

UK General Election 2019 statement

Last week's election results mean that the Government in Westminster will move forward with Brexit and Conservative manifesto commitments, backed by its sizable majority in the House of Commons. These commitments include new legislation on the environment, and further efforts to boost housing and streamline planning.

We await news of a major re-shuffle after January, including possible changes to the structures of Government departments in Westminster and the functioning of government.

In all this, we will champion the importance of archaeology and argue for change that is backed by well thought-through strategy, ambition, and care.

Our vision and message to the new Government

The result confirms the likelihood of legislation and policy proposed under the last Government. We hope that a confident Government better able to push forward its agenda will not do so without listening to stakeholders whose insights will be critical to the success of proposed policies.

We ask Government to work with CIfA and CBA, and through bodies like Heritage Council, so that we can help it to protect existing safeguards and deliver sustainability.

We want a healthy, productive and protected environment. We ask Government to

1. Prevent the erosion of archaeological safeguards in the planning process
2. Deliver an exit from the EU that works for archaeology and the wider environment
3. Develop a world-leading integrated approach to environmental protection that includes the historic environment
4. Ensure an effective voice for the historic environment across Government and continue to support the Heritage Council
5. Champion a stable and productive archaeological sector

1. Prevent the erosion of archaeological safeguards in the planning process

Government policy for *planning reform* will probably be set out in an *Accelerated Planning White Paper* in England, promised before the election, with similar proposals also being consulted on by Scottish Government. We will argue against erosion of heritage protection, particularly of undesignated heritage assets, by changes that remove opportunities for archaeological assessment.

The system for *local authority archaeology services* works well where it is properly funded. We will continue to advise government on protecting and enhancing these services, using our evidence base.

Local government funding remains at risk and we will encourage exploration of new ways of working that improve sustainability of archaeological advice and increase public benefit from archaeology.

2. Deliver an exit from the EU that works for archaeology and the environment

CIfA and CBA will press to maintain environmental protections, research, and funding for culture and heritage. We will stress the demand for skilled workers in UK archaeology, building on the recent *recognition that archaeology is an occupation in shortage*.

We will advise on programmes for student continuation visas, Tier-1 style exceptional-talent visas, or sector-specific deal visas for archaeology and continue to champion the importance of international citizens who are already working in UK archaeology.

We will make the case for funding for research and for communities through the proposed *UK Shared Prosperity Fund*, and ensure that the *UK's world-leading archaeological research* is maintained even without EU funding.

3. Develop a world-leading integrated approach to environmental protection that includes the historic environment

The Government has committed to producing new environmental legislation which protects environmental principles, enshrined in a new *Environment Bill* which sets enforceable targets. Government must revisit this draft legislation to ensure that the scope of future monitoring and the remit of the new Office of Environmental Protection include the historic environment.

The *Agriculture Bill* was absent from the Queen's speech, but we will remind Government of previous promises on agricultural subsidy based on public money for public goods, and continue to advise on how to target subsidy that includes conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. We will continue to engage with parallel processes, based on these principles, across all UK nations.

We will also push Government to ensure inclusion of the historic Environment in the *Fisheries Bill*.

4. Ensure an effective voice for the historic environment across Government and continue to support the Heritage Council

With ministers such as Culture Secretary Nicky Morgan, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick and Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers retaining cabinet roles, there is ministerial continuity at least until any New Year re-shuffle.

We will remind ministers of the importance of the Heritage Council in bringing a cross-Government approach to heritage.

5. Champion a stable and productive archaeological sector

Government should assist the archaeological sector's training initiatives to meet archaeological skills needs domestically, supplemented by accredited professionals from overseas, and facilitation the exporting of UK accredited archaeological expertise.

For further information about CIfA's advocacy and campaigns and for details on other priority areas, visit www.archaeologists.net/advocacy or email info@archaeologists.net.

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