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Dear Sirs

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service: Proposed Budgetary Cuts

I am writing to you on behalf of the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME).

FAME represents 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 Worcestershire for many years.

This work is facilitated through the expertise of the archaeological specialists in the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, based on the information held in the Historic Environment Record they maintain. It allows informed planning decisions to be made, and promotes sustainable growth that both respects and reflects the unique heritage of the area.

We were therefore very concerned to learn that the County Council is proposing to reduce its funding to the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service by a further 44% by 2016.

The present service enables Worcestershire County Council to discharge its statutory obligations for conserving and enhancing the historic environment under the *National Planning Policy Framework*, and also enables it 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 Worcestershire's exceptional historic environment, for those small businesses who record and promote it, and for those local residents and communities who benefit from it.

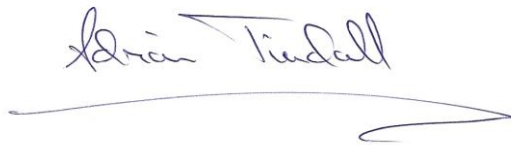
It would also have potentially serious consequences for our members' clients in both the public and private sector, who depend upon timely and expert advice to provide greater certainty before planning applications are determined, and to reduce the risk to them of costly delays and disruption once planning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

Both our members and their clients accept the need for the County Council to generate income by charging commercially-funded users of the Historic Environment Record.

However it is essential that any such charging policy be clearly linked to explicit service and data standards - including the provision of both an up-to-date and accessible Historic Environment Record and the specialist expertise necessary to maintain and enhance it.

Whilst we fully understand the budgetary pressures facing local government at this time, the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service represents a highly cost-effective and efficient means of providing statutory advice and information to the commercially-funded archaeological sector, and we urge you to maintain your current level of funding for this innovative and highly-acclaimed service.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adrian Tindall". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is 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