expertise. These private sector organisations will then sell these services to the private and public sectors.

³ It should be noted that the changes, an overall reduction of 35, in local authority make-up between 2008 and 2009 affects the comparison between figures for provision in local planning authorities.

Appendix 2

Tables

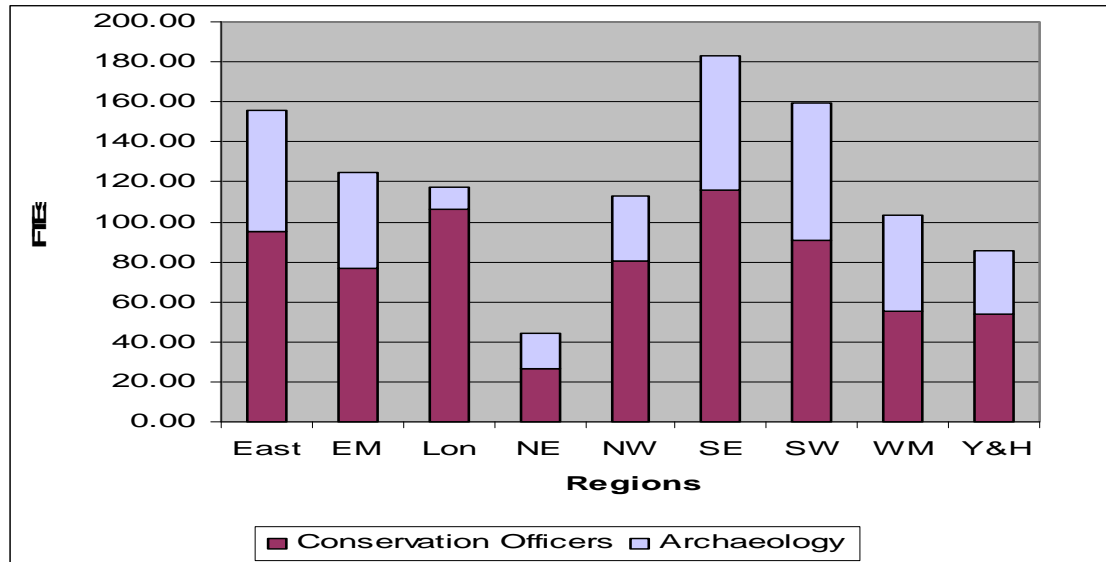


Table A2 – Regional breakdown of the staff resources in 2010

	LA staff working on Conservation				LA Staff working on Archaeology				All LA Historic Environment Staff			
	2003	2006	2008	2010	2003	2006	2008	2010	2003	2006	2008	2010
East	81.00	95.72	93.77	95.37	46.70	66.00	63.40	60.10	127.70	161.72	157.17	155.47
EM	74.00	89.05	82.35	77.10	44.50	47.10	48.00	47.70	118.50	136.15	130.35	124.80
Lon	67.00	132.20	115.6	106.20	10.00	15.00	12.00	11.00	77.00	147.20	127.60	117.20
NE	22.00	32.50	41.9	26.30	19.50	15.50	18.20	17.75	41.50	48.00	60.10	44.05
NW	82.00	72.60	76.26	80.21	24.00	31.00	34.00	33.00	106.00	103.60	110.26	113.21
SE	133.00	129.20	123	115.78	60.25	62.20	58.10	67.55	193.25	191.40	181.10	183.33
SW	97.00	135.65	105.3	90.80	69.15	79.00	84.64	68.80	166.15	214.65	189.94	159.60
WM	68.00	79.60	64.22	55.30	43.25	50.10	49.30	47.90	111.25	129.70	113.52	103.20
Y&H	44.00	50.45	50.74	54.14	29.00	41.25	33.50	31.45	73.00	91.70	84.24	85.59
	668.00	816.97	753.14	701.20	346.35	407.2	401.1	385.25	1014.4	1224.12	1154.3	1086.4

