

Improving Information Access To Historic Environment Data – first principles

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What is the Issue?

- Information access is vital for efficient decision making
- For investigation of the historic environment, in the planning process, informing research & elsewhere
- But...the current situation has some significant weaknesses

English Heritage want to begin a dialogue that explores ways of:

- Clarifying Local Authority role as the source of primary data
- Supporting NPPF and changes in planning regulations
- Supporting more effective engagement with built environment practitioners
- Saving Local Authorities time and money
- Ensuring compliance with useful standards for data creation and management
- Eradicating duplication and promoting historic environment research
- Enabling interoperability and data sharing across the sector
- Safeguarding national and local historic environment datasets
- Clarifying EH's role in the context of Arms Length Body status
- Supporting efficient English Heritage delivery of NHPP
- Freeing up strategic resources

The Information Access Strategy : Outline Vision

- What is the Information Access Strategy?

An initiative by EH and our partners in HERs to improve access for the sector to digital heritage data

- How will it work?

Building on the network of local authority HERS, with English Heritage contributing data from its own research and commissioned projects; championing the development and implementation of shared data standards; providing integrated responses to national and sub-national scale queries (where many local queries would be burdensome); and safeguarding a 'security copy' of the national record.

- How advanced is the project?

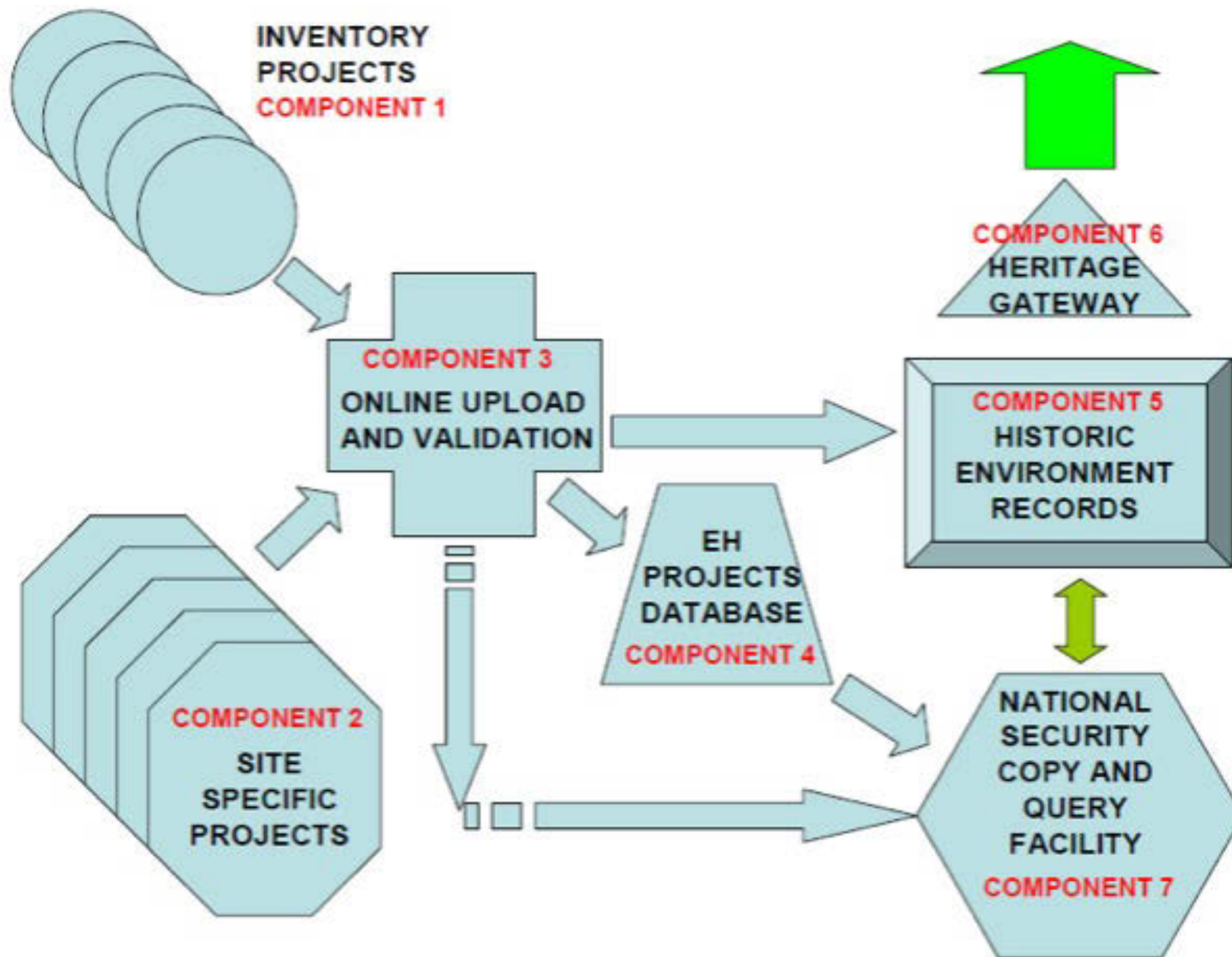
The initiative is still at proof-of-concept stage and much work remains to be done.

