

AGENDA ITEM 11

MODERNISING THE COUNTYWIDE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To: Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee

Date: 21st March 2000

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A PURPOSE

- 1 To review the implications of current national policy changes for the operation of the CAAC and to propose that the committee seek to adopt a new wider role, remit and membership covering policies relating to the historic environment.

B PROPOSED ACTION

- 2 **The Committee is invited to:**
 - a) **AGREE the principle of converting the Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee to an Historic Environment Forum or Joint Committee**
 - b) **INSTRUCT the Secretary to write to each constituent organisation asking for their support for this proposal**
 - c) **INSTRUCT the Secretary to write to the National Trust, Chilterns Conference, MAFF's Rural Development Service, Diocese of Oxford, Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust, Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils and the Country Landowners Association to invite them to participate in the next meeting of CAAC with a view to adopting a new Constitution at that meeting.**
 - d) **INSTRUCT the Secretary to prepare a draft new Constitution in consultation with member organisations for presentation to the next CAAC meeting**

C RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3 No additional resources would be required to implement the proposed changes.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 The desirability of reviewing the role, remit and membership of the CAAC with a view to creating a more broad based Historic Environment Forum for Bucks was trailed in *A Future for our Past* (The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan). Such a review would be timely in the light of the government's agendas on Modernising Local Government, Best Value and the Review of Policies Relating to the Historic Environment (see agenda item 8).
- 5 The Historic Environment Review sought an inclusive definition of the historic environment as “...all the physical evidence for past human activity, and its associations, that people can see, understand and feel in the present world.” It emphasised that places such as towns or villages, coast or hills and things such as buildings, buried sites and deposits, fields and hedges are all part of the historic environment and that the engagement of the individual with these physical remains through emotion, memory or history etc is essential.
- 6 Current provision for the historic environment in Buckinghamshire is fragmented and can lack county-wide co-ordination. For example, the County Council runs the County Archaeological Service, County Museum and Records Office/Local Studies Library whilst the District Councils employ Historic Buildings Conservation Officers. Both levels of authority exercise planning functions and can promote countryside conservation and access projects with an historic/archaeological dimension. Other bodies as diverse as English Heritage, the National Trust, the Chilterns Conference, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society and other local societies, church authorities, schools, local councils, landowners and the general public all have significant interests in historic environment issues. A more broad-based committee could raise the profile of the historic environment across the county. It would provide a mechanism to bring together these different stakeholders in a single forum and develop the links between them – for example on public outreach projects, landscape conservation and the recording of historic buildings. The potential of such “joined up thinking” is already becoming apparent in the Chilterns AONB where an Historic Environment Group was set up last year. The new committee could help to identify means to improve provision for the historic environment in the most cost effective manner.
- 7 Current representation is mainly from local authorities with the addition of representatives from English Heritage, the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (representing the voluntary sector) and the Oxford University Department of Extra-Mural Studies (nominally representing academic archaeology but not currently an active participant). Major stakeholder groups not represented include the National Trust, Chilterns Conference, Ministry of Agriculture, the Country Landowners Association, the Diocese of Oxford, the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust and the Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils. Members will wish to consider whether these organisations should be invited to join the new committee, whether any other organisations should be invited and whether any of these new organisations should be offered voting membership. It may also be desirable to ask the Buckinghamshire, Berkshire

and Oxfordshire Conservation Forum to nominate a Buckinghamshire Conservation Officer to take a lead on Historic Buildings policy issues. Similarly, the Education Service could be asked to nominate someone to represent schools.

- 8 The status of the new committee also needs to be considered in the light of the Modernising Local Government process. Options are either a Forum or a Joint Committee – further advice is being sought on the merits of each and the matter can be considered further at the next meeting. Whichever option is chosen it is recommended that the new committee seek appropriate recognition for its status as a advisory body on Buckinghamshire’s historic environment from each constituent body.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A Future for our Past (The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan).

Review of Policies relating to the Historic Environment (Five Discussion Papers)

Power of Place: The Future of the Historic Environment

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