Table A3– Numbers of FTEs working in Local Authority Historic Environment Services in 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2010

	LA staff working on Conservation				LA Staff working on Archaeology				All LA Historic Environment Staff			
	2003	2006	2008	2010	2003	2006	2008	2010	2003	2006	2008	2010
East	1.47	1.74	1.70	1.80	0.85	1.20	1.15	1.13	2.32	2.94	2.86	2.93
EM	1.61	1.94	1.79	1.68	0.97	1.02	1.04	1.04	2.58	2.96	2.83	2.71
Lon	2.03	4.01	3.50	3.22	0.30	0.45	0.36	0.33	2.33	4.46	3.87	3.55
NE	0.85	1.25	1.61	2.02	0.75	0.60	0.70	1.37	1.60	1.85	2.31	3.39
NW	1.74	1.54	1.62	1.91	0.51	0.66	0.72	0.62	2.26	2.20	2.35	2.53
SE	1.77	1.72	1.64	1.54	0.80	0.83	0.77	0.90	2.58	2.55	2.41	2.44
SW	1.87	2.61	2.03	2.16	1.33	1.52	1.63	1.64	3.20	4.13	3.65	3.80
WM	1.79	2.09	1.69	1.68	1.14	1.32	1.30	1.45	2.93	3.41	2.99	3.13
Y&H	1.83	2.10	2.11	2.26	1.21	1.72	1.40	1.31	3.04	3.82	3.51	3.57
National	1.69	2.06	1.91	1.94	0.87	1.03	1.01	1.05	2.56	3.09	2.91	2.99

Table A4 – Average numbers of FTEs per authority in each region for 2003; 2006; 2008 and 2010

	LA staff working on Conservation				LA Staff working on Archaeology				All LA Historic Environment Staff			
	2003	2006	2008	2010	2003	2006	2008	2010	2003	2006	2008	2010
East	12.13%	11.72%	12.45%	13.60%	13.48%	16.21%	15.80%	15.89%	12.59%	13.21%	13.62%	14.40%
EM	11.08%	10.90%	10.93%	11.00%	12.85%	11.57%	11.97%	12.61%	11.68%	11.12%	11.29%	11.56%
Lon	10.03%	16.18%	15.35%	15.15%	2.89%	3.68%	2.99%	2.91%	7.59%	12.02%	11.05%	10.86%
NE	3.29%	3.98%	5.56%	3.75%	5.63%	3.81%	4.54%	4.69%	4.09%	3.92%	5.21%	4.08%
NW	12.28%	8.89%	10.13%	11.44%	6.93%	7.61%	8.48%	6.87%	10.45%	8.46%	9.55%	9.84%
SE	19.91%	15.81%	16.33%	16.51%	17.40%	15.28%	14.48%	17.86%	19.05%	15.64%	15.69%	16.98%
SW	14.52%	16.60%	13.98%	12.95%	19.97%	19.40%	21.10%	18.19%	16.38%	17.54%	16.46%	14.79%
WM	10.18%	9.74%	8.53%	7.89%	12.49%	12.31%	12.29%	12.66%	10.97%	10.60%	9.83%	9.56%
Y&H	6.59%	6.18%	6.74%	7.72%	8.37%	10.13%	8.35%	8.31%	7.20%	7.49%	7.30%	7.93%

Table A5 - Percentage of the national resource broken down by region for 2003; 2006; 2008 and 2010