- Who will benefit?

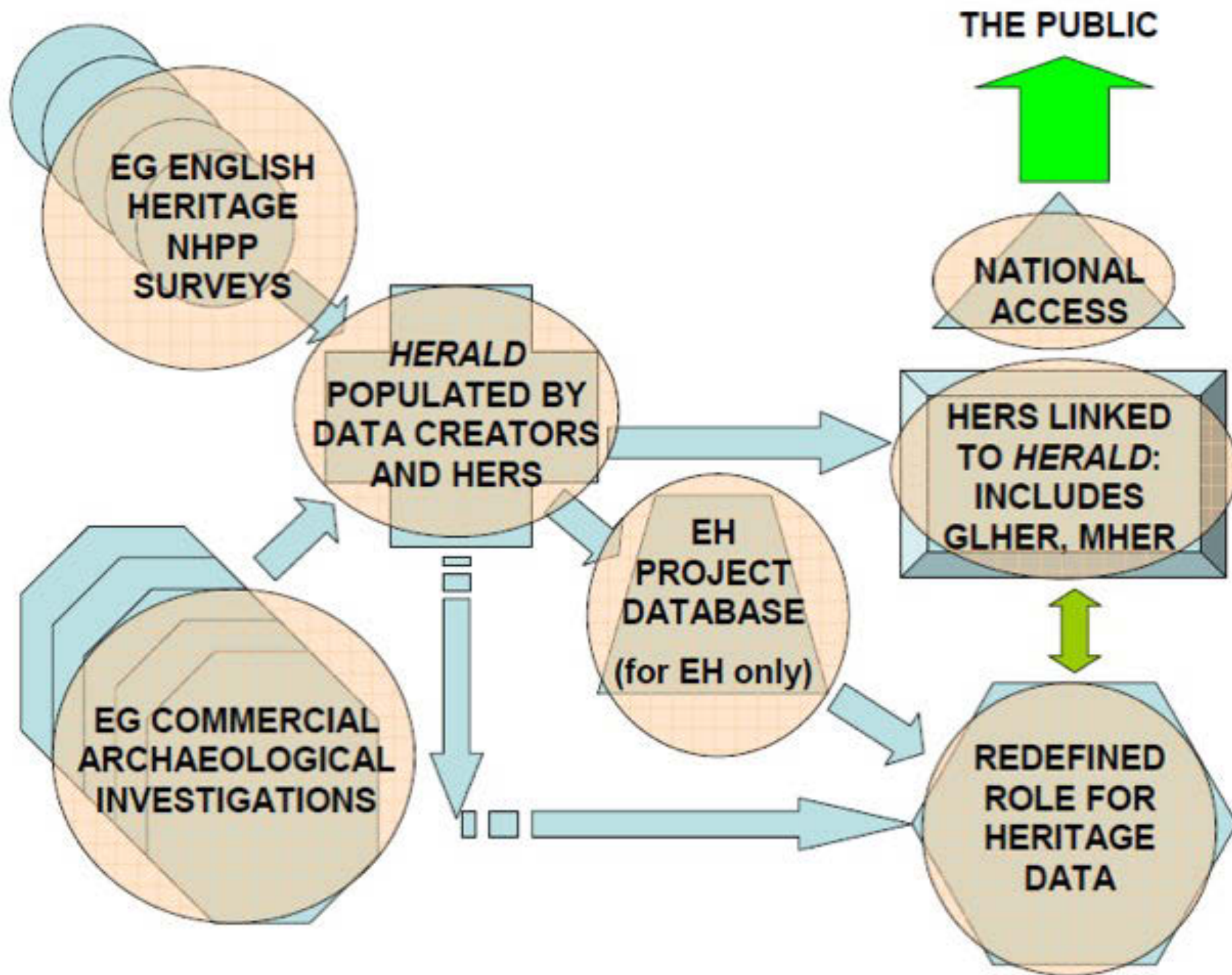
HERs; EH/HE; Archives; Museums; Contractors; Developers & Planners; wider Historic Environment Research including Communities & Academic sector; along with broader benefits for providing more accessible information to Heritage Tourism & the Public.

- What is the timetable?

The Information Access Strategy will be developed and implemented over the next three years. A more detailed timetable following decisions on the new model for HBMCE



High level vision of main components



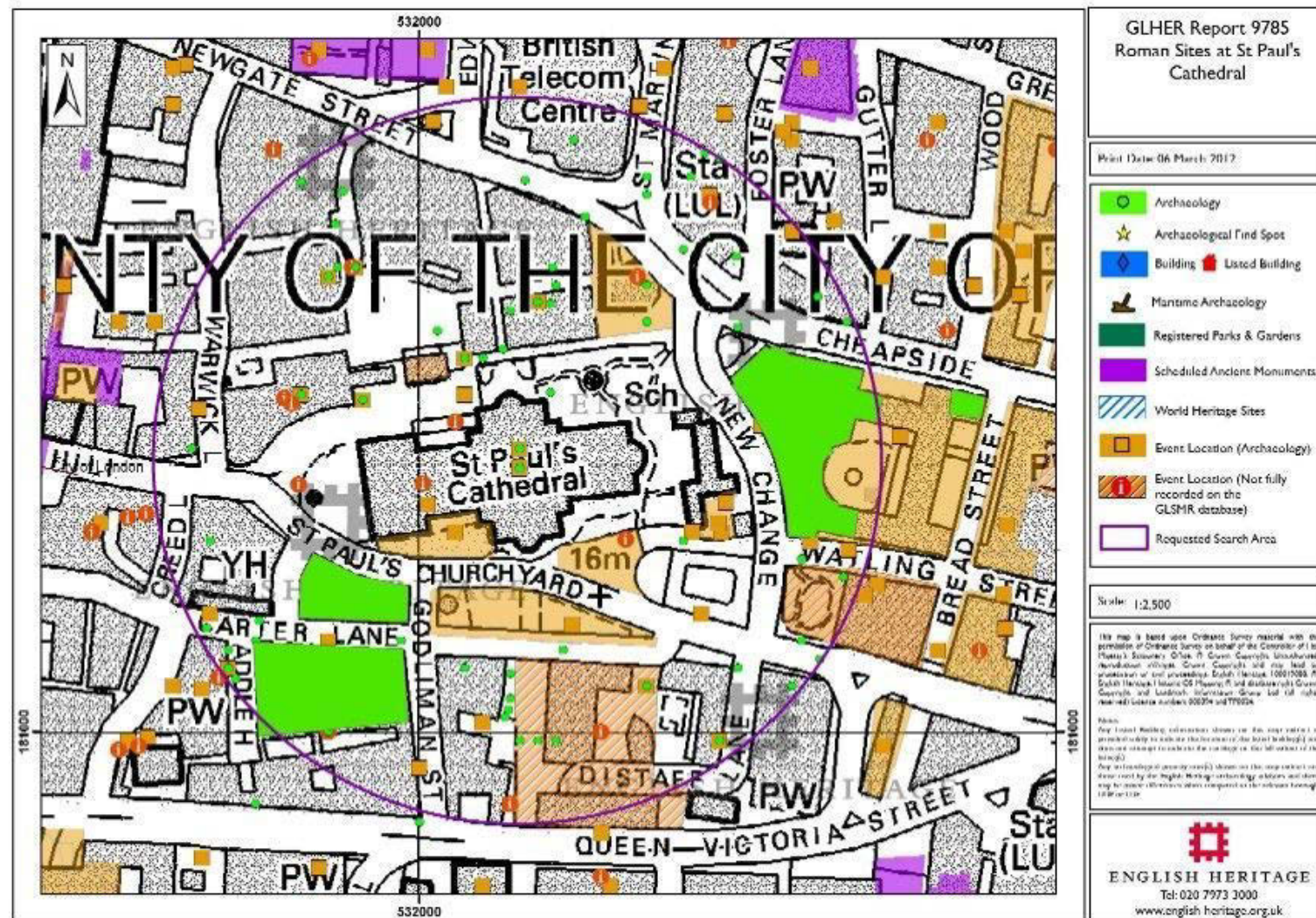
High level vision of main components - Examples

