

Rescue

The British Archaeological Trust

15a Bull Plain, Hertford
Hertfordshire, SG14 1DX

Telephone: 01992 553377

Office hours:: Tuesday and Friday mornings.
Otherwise please leave a message on the
answerphone.

rescue@rescue-archaeology.freeserve.co.uk

www,rescue-archaeology.org.uk

Mr Ed Vaizey MP
House of Commons

29th August 2015

Dear Mr Vaizey,

Early in 2014 you convened an enquiry into the future of local government archaeology services under John Howell MP and Lord Redesdale. The call for written evidence stated:

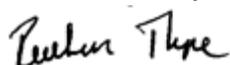
“In response to issues raised by representatives of the archaeological sector at an event organised by the Archaeology Forum in October 2013, the Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries, Ed Vaizey, initiated a review to be undertaken by Lord Redesdale and John Howell MP into the future of local government archaeological services. These services have traditionally played a key role in the identification, protection, conservation and investigation of England’s rich archaeological heritage – including sites of undisputed international or national importance. In addition they also provide the backdrop for the nation’s long tradition of public involvement with archaeology.”

Numerous heritage organisations submitted written evidence and personal testimony to the enquiry which we believe was sufficient to establish beyond doubt that cuts to the budgets of local authorities and of national heritage bodies are placing a severe burden on existing services and are leading to an inexorable decline in the quality of service and the ability of local government to meet its obligations to archaeology and our national heritage more generally. A report into the situation based on the enquiry's findings was promised but today, over a year after the committee concluded gathering evidence, we are still waiting for the report. In the meantime local authority archaeological services have continued to decline with posts frozen and deleted and ongoing cuts to budgets that were already barely adequate for the purpose.

We urge you to publish the results of the enquiry, together with the details of the written and verbal evidence submitted by the participants with a view to clarifying the situation as it stood at the time the enquiry was meeting. We also look forward to hearing your proposals for restoring the funding and staffing of local authority archaeology services to a point where they are able to meet the numerous and competing demands for their services.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reuben Thorpe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Reuben Thorpe
Chair,
Rescue, The British Archaeological Trust

RESCUE is a non-political organisation dedicated to supporting archaeology and archaeologists in Britain and abroad (www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk). We do not receive any state support and are entirely dependent on the contributions of our members to support our work.