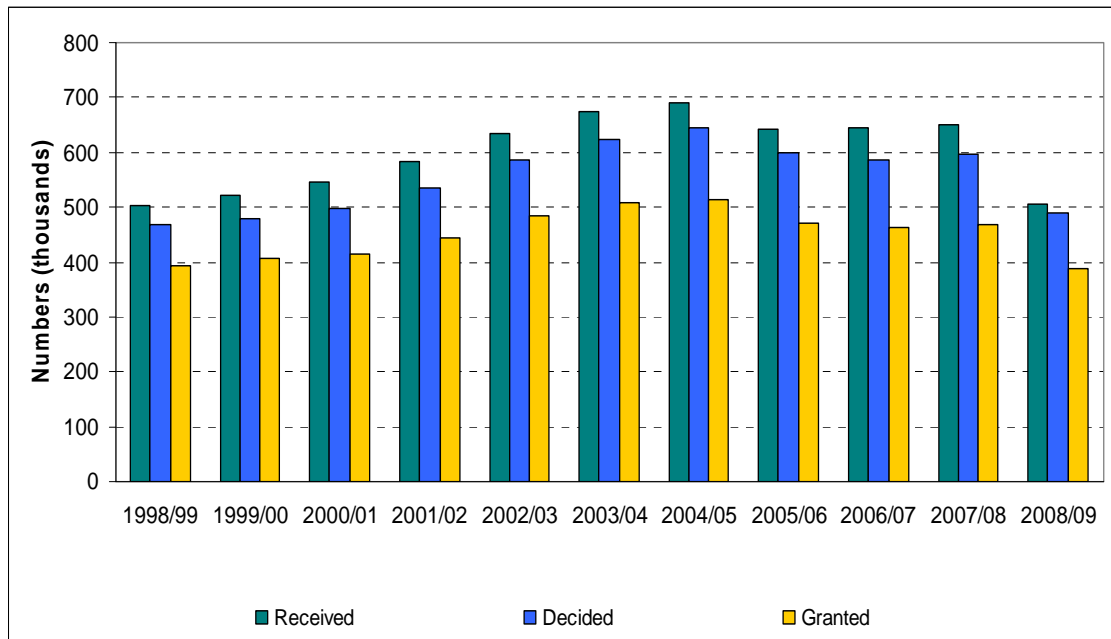


Table A6 – CLG record of development activity annually between 1998/9 – 2008-9

	% of Staff Resource 2010			% Designated assets	% Consents/Activity 2008-9	
	Conservation FTE	Archaeology FTE	Combined FTE	All assets	LBC Consent	Planning Consent
East	13.60%	15.60%	14.31%	11.81%	13.23%	12.14%
East Midlands	11.00%	12.38%	11.49%	8.00%	6.46%	7.61%
London	15.15%	2.86%	10.79%	5.01%	14.19%	15.93%
North East	3.75%	4.61%	4.05%	3.47%	2.19%	3.57%
North West	11.44%	8.57%	10.42%	7.04%	6.55%	10.33%
South East	16.51%	17.53%	16.87%	20.75%	20.55%	19.70%
South West	12.95%	17.86%	14.69%	25.01%	21.87%	13.78%
West Midlands	7.89%	12.43%	9.50%	9.38%	7.68%	8.19%
Yorkshire and the Humber	7.72%	8.16%	7.88%	9.54%	7.03%	8.74%

Table A7 - Regional Breakdowns of the staff resource, totals of designated assets and activities as a percentage of the respective national totals