To Achieve these goals for the
Historic Environment sector
English Heritage are proposing
8 Principles of Information Access

8 Principles

Principle 1

Local Authority HERs should be the first point of call for and primary trusted source of investigative research data and knowledge



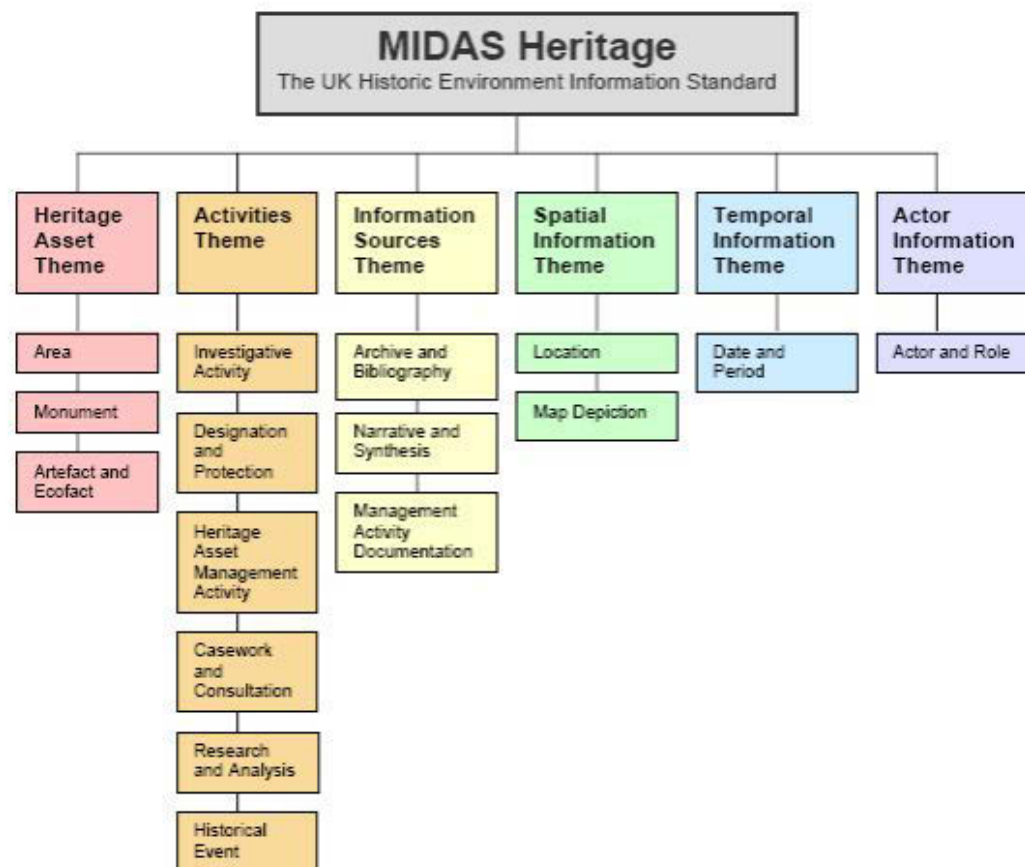
Principle 2

English Heritage should be the first point of call for and primary trusted source of national datasets such as Designated Assets and the National Maritime Record



Principle 3

English Heritage should continue to champion the development, maintenance and implementation of standards for the creation, management and storage of digital historic environment data

