

**HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD/HERITAGE PROTECTION REVIEW
SCOPING PROJECT: PROGRESS REPORT**

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 29th March

Authors: Report by the Sites and Monuments Record Officer

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To report on progress in assessing the costs and other implications of the Heritage Protection Review and of meeting potential national benchmarks for Historic Environment Records. The project will help inform local authorities' response to the forthcoming Heritage White Paper.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

2 The Forum is invited to:

- a **NOTE** the progress report
- b **COMMENT** on any matters which ought to be considered in the final report

C. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 3 The resource implications of the Heritage Protection Review and Historic Environment Records benchmarks are unclear at present. The current initiative is aimed in part at clarifying that cost.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 At the last meeting of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum it was agreed that the County Archaeological Service should carry out a scoping project to assess the resource and other implications of complying with the draft national Historic Environment Record benchmark targets within the timescale of the Government's Heritage Protection Review.
- 5 Initial data gathering was carried out with District Council staff and this was followed up by visits to each of the Districts for detailed discussions about widening the recording of historic buildings in the Sites and Monuments Record, the creation of local lists, data sharing and closer worker relationships with the County Archaeological Service. A visit to English Heritage's National Monuments Record Centre was made to scope the extent of specialist building reports, to research additional sources of information and to discuss building recording issues.

- 6 Following the discussions with the Districts' Historic Buildings and Conservation staff, a clear consensus has emerged, with all the Districts anxious to maximise the benefits of developing closer working with the County Archaeological Service. All are happy for the Sites and Monuments Record to record unlisted historic buildings and are wanting to have access to the full range of information held on the Sites and Monuments Record, with the ability to add content to the designations modules and to link to digital photos and other digital documents. A number of specific planning-related issues were raised by the Districts, including developing briefs for building recording and concerns about greater quality control on reports.
- 7 Work is currently ongoing to quantify the resources required to achieve Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the HER Benchmarks, to enhance recording of historic buildings in the Sites and Monuments Record and to complete the key outcomes identified in the existing SMR Action Plan. A range of costed IT options are also being produced to enable data sharing between the Sites and Monuments Record and the District Councils. We expect that the report will be circulated to the Districts for consultation in June.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Consultations on the Review of Heritage Protection and Historic Environment Records. Report to Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum, 24th September 2003

Heritage Protection Review. Report to Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum, 21st September 2005

HER/Heritage Protection Review Scoping Project. County Archaeological Service project design, 2nd December 2005

The historic environment : a force for our future. Government Policy Statement.

Historic Environment Records Consultation. DCMS (July 2003)

Protecting our historic environment: Making the system work better. DCMS (July 2003)

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