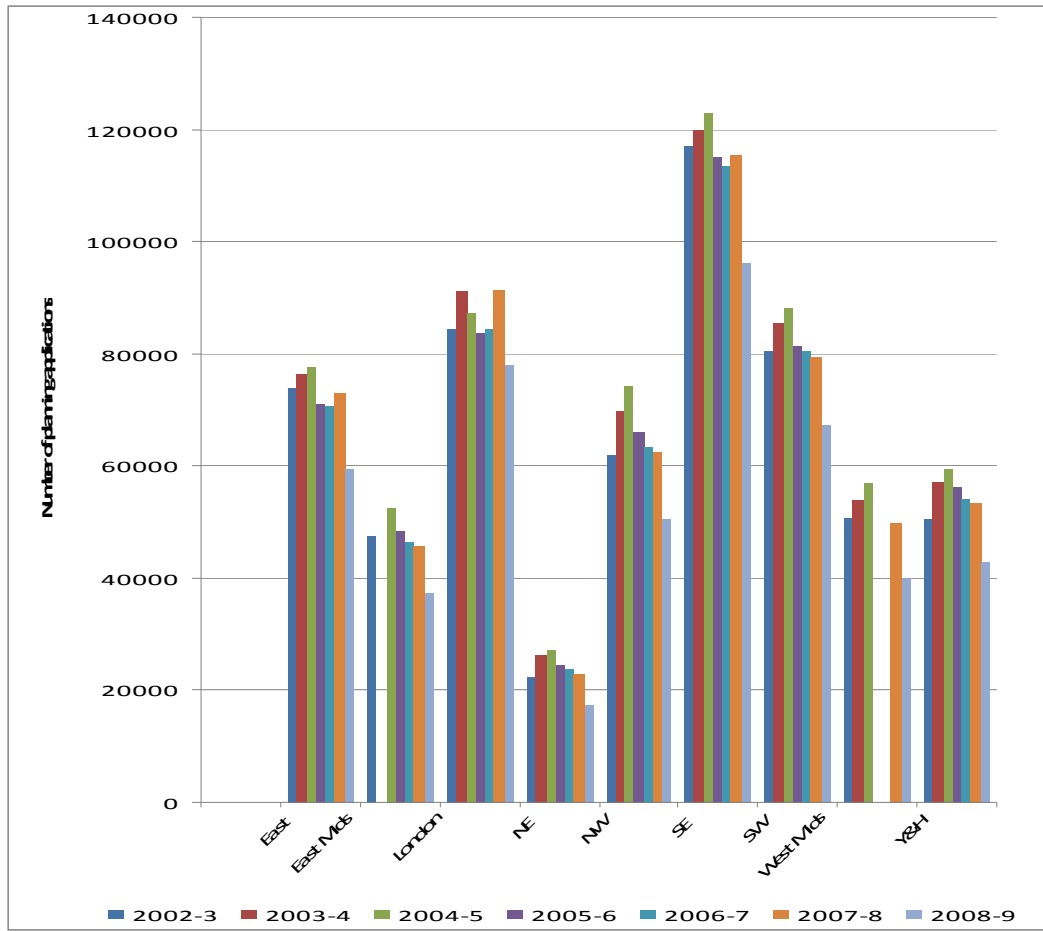


Table A8 - Regional breakdown for planning consents from 2002-3 through to 2008-9⁴

⁴ Some data currently not available. Some totals have been rounded to the nearest 00.

	2002-3 to 2003-4	2003-4 to 2004-5	2004-5 to 2005-6	2005-6 to 2006-7	2006-7 to 2007-8	2007-8 to 2008-9
East	3.24%	1.70%	-8.62%	-0.56%	3.38%	-18.64%
East Midlands	Data N/A	Data N/A	-7.81%	-4.13%	-1.42%	-18.63%
London	8.30%	-4.49%	-4.01%	0.72%	8.33%	-14.67%
North East	17.94%	3.42%	-9.93%	-2.45%	-4.34%	-23.52%
North West	12.24%	6.31%	-10.93%	-4.09%	-1.43%	-19.02%
South East	2.31%	2.67%	-6.42%	-1.30%	1.66%	-16.58%
South West	5.96%	3.04%	-7.50%	-1.11%	-1.12%	-15.31%
West Midlands	6.11%	5.76%	No return	No return	No return	No return
Yorkshire and the Humber	13.24%	3.84%	-5.55%	-3.91%	-0.86%	-20.14%
England	6.75%	3.33%	-7.20%	-2.02%	1.12%	-17.64%

Table A9 – Annual change in numbers of planning applications (permissions) expressed as percentages by region

