

Rescue

The British Archaeological Trust

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answerphone.

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County Councillor Marcus Johnstone
Cabinet member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services
Lancashire County Council
By email

25th November 2015

Dear Councillor Johnstone

I am writing to you as chairman of RESCUE – The British Archaeological Trust. RESCUE is a non-political organisation which exists to support archaeology and archaeologists in Britain and abroad. We receive no support from government and are entirely dependent on the contributions of our members to fund our work. Details of our activities can be found on our website: www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk.

We are extremely concerned to note your current proposals to remove your Historic Environment Record (HER), and **strongly object** to this measure being implemented.

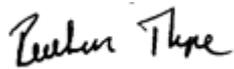
We are sure that you are aware and indeed proud of the fact that Lancashire has a very particular and important history, much of which can only be learned by careful examination of archaeological evidence. In many cases highly significant sites are unknown until they are assessed, exposed and recorded through the development process. This assessment cannot be done wholesale in advance, and must be carried out in detail, on an application-by-application basis, by the developer. The importance of the knowledge gained in shaping how we as a society continue to evolve and progress is widely recognised, and its value for education, tourism and the development of local business is embraced both by the public, and by the legislative powers. The HER is integral to this process and is intimately linked to the successful operation of current planning legislation and guidance.

The requirement for archaeological survey, excavation and protection measures is a central principle of the National Planning Policy Framework – which itself is the national expression of the UK Government's commitment to the principles set out in the *European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage*, to which the UK is a signatory. The need for a Local Planning Authority to maintain and have access to a functioning HER as part of this process is clearly set out in the NPPF (paragraph 169). Your current proposals effectively indicate that Lancashire intends to proceed with a planning system which employs selective and subjective imposition of national principles and policies. This would leave the authority open to numerous challenges, ranging from grounds of non-compliance with national policy, to having the validity of individual application decisions queried and overturned.

We urge that you reconsider and abandon the proposal to remove your HER provision and to commit to maintaining a both fully resourced and nationally compliant HER, and an archaeological planning advisory service. In the absence of this commitment, we would be pleased to learn how you are proposing that Lancashire's historic environment policy and practice on development control would operate in the future, how prospective developers would have access to the historic environment information they are required to examine (and you are required to provide), and how you propose to remain compliant with both national and European planning policy.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reuben Thorpe'.

Reuben Thorpe

Chair, Rescue, The British Archaeological Trust

Copies to: CC Jennifer Mein

CC Margaret Brindle

CC Janice Hanson