

## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY 21 JANUARY 2010

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROGRESS

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report advises Members on:

- recent changes within Exeter Archaeology;
- progress with archaeology reports and projects funded from the Economy and Tourism budget; and
- information relating to archaeological projects carried out in the city for both ECC and external clients.

#### 2.0 RECENT CHANGES TO EXETER ARCHAEOLOGY

2.1 In response to a downturn in business and reciprocal drop in income, in large part the result of the recession, Members approved a restructuring of EA in the spring of 2009, reducing core staff numbers from 31 to 21. At the November 24th meeting, in response to continued concerns over anticipated income, Executive agreed a further staff restructure, with numbers reduced from 21 to 15, all through voluntary redundancy. As a result of these changes, anticipated completion of all projects funded from the Economy and Tourism budget has not been possible, although significant advances have been made.

2.2 Methods to deal with City Council obligations to publication backlog, outstanding Scheduled Monument Consent projects and archive deposition, identified in the report to Members of 29th September, have been agreed with relevant archaeological curators including English Heritage, with additional funding approved by Executive and offered by English Heritage and Devon County Council.

#### 3.0 ECONOMY AND TOURISM FUNDED WORK

##### Work to date

3.1 The purpose of this programme of work is to make available, in a range of formats and media, the results of archaeological and historical investigations and research undertaken by Exeter Archaeology on behalf of the City Council on a variety of topics.

3.2 This has included:

- production of a booklet presenting the results of the Princesshay excavations to a public audience;
- contributions to the City Council 'Romans in Exeter' event;
- part production of a booklet presenting the results of the 1970s Exe Bridges excavations to a public audience;
- part production of a publication presenting the results of the 1970s Exe Bridges excavations to a public and academic audience;
- part production of a booklet presenting the development and history of the Custom House for a public audience.

Costs of the production of booklets can, at least in significant part, be offset through sales. Modest sales of the Princesshay booklet have already been made.

#### **4.0 PROJECTS FUNDED BY OTHER CLIENTS**

- 4.1 It is intended to report more fully on the work of Exeter Archaeology at the meeting, and therefore only a summary written account is provided. 2009 has been an extremely difficult year for Exeter Archaeology, with major restructuring of the organisation resulting from the dual impact of the recession and significant increases in competition from other commercial companies. However significant work has been undertaken both within the city and throughout the Southwest.
- 4.2 A significant body of fieldwork was undertaken at the former Royal Naval Stores Depot for the housing developer Persimmons, exposing significant prehistoric remains. Work to publish the results is underway.
- 4.3 At the time of writing, the signing of a major contract to undertake the excavation of the Roman remains at former St Loye's College site is anticipated within the next few days. If secured, this will provide a very welcome income stream over the next 12 months.
- 4.4 Outside the City, Exeter Archaeology made significant discoveries early in the year at the Roman fort at Calstock, Cornwall. Work has continued throughout this year, funded by English Heritage, to complete the assessment of the results, and an application been made to the same body to fund the full analysis and publication of the results. A funding application has also been submitted to English Heritage to cover the study and publication of the significant late medieval pottery remains from Hemyock. As part of this work a week of workshops for schools and the public, which included the cleaning and sorting of approximately 40,000 sherds of pottery, was well attended. Both projects are expected to bring in useful income.
- 4.5 Work to support Sibelco Ltd with mineral applications on SW Dartmoor has continued throughout the year, resulting in significant financial benefit.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Exeter Archaeology operates as a direct service organisation and is anticipating a turnover of just over £600,000 for 2010/11. For Economy and Tourism projects the Archaeology in Exeter budget allocation for 2010/11 is £26,000. It is proposed that in 2010/11 this will include:
- completion of a booklet presenting the results of the 1970s Exe Bridges excavations to a public audience;
  - completion of a publication presenting the results of the 1970s Exe Bridges excavations to a public and academic audience;
  - completion of a chapter on the medieval houses of Exeter for a publication on Westcountry houses intended for a public and academic audience;
  - production of a publication of the Elizabethan inventories of Exeter for a public and academic audience; and

- completion of a booklet presenting the development and history of the Custom House for a public audience.

As noted above, costs of the production of booklets can, at least in significant part, be offset through sales. It is possible that sales of the Elizabethan inventories publication, which is likely to have an international appeal amongst an academic audience, could recover its costs.

5.2 Much of this work will be of benefit to the Tourism unit and individual interpretation projects that they are developing.

**6.0 RECOMMENDED** that Members:

- 1) note the progress being made to establish a financially viable archaeological contractor within a constrained economic environment; and
- 2) note the progress being made with these projects.

**TIM GENT**  
**HEAD OF EXETER ARCHAEOLOGY**

**ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report:

*None*