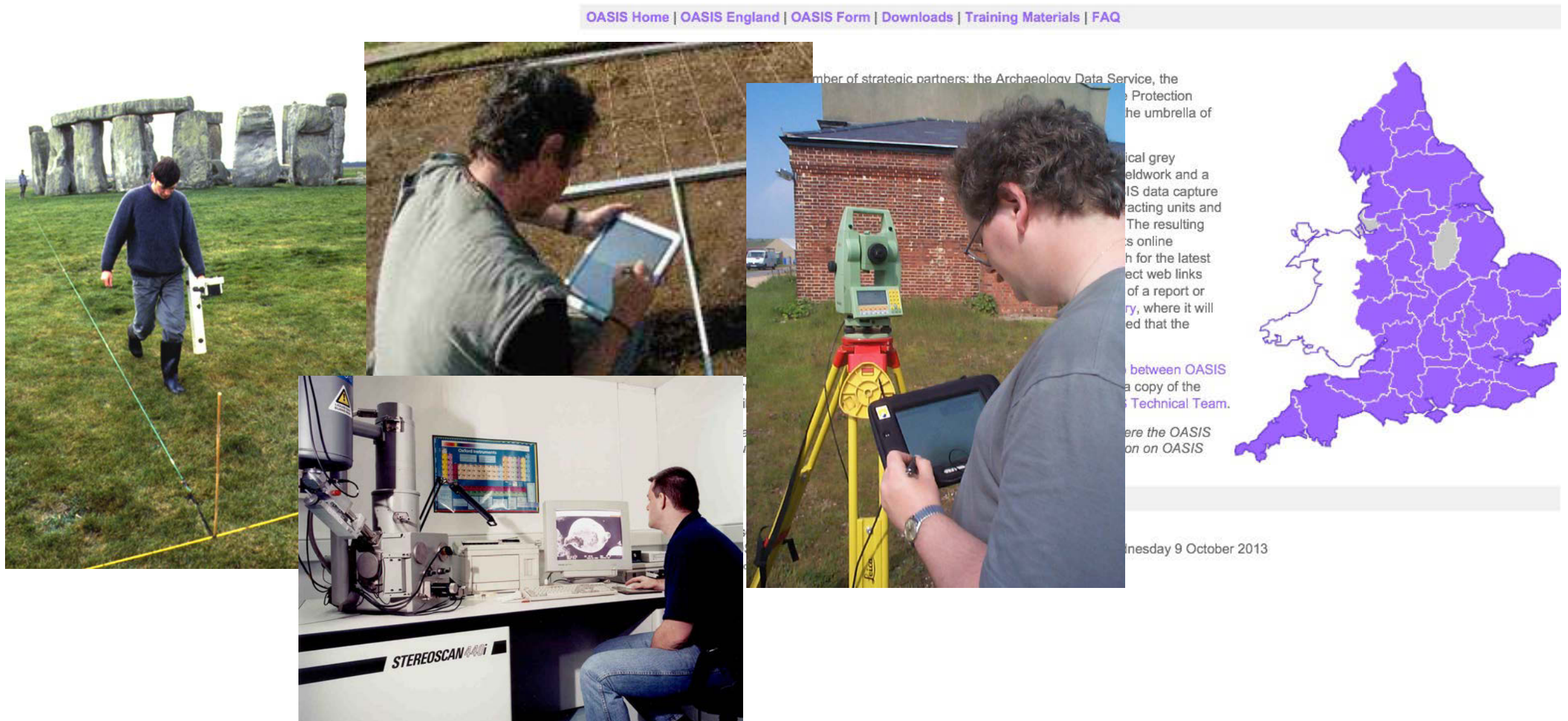


The screenshot shows the 'Heritage Data' website, which provides 'Linked Data Vocabularies for Cultural Heritage'. The page includes a navigation menu with 'About Heritage Data', 'Vocabulary Providers', 'Vocabularies', and 'Posts'. A dropdown menu for 'Vocabulary Providers' is open, listing 'English Heritage', 'Royal Commission on Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)', and 'Royal Commission on Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW)'. The main content area displays a table of vocabularies:

SCHEME	TEXT IDENTIFICATION	DOWNLOADS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCES (EH) Used for recording the techniques, recovery methods and materials associated with archaeological sciences	DENDROCHRONOLOGY	SKOS (RDF) Alphabetical (PDF) Hierarchical (PDF)
BUILDING MATERIALS (EH) Thesaurus of main constructional material types (eg. the walls) for indexing of monuments	DOLOMITE FELT LEATHER	SKOS (RDF) Alphabetical (PDF) Hierarchical (PDF)

Principle 4

Investigative research data or knowledge should be readily uploaded, validated and accessed online



Principle 5

The national overview for England should be delivered online through the Heritage Gateway

The screenshot displays the Heritage Gateway website. At the top, the header includes the site name "HERITAGE GATEWAY", links for "Login" and "Register", a "Site Map" link, and a text size selector. Below the header is a large search bar with the word "search" in a large font. A navigation menu on the left lists options: "select...", "Homepage Search", "More Detailed Search", "Help and FAQs", and "Cookies". The main content area is titled "More Detailed Search" and explains that users can search by location (Where), type (What), period (When), and person (Who). It also mentions that users can select specific resources to search for, such as Historic Environment Records. Below this, there are tabs for "Map" and "Admin Location". The "Map" tab is active, showing a "Find on map:" input field with a "Find" button. Below the input field is a "Search within:" dropdown menu set to "1km of selected location". The map itself shows a detailed view of the London area, with a red box highlighting a specific location near Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City. The map includes various road networks, green spaces, and urban areas.

Principle 6

Such data or knowledge should not be at risk of loss, fragmentation, inundation (in data), or system obsolescence



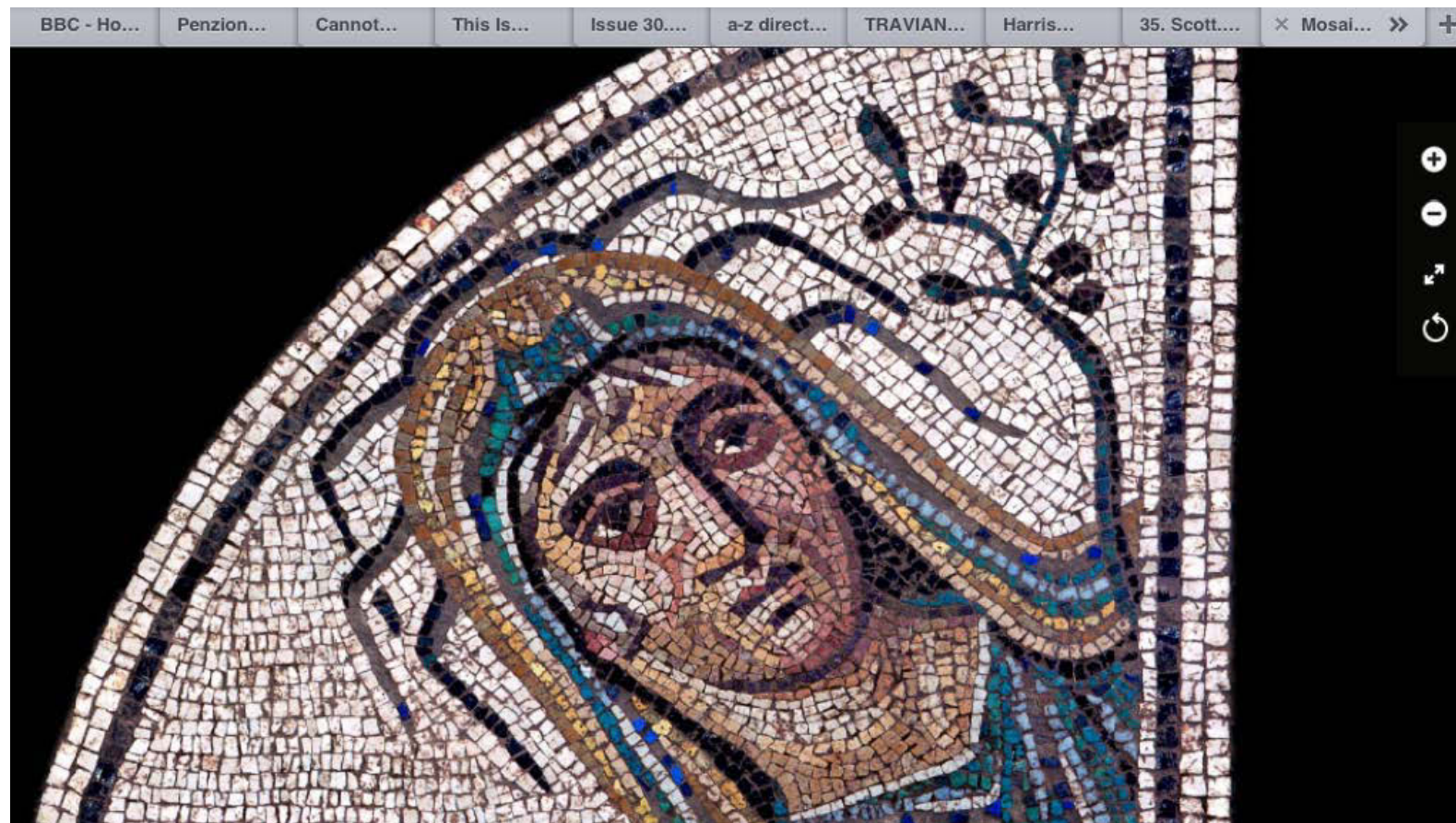
Principle 7

English Heritage should, on behalf of the nation, ensure that a security copy of all such data exists in accordance with Principles 3 and 6



Principle 8

Digital data should be supported by material archives in safe repositories accessible to the public.



8 Principles of Information Access

Principle 1: Local Authority HERs should be the first point of call for and primary trusted source of investigative research data and knowledge

Principle 2: English Heritage should be the first point of call for and primary trusted source of national datasets such as the National Maritime Record

Principle 3: English Heritage should continue to champion the development, maintenance and implementation of standards for the creation, management and storage of digital historic environment data

Principle 4: Investigative research data or knowledge should be readily uploaded, validated and accessed online

Principle 5: The national overview should be delivered online through the Heritage Gateway

Principle 6: Such data or knowledge should not be at risk of loss, fragmentation, inundation (in data), or system obsolescence

Principle 7: English Heritage should, on behalf of the nation, ensure that a security copy of all such data exists in accordance with Principles 3 and 6

Principle 8: Digital data should be supported by material archives in safe repositories accessible to the public.

Conclusion and Challenge

The technologies will continue to be developed. But what is the common will for sharing historic environment data openly in the interests of improving research methods and increasing understanding?

Degree of success will be proportional to the degree of partnership and collaboration that we in the sector can generate.
A shared R&D Agenda?

Next Steps

Ongoing Information Access
Strategy Development

EH
IAS Programme
Board

HeritageData.
org

User
Requirements
Gathering

Consultation
with Sector

IAS External
Advisory Group

TACOS
Workshop to
inform strategy