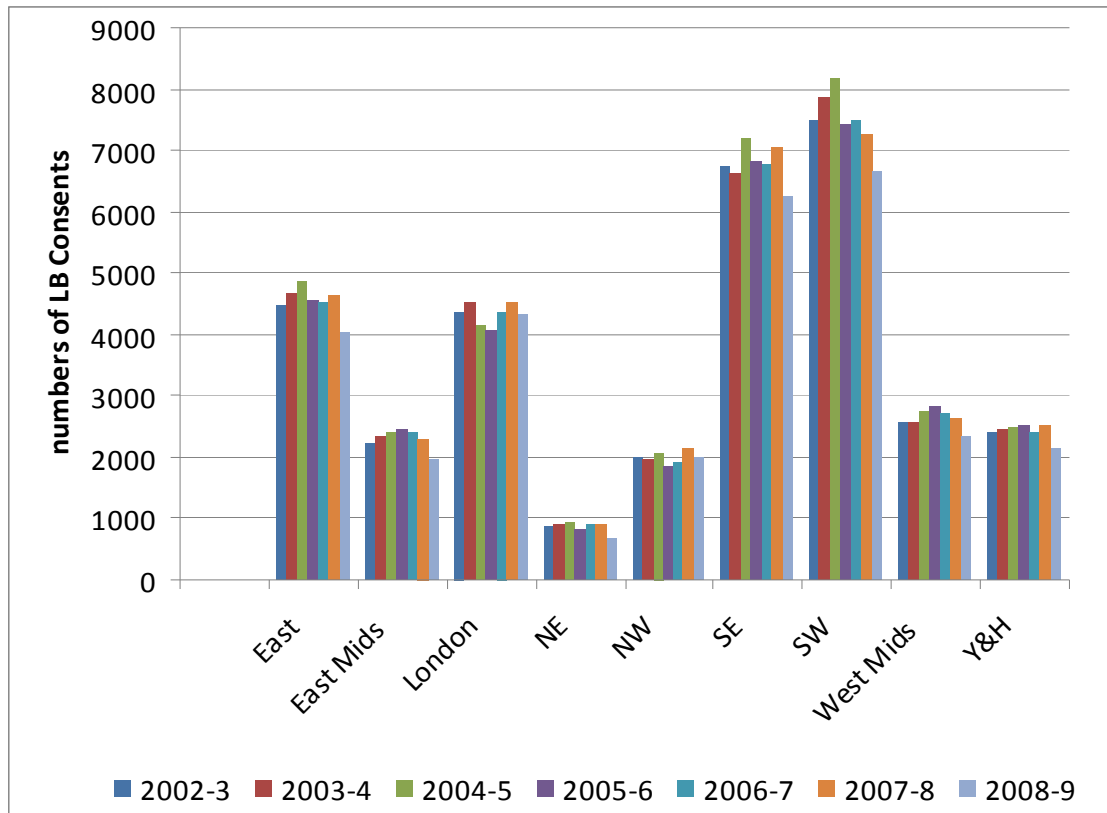


Table A10 - Listed Building Consents by region 2002-3 through to 2008-9

	2002-3 to 2003- 4	2003-4 to 2004-5	2004-5 to 2005-6	2005-6 to 2006- 7	2006-7 to 2007-8	2007-8 to 2008-9
East	4.31%	3.92%	-5.86%	-0.88%	1.94%	-12.81%
East Midlands	4.63%	3.22%	2.46%	-2.23%	-5.24%	-13.86%
London	3.24%	-8.11%	-2.04%	7.61%	3.24%	-4.66%
North East	7.16%	2.41%	-11.98%	9.96%	-0.99%	-25.67%
North West	-1.41%	4.90%	-9.82%	3.72%	12.22%	-7.78%
South East	-1.37%	8.40%	-5.06%	-0.94%	4.11%	-11.37%
South West	5.28%	3.73%	-8.97%	0.73%	-3.10%	-8.43%
West Midlands	-0.20%	7.22%	3.59%	-4.52%	-2.70%	-11.25%
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.78%	1.52%	2.14%	-5.30%	5.18%	-15.24%
England	2.14%	5.09%	-4.49%	0.28%	1.27%	-10.42%

Table A11 – Annual change in listed building consents expressed as percentages by region.