

# Rescue

The British Archaeological Trust

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Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP  
Dept. for Culture, Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ

6th July 2016

**Re: Imminent closure of three museums by Kirklees Council**

Dear Mr Whittingdale,

I am writing to you on behalf of RESCUE – The British Archaeological Trust to draw your attention to the consultation recently initiated by Kirklees Council into the closure of three museums; Tolson House Museum, Dewsbury Museum and Red House Museum as a direct result of cuts to the funding of the local authority by central government.

In the recent Culture White Paper your department was keen to outline the social, cultural and economic benefits of culture in its broadest sense and of museums in particular. We note for example, your commitment to putting in place 'measures to increase participation in culture among those who are currently excluded from the opportunities that culture has to offer' (p.8) as well as your desire 'to see increased public participation across all our cultural sectors: the arts, museums and galleries, libraries, archives and heritage' (p.20). Elsewhere you wrote of culture as 'strongly rooted at a local level' (p.30) and on the subject of local museums specifically you stated that it is 'vital they can continue to innovate and flourish' (p.32). Such sentiments, with which we agree, can be found throughout the White Paper and, with their emphasis on the role of culture in regenerating and maintaining local communities, seem highly applicable to the case of Kirklees, which covers an area which faces very real social and economic challenges.

In view of this, we are keen to learn of the measures that you intend to take in the immediate future to persuade Kirklees Council to abandon its plans to close these museums and to ensure that the Council receives adequate funding to allow them to remain open. This will enable the staff to continue their vital work with children, families, the disadvantaged and those who simply value their local museum as an important community asset, as well as maintaining the positive contribution of these institutions to the local economy.

Yours sincerely



Chair, RESCUE The British Archaeological Trust

cc. Mr Barry Sheerman MP (c/o House of Commons)

RESCUE is a charitable trust which works to promote archaeology and the historic environment. We are wholly independent of all political parties and are entirely dependent on our members for our operating budget: [www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk](http://www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk)