
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration Committee	Date:	5 September 2013
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	E&R/09/13/04 SJ/RG
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Subject:	Archaeology Services		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise Committee of representations received on Inverclyde Council's withdrawal from the partnership agreement with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service which took effect on April 1st 2013.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council was a member of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) Joint Committee since its inception in 1997 until its withdrawal on 31st March 2013. The withdrawal followed a two year period of notice that was required under the partnership's Minute of Agreement, and which was approved by the Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee in March 2011. The reasons for Inverclyde Council's withdrawal from WoSAS were as a result of the low number of planning applications that raise archaeological issues in Inverclyde and budget pressures.
- 2.2 Following withdrawal from the partnership, the Council has received correspondence from the Institute for Archaeologists, Archaeology Scotland, a representative of Rescue (a national Archaeological body devoted to the preservation of the archaeological records of the UK) and a representative of Inverclyde Archaeology Project. Concern has been expressed that the Council will not be able to fulfil its obligations with regard to the historic environment, and requests that reconsideration be given to its decision to withdraw from WoSAS.
- 2.3 The existing adopted Local Plan (2005) includes a policy to protect archaeological sites, and this has been taken forward in the new Local Development Plan: Proposed Plan 2013. Decisions on planning applications take account of all consultations and representations received, including those from Historic Scotland on Scheduled Monuments, and impose conditions where necessary requiring survey work and/or a watching brief.
- 2.4 The Council therefore continues to recognise the importance of archaeology in the development planning and management process, and is fully committed to meeting its obligations under Scottish national planning policy.

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3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Committee note the representations received on the withdrawal of Inverclyde Council from the West of Scotland Archaeology Service and endorses the Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee decision of 8th March 2011.

Aubrey Fawcett, Corporate Director Regeneration and Environment

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following the demise of Strathclyde Regional Council in 1996, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) was established by Minute of Agreement between 11 Councils, including Inverclyde Council. In the years since the partnership was established, the membership has varied slightly with the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) joining in 2002, West Lothian Council joining in 2004, and North Lanarkshire Council withdrawing from the partnership in 2009. Currently 12 members remain.
- 4.2 The purpose of the Service is to maintain and update the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the complete record of all known archaeological sites, finds, fieldwork and research for the West of Scotland. This database is used primarily to provide information and advice to the local planning authorities and other services of the member Councils, and that of the LLTNPA, on potential archaeological issues raised by development proposals. The Service also provides professional advice to landowners, public utilities, private developers, farmers and other land managers to promote the implementation of national and international policies for the preservation of archaeological remains. The Archaeology Service is run by a Joint Committee supported by a Steering Group of officers from each of the member organisations.
- 4.3 Inverclyde Council was a member of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) Joint Committee since its inception in 1997 until its withdrawal on 31st March 2013. The withdrawal followed a two year period of notice that was required under the partnership's Minute of Agreement, and which was approved by the Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee on 8th March 2011. Immediately prior to withdrawal from WoSAS, Inverclyde Council's membership contribution was £10,832 per annum. Min Ref:
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- 4.4 The Council's withdrawal from the partnership agreement was based on financial and casework reasons. Since 2000/01, Inverclyde Council's financial contribution to the Service has remained the second lowest of all the members (East Renfrewshire Council being the lowest contributor), while its casework has remained consistently the lowest of all the members by a considerable margin.
- 4.5 Between 2000 and 2011, the proportion of the casework undertaken by WoSAS within the Inverclyde Council area averaged 1.3% per annum, in comparison to the Council's average annual financial contribution of 5.7% of all member contributions. This equates to an average of 18 cases per year, 3.4 of which were for planning applications that raised archaeological issues. Within the partnership during the same period, the most prolific user of the service was Argyll and Bute Council whose casework averaged 31% per annum.
- 4.6 The Council is fully aware of the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy and Planning Advice Note 02/2011 (Planning and Archaeology), where the presence and potential presence of archaeological assets should be considered in both the development plan and in making decisions on planning applications. A policy to protect archaeological sites is currently in place in the adopted Inverclyde Local Plan 2005, and it has been taken forward in the new Local Development Plan: Proposed Plan 2013, which was published for consultation on 31 May 2013.
- 4.7 In taking the decision to withdraw from WoSAS, the potential source of alternative archaeology advice to the Council was given consideration. In this regard it should be noted that statutory protection is limited to Scheduled Monuments, of which there are 33 currently in Inverclyde. The planning application process requires statutory consultation with the Scottish Ministers where development may affect a Scheduled Monument or its setting. This consultation is undertaken directly with Historic Scotland, who has experts in place to offer advice, at no cost to the Council.
- 4.8 The Council maintains a list of monuments and sites of archaeological potential. These sites have no statutory protection, and as such can only be controlled where development requires planning permission and a survey or watching brief is imposed as a planning condition. Such control continues to be attached to permissions irrespective of WoSAS involvement, and should evidence produce important findings, there would be immediate referral to Historic Scotland. Advice from a professional archaeologist will also be sought by the Council should

it be deemed necessary.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Council continues to recognise the importance of archaeology in the development planning and management process, and is fully committed to meeting its obligations under Scottish national planning policy.
- 5.2 It also acknowledges the concern of the various archaeology interest groups over the withdrawal from WoSAS, and seeks to reassure them that measures are in place to address any developments that may pose a threat to existing and potential archaeological sites.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Finance:

Financial implications – one-off costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Financial Implications – Annually Recurring Costs/Savings

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From	Other Comments

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 **Chief Financial Officer:** no requirement to comment.
- 7.2 **Head of Legal and Democratic Services:** no requirement to comment.
- 7.3 **Head of Organisational Development, HR and Performance:** no requirement to comment.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee Report (8 March 2011) - Partnership Agreement with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS)