

## AGENDA ITEM 7

### **Milton Keynes and South Midlands Strategy - Update**

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2004

Author: Senior Archaeological Officer

#### **A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1 To advise the Forum of the historic environment response to the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy.

#### **B. PROPOSED ACTION**

##### **2 The Committee is invited to:**

- a) **NOTE the contents of the report and implications of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy for the historic environment of Buckinghamshire.**
- b) **WELCOME the positive initial response from English Partnerships to the Forum's invitation to join.**

#### **C. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 3 Full assessment of the implications of the MKSM Strategy for the historic environment could not be contained within established budgets. English Heritage has provided financial support for the Milton Keynes Growth Area Historic Environment Assessment as part of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Historic Landscape Characterisation Project.

#### **D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4 The local authorities and English Heritage made the case to the Panel Inquiry in June 2004 that treatment of the historic environment in the draft Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy had been weak. In order to illustrate and help redress these deficiencies, English Heritage commissioned the County Archaeological Service to prepare a study of the historic environment of Milton Keynes Urban Expansion as a joint project with English Heritage, Milton Keynes Council and Bedfordshire County Council. The *Milton Keynes Urban Expansion Historic Environment Assessment* was submitted as a core document to the Public Examination.
- 5 During debate at the inquiry it emerged that there were widespread concerns that the draft strategy had failed to give proper account to the environment, or

to recognise the need for cultural and green infrastructure to build sustainable communities. The panel's report contains trenchant criticisms of these failings and strong recommendations for amendments that it is hoped the Government Office will now make to the draft strategy. For Aylesbury Vale, much of the local concern related to possible urban extensions into open countryside of the former Whaddon Chase. No firm recommendations were made for or against these specific spatial options, which are left to the Local Development Frameworks to resolve. At Aylesbury, the suggestion is that longer-term growth may be scaled back somewhat with further work required to refine locations of growth and infrastructure requirements (including green infrastructure).

6. The Local Delivery Vehicle for Milton Keynes will be a Committee of English Partnerships, which will assume planning powers for the designated Urban Development Area (UDA). Following a resolution passed at the last meeting, the Chairman wrote to English Partnerships stressing the importance of adequate recognition for the historic environment and inviting them to nominate representatives to this forum. A favourable initial response has been received and a meeting is to be held shortly to review arrangements. A major issue will be ensuring the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee recognises an obligation to provide resources to secure appropriate specialist advice rather than depending on the already stretched services of Milton Keynes Council (and for the longer term its neighbours).

#### E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

*Consultation Draft Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (Proposed RPG Alterations)*, July 2003, EERA, EMA & SEERA

*Milton Keynes Urban Expansion. Historic Environment Assessment*, February 2004. English Heritage, Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council.

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy. Public Examination March/April 2004. Report of the Panel.

**CONTACT OFFICER: ALEXANDER (SANDY) KIDD 01296-382927**