

Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham St
London
SW1P 4DF

22 September 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing on behalf of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and Council for British Archaeology (CBA) to welcome you into your new post of Secretary of State for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities.

As you may know, the vast majority of archaeological work is undertaken through the planning system. Archaeology and heritage are also key aspects of place-making, providing local distinctiveness and a strong bedrock for local identities, making our cities, towns, villages and wider landscapes more interesting and attractive places to live and visit.

As the two main bodies representing archaeology in the UK, the CBA and CIfA have a keen interest in ensuring that archaeology contributes to housing and infrastructure delivery by providing effective services which minimise uncertainty in development processes, minimise harm to heritage assets and maximise public benefit from the investigation of heritage assets where harm to them cannot be avoided.

Over the past year we have worked productively with MHCLG officials to examine the opportunities and potential threats posed to archaeology by the *Planning for the Future* White Paper. We have been optimistic that the proposed reforms *could* provide an important opportunity to improve how archaeology in planning works; strengthening the already effective ways that archaeology works by ensuring advice is sought early, making Historic Environment Records statutory and investing in enhancement of datasets, and allowing for greater targeting of public benefits.

However, these potential benefits have always been contingent upon careful policymaking. We understand that you will be re-examining some of the proposals before proceeding with the publication of a Planning Bill. We would like to continue to offer our services to your department to help bring some of these opportunities to the fore. We also hope that the Government's response to the White Paper explicitly reflects some of the productive conversations that we have had with officials, where we have sought to clarify oversights and inadvertent threats implicit in the White Paper.

We are also looking forward to working with you on reforming EIA, SEA and NSIPs in a way which will make these processes faster and more effective, but which does not threaten the useful integrated scoping and screening processes that ensure archaeology requirements are identified at the outset of projects, and that archaeology is integrated within clear legal frameworks for major development on land and at sea.

Finally, there is a huge scope to ensure that heritage is recognised as a key tool in the Levelling-up White Paper by exploring the ways that heritage can underpin sense of place, pride, and economic prosperity through enhanced tourism.

We look forward to meeting with your officials on these issues at their earliest convenience to discuss our priorities and proposals in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is for Stephen Carter, and the second signature on the right is for Neil Redfern. Both signatures are fluid and cursive.

Stephen Carter
BSc (Joint Hons) PhD MCIfA FSA Scot
Hon. Chair, ClfA

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink for Neil Redfern. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Neil Redfern
BA MPhil ACIfA FSA
Executive Director, CBA