



Councillor Stephen McCabe
Leader of the Council
Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
Greenock
PA15 1LY

19 February, 201

Dear Councillor McCabe,

The Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) has been informed that Inverclyde Council is shortly to withdraw funding from the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WOSAS) which has hitherto provided archaeological advice to the Council along with other local authorities under a service-level agreement.

IfA is the professional body for archaeologists and related professions concerned with the study and care of the historic environment. It promotes best practice in archaeology and provides a self-regulatory quality assurance framework for the sector and those it serves. IfA has over 3,000 members and more than 70 registered practices across the United Kingdom and abroad. Its members work in all branches of the discipline: heritage management, planning advice, excavation, finds and environmental study, buildings recording, underwater and aerial archaeology, museums, conservation, survey, research and development, teaching and liaison with the community, industry and the commercial and financial sectors.

IfA recognises the difficult financial circumstances faced by local authorities. However, ending the provision of expert archaeological advice and services is not an acceptable way of addressing these difficulties and would expose the Council to serious risks by placing it in a position where it would be unable to comply with the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy and PAN 02/2011.

- Both documents are quite clear that archaeological knowledge and understanding are necessary to ensure informed planning decisions are made about the management and protection of historic assets (particularly undesignated historic assets). Vitally this includes maintaining an up-to-date Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) or Historic Environment Record (HER).
- Secondly, recognising that it is often the case that the benefits of development outweigh those of retaining sites and monuments, the planning authority is obliged in such cases to require the applicant to commission an appropriate programme of investigation, excavation, analysis and publication of the results. This can only be secured by planning conditions or obligations: without professional archaeological advice to planners this responsibility cannot be adequately discharged and important elements of our heritage can be lost without record.
- Thirdly, the opportunity through the planning process to bring new understanding and enjoyment to communities (for instance, through understanding the industrial archaeology of Inverclyde) will be lost. Investment in the historic environment can make a major contribution to quality of life and sense of place and is something the authorities should be proud of. Such dividends are rarely equalled by other sectors and should not be put at risk, particularly when the cost to your Council of providing an archaeological 'safety net' is in this case relatively small.

Furthermore, the service provided by WOSAS is by no means confined to its role in the development management process. For instance, the public in Inverclyde benefits from access to,

and use of, the impressive on-line facilities provided by the SMR currently maintained and supported by WOSAS and its staff.

I do hope that you will recognise how essential it is to retain this service and that your Council will be able to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the service-level agreement. Failing that, would you please provide details of how Inverclyde Council proposes to fulfil its obligations with regard to the historic environment (including its obligation to have access to an up-to-date SMR curated by a professional archaeologist) in the absence of any service from WOSAS?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Hinton', written in a cursive style.

Peter Hinton BA MIFA FSA FRSA FIAM
Chief Executive, Institute for Archaeologists

cc John Mundell, Chief Executive, Inverclyde Council