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Dear Sirs

Cheshire West and Chester Council Budget Consultation: Archaeological Planning and Advisory Service

I am writing to you on behalf of the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers to express our concern about proposed cuts to the Cheshire West and Chester Council Archaeological Planning and Advisory Service (APAS).

We represent around 50 archaeological businesses providing advice and specialist services to commercial clients and developers throughout the UK, and our members have been actively engaged in archaeological excavation, recording and publication in Cheshire for many years.

This work is entirely facilitated through the expertise of the archaeological specialists in APAS, based on the information held in the Historic Environment Record they maintain. We are therefore very concerned about the potential impact on the service of any proposed reductions in its budgetary and staffing levels.

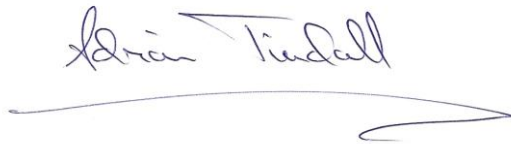
The present service allows informed planning decisions to be made and promotes sustainable growth that both respects and reflects the unique heritage of the area. It enables the Council to discharge its statutory obligations for conserving and enhancing the historic environment under the *National Planning Policy Framework*, and to implement the policies set out in local development frameworks and emerging neighbourhood development plans.

Any significant reduction in the service would risk serious consequences for Cheshire's exceptional historic environment, for those small businesses that record and promote it, for their commercial clients, and for those local residents and communities who benefit from it.

It would have potentially serious consequences for our members' clients in both the public and private sector, who depend upon timely and expert advice to provide greater certainty before planning applications are determined, and to reduce the risk to them of costly delays and disruption once planning consent has been granted and development is underway.

Whilst we fully understand the current budgetary pressures facing local government, the Archaeological Planning and Advisory Service represents a highly efficient and cost-effective means of providing statutory advice and information to the commercially-funded archaeological sector, and we strongly urge you to maintain your current level of support for this important and highly-respected service.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adrian Tindall". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends across the width of the signature.

Adrian Tindall MA FSA MIfA
Chief Executive, Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers