

AGENDA ITEM 5

Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officer's Report

To: Buckinghamshire Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee

Date: 21st March 2001

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A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1 To advise the Committee of significant events since the last CAAC meeting.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

2 **The Committee is invited to:**

- a **NOTE the Service's Outputs and Performance Indicators and satisfactory performance in relation to the latter**
- b **WELCOME the County Council's approval and publication of the Archaeological Management Plan**
- c **NOTE progress with Strategic and Conservation Projects**
- d **NOTE recent development-related archaeological fieldwork in the county**

C. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

3 All costs are contained within established budgets.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4 **Archaeology Service Output Measures and Performance Indicators**

Unfortunately collation of planning statistics has been affected by delays in installing the new SMR system. Data for this period is being input at present. Other Output and Performance Indicator statistics collected for the service as part of the County Council's best value monitoring programme for the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2000 are as follows:

Output	3rd Quarter 2000	4th Quarter 2000
Total number of consultations handled	not yet available	not yet available
Number of planning applications handled	not yet available	not yet available
Number of archaeological fieldwork projects monitored	8	15
Number of reports received by the SMR	43 (est)	43 (est)
Number of Sites and Monuments Records enquiries handled: commercial	6	19
Number of Sites and Monuments Records enquiries handled: non-commercial	12	17

Performance Indicator	3rd Quarter 2000	4th Quarter 2000
Planning applications responded to within 14 days (target 80%)	not yet available	not yet available
Number of successful appeals against advice (target 0)	0	0
Number of important sites destroyed or damaged by development or related activity without adequate mitigation (target 0)	0	0
Sites and Monuments Records data inputting backlog (see agenda item 9)	657 (est)	700

5 A Future for Our Past (The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan)

Following the last meeting of CAAC, the duly amended Archaeological Management Plan was approved by the final meeting of the County Council's Environmental Services Committee in October 2000. The Plan has now been published and will be accessible through the County Council's web site.

6 Strategic and Conservation Projects

The Service is involved with an increasing number of projects which are not based directly upon our development control functions but are of a more strategic, conservation and interpretation nature. Most of these projects are being pursued in partnership with other organisations. Some involve drawing in substantial amounts of external funding. A list of current projects is provided in appendix A.

7 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

See agenda item 9 for a summary of recent work and proposed future development.

8 Archaeology and Development

A list of recent fieldwork is provided in appendix B - the highlights are summarised below:

At **The Rye Environment Centre, High Wycombe** trial pitting confirmed that walls and floor sub-base of the Roman villa survive beneath the Holywell swimming pool complex which was constructed on its site in 1954. It is proposed to preserve the remains beneath the new building and to undertake geophysical survey of the surrounding land to provide an archaeological dimension to the new centre.

Extensive trial trenching in advance of mineral extraction at **The Lea, Denham** failed to find any evidence for the Early Mesolithic occupation for which the Colne Valley is particularly important. Nevertheless, most trenches encountered ditches, pits or postholes of later prehistoric and/or Roman date and one cremation pyre was also found. Recent work along the Middle Thames, especially around its confluence with the Colne, is demonstrating that very extensive planned field systems were laid out in the Middle to Late Bronze Age apparently as part of an intensive livestock farming regime. The Lea may be part of this system or a later development – further investigation is due to commence shortly.

Small-scale trial trenching adjacent to the Thames at **Hedsor Wharf** revealed evidence for Saxon and medieval occupation suggesting that the historically documented medieval wharf may have earlier origins. This is particularly interesting as the site lies opposite “Sashes Island” which has been interpreted to be the site of an Alfredian burghal fort guarding access along the river. Further investigation will be required if development is permitted.

A review has been undertaken of progress on ten as yet unpublished developer-funded excavations from 1999 and before. In nine cases revised programmes are being agreed with the archaeological contractor and monitored closely. Planning enforcement is being considered for one project - **Church Farm, Berton** – where the archaeological contractor has ceased trading and the archive resides in the County Museum.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Archaeological Reports submitted to the SMR

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