

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT
PLAN**

To: Buckinghamshire Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee

Date: 20th March 2001

Authors: Senior Archaeological Officer

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To review progress on the implementation of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

2 The Committee is invited to:

**WELCOME progress made so far with implementing the
Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan.**

C. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 3 As set out in the Plan.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5 The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan was approved by the County Council's Environmental Services Committee in October 2000. It contained an Action Plan covering five years from April 2000 to April 2005. This report summarises progress after two years and will help inform the current best value review of the County Archaeological Service.
- 6 The Action Plan has five sections covering policy, the Sites and Monuments Record, planning advice, conservation advice and management and resources. For each action a priority, timetable and performance measure were specified. For this review each action has been assessed as either:
 - A. On target
 - B. In progress but behind target
 - C. Not yet commenced

Progress is summarised in the following table:

	On target	In progress but behind target	Not yet commenced
Policy	5	2	6
SMR	14	13	2
Planning	14	6	1
Conservation	5	3	4
Management	8	6	0
Total	45	31	13

7 **What is going well ...**

The service is working closely with Aylesbury Vale District Council and the County Council's Strategic Plans Team to ameliorate the impacts of the expansion of Aylesbury. We are close to securing English Heritage funding for historic landscape and research frameworks projects.

Good progress has been made with modernising the Sites and Monuments Record despite challenges with IT. The SMR Audit has been completed. Use of the SMR is increasing and customer satisfaction is universally high. Consultation for the "Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past Project" has elicited an excellent positive response from teachers and the public. Our local history questionnaire received 333 responses (a c 40% return rate) of which 90% were supportive. We aim to submit the HLF bid in the summer of 2002.

We have established a response rate for planning consultations well in excess of our target of 80% within 14 days. Consultation responses are recorded on our Geographical Information System (GIS) to improve consistency. There are few problems with routine casework but where they do arise they are addressed with planning authorities as appropriate. Archaeological fieldwork standards are maintained through briefs, specifications and monitoring. Public involvement has been achieved at several sites, most recently the Aston Clinton Bypass.

Close working arrangements have been developed with the Chilterns AONB Office and the County Council's Strategic Initiatives Team as well as regular contacts with DEFRA, the National Trust and FWAG. Funding has been secured for a number of projects, including most notably at Whiteleaf Hill. This was recognised in BAMP to be an effectively un-resourced area and it is particularly gratifying to have positive achievements to report.

The appointment of a third post to the team will enable the Management Plan to be driven forward with renewed vigour.

8 **What has not gone so well ...**

Renewal of the archaeological planning notification maps is behind schedule but will be a high priority for next financial year. A decision has been taken to

delay submission of a bid to English Heritage undertake an Extensive Urban Survey due to workload pressures. It is now hoped this will follow on from and complement the historic landscape project.

The installation of new IT systems for the SMR has been much more time-consuming than was anticipated. The SMR Audit and Action Plan also took longer than expected to complete. Backlog data inputting has been started but looks to be an even more daunting task than originally reckoned. Progress with the Disaster Recovery Plan and digital data standards has been slower than expected, partly due to delays with the County's Electronic Records Management Project. With the establishment of a full-time SMR Officer post there will be more focussed resource to address these issues.

Planning work has been generally successful but there have been a few damage cases and disappointing appeal decisions.

There has been no progress yet with the proposed "monuments at risk" assessment and register. The development of this project will be possible once the planning and conservation officer is appointed.

Many opportunities for external funding have been identified but the demands of planning casework have so far slowed attempts at uptake. Once again, the expansion of the core service should enable more progress in future.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A future for our past : The Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan.

CONTACT OFFICER: ALEXANDER (SANDY) KIDD 01296-382927