

Transforming Libraries and Cultural Services consultation team  
Surrey County Council

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*Submitted via email*

7 January 2018

Dear Madam/Sir,

**Re: Transforming Libraries and Cultural Services consultation**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA) in response to the above consultation. Our response seeks to highlight the work done by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) and highlight the Unit's reputation in the profession, the value for money that this service provides, and the wider importance of heritage and archaeology to Surrey residents and the Council.

*About us:*

CifA is the leading professional body representing archaeologists working in the UK and overseas. CifA promotes high professional standards and strong ethics in archaeological practice, to maximise the benefits that archaeologists bring to society, and provides a self-regulatory quality assurance framework for the sector and those it serves.

CifA has over 3,600 members and more than 80 registered practices across the United Kingdom. Its members work in all branches of the discipline: heritage management, planning advice, excavation, finds and environmental study, buildings recording, underwater and aerial archaeology, museums, conservation, survey, research and development, teaching and liaison with the community, industry and the commercial and financial sectors.

*General comments:*

In the current climate CifA recognises that local authorities are being forced to make tough decisions about how they meet their statutory and non-statutory responsibilities with limited funding. We are encouraged that Surrey County Council is pursuing options for innovative service delivery, as set out in the consultation document. We support the Council's efforts to create a more streamlined approach to the delivery of services and we agree with the proposed 5 principles. We are confident that SCAU is capable of contributing to beneficial outcomes deriving from these principles if supported correctly.

Surrey County Council has a unique asset in the SCAU. This is because SCAU is one of the last remaining commercial archaeological units which operate from within a local authority. In previous years, this model of in house service fell out of favour in many other places. However, in the current financial climate this service model now offers significant opportunities over other models. For example, an in-house unit, which generates revenue from commercial activity in the private sector provides an excellent way to off-set the cost of archaeological work on public sector contracts and to enable and subsidise initiatives to engage local communities.

At a time where diversification of services and earned income are of paramount importance in local authority service reorganisations across the country, this model provides an effective way to ensure that archaeology services can continue to contribute to the Council's learning, skills, and wellbeing objectives. We know that engaging communities with their local heritage and archaeology is a positive way to develop local identities, and create healthier, happier, and more resilient communities and as such demonstrates a clear relevance to the Council's 5 principles guiding this review.

SCAU has a long history of delivering high quality archaeological services. If supported correctly, SCAU should be a net contributor to the Cultural Services Directorate's budgets and its reputation with local communities. We do not have access to information on the financial performance of the service, but we know that SCAU is a service which has a high standing in the profession and which is competitive in the commercial marketplace. SCAU is a Registered Organisation of ClfA and as such is regulated and assessed for its performance to high professional standards. This means that it ranks among the most trusted archaeological service providers in the sector.

We are not aware of the Council's specific proposals as regards SCAU. However, we would like to emphasise the potential benefit of ensuring that the Unit continues to be supported in future budgets, such that it can continue to be a revenue-generating asset and that it is able to provide an enhanced service to local communities.

If you have any questions about how best to support the Unit and specific proposals resulting from this consultation we would be extremely happy to advise further.

Yours sincerely,



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