



Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers

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Dear Steve

FAME comments: National Infrastructure Development and Historic Environment Skills and Capacity 2015-30: An Assessment

Thank you for inviting FAME to comment on the above. Overall the report is very timely and makes an essential contribution to quantifying and understanding what is clearly a very predictable capacity crisis. The review of options for addressing this and the recommendations are also very helpful. FAME fully support HE in your assessment that a strategic view needs to be taken if we are to maximise the value from the time and resources that will be expended on these projects.

FAME have recently undertaken a rapid survey of our members to better understand the available capacity for a specific project, HS2. While archaeological contractors predict they may be able to commit up to 40% of available resources, and although many are making plans to recruit and train new staff, it is unclear, as yet what the scale of requirement on HS2 will be. Equally, there is a significant risk that demands from other sectors, such as housing and other infrastructure projects, will be unmet. The archaeology sector badly needs reliable information on which to plan.

The HE report helps greatly with providing that information, but there are areas that could be improved, in our opinion, by taking a more UK wide view, by a more consistent and clearer use of recent data, and provision of more fully formed recommendations. We have marked up a copy of the document with specific comments, but the following provides a summary.

1. The report needs to make a clearer distinction between figures that are applicable to the UK and England only (where possible). Although the bulk of the investment would be within England, the infrastructure and archaeological markets are UK wide and we would suggest that some liaison with HES, Cadw and DOENI might help to

provide a more complete understanding of the capacity issues. By and large our members work across the UK and plan capacity accordingly.

2. The report may need to be updated to reflect new predicted spending in the 2015 Autumn Statement.
3. The summary needs to be updated to reflect recent data in the Archaeological Market Survey 2015. Overall there is inconsistent use of data from the 2014 and 2015 reports throughout and the algorithms/extrapolation would benefit from greater clarity to understand on what basis the figures have been calculated
4. In particular, the 2014 figure for average staff turnover is used for many of the calculations (and the report rightly indicates that this is a critical figure). We would suggest an average over a period is used to avoid inconsistencies between years (with earlier years possibly adjusted for inflation). Either that or the 2015 figure should be used.
5. It is not clear how the figures used in the summary, indicating the number of FTE staff required, have been selected and calculated in the main body of the text. There needs to be a better and clearer link, and better explanation.
6. There is no consistent use of the latest ONS construction statistics –sometimes 2014, sometimes 2015.
7. While the report does a good job of estimating the upturn in demand as a result of infrastructure, some work (perhaps not as detailed) needs to be done to potentially qualify this by the predicted demand in other sectors such as renewables and housing. If the government are successful in further stimulating housing, then the capacity problems will be even more acute. Your report assumes a steady state across other market sectors (and this assumption should at least be made clear).
8. A lot of work is put into calculating how many archaeologists might be required, and establishing how many we have, (and how many of those might be available), but nowhere are the two figures explicitly pulled together to come up with a shortfall – i.e. the rough and ready number we need to have in mind when designing entry routes. It would then be interesting to suggest how many apprenticeships might need to be created and how many new graduates might need to be targeted, for instance.
9. In section 8 the question asked is “where do we currently get archaeologists”. Three levels/routes are discussed, but should there also be a section included on the potential resources available through EU membership (although this is touched upon later)? Past experience has shown archaeologists from all over Europe have come to work in Britain when the market is expanding, and although many northern European countries may be employing the majority of their archaeologists at the present time, There is capacity available within southern Europe. The experience and quality of this resource will be variable, but could perhaps be harnessed and moulded through the apprenticeship scheme or other means.
10. The report needs a section at the end which reinforces and expands on the recommendations listed in the summary. It needs to be clear on what action might be required.

FAME fully endorses this Historic England initiative which should help to ensure the sector responds more effectively to the increasing demands placed on it, and continues to play its part in enabling sustainable development. We remain ready to further support this process

and note one of the report recommendations, which calls for joint HE/FAME action on developing tools to predict archaeological cost, and we look forward to further discussion on this.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Shepherd', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nick Shepherd
CEO, FAME