

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 29th March 2006

Authors: Report by the Senior Archaeological Officer

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To report progress with Historic Landscape Characterisation and future plans.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

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

a) NOTE the development of HLC

C. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 3 Funding is secured from a range of sources, most notably English Heritage but also the Chiltern Conservation Board and internal County Council sources.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 English Heritage's national programme of historic landscape characterisation (HLC) commenced in 1992 and has now covered approximately of the two-thirds of the country. It is a means of understanding the historic character of the landscape as a whole, not just its component historic features, and using this understanding to inform and manage change.
- 5 The Buckinghamshire HLC project commenced in 2002 has produced a consultation draft report, which will be amended to reflect comments and published by June 2006.
- 6 A number of "spin-off" projects are underway or under development:
 - Aylesbury Local Development Framework: a suite of reports under preparation to assess options for growth around Aylesbury and four market towns.
 - Bucks Historic Towns: A project to develop characterisation of historic towns, part of English Heritage's Extensive Urban Survey Programme. A draft project design has been submitted to English

Heritage who have approached SEEDA for funding support. We hope to secure funding to start the project in 2007.

- Chiltern HLC: A partnership project with the Conservation Board to provide a Chiltern-wide characterisation map and report with “deepening” themes covering historic buildings, woodlands and routeways. Commenced in 2005 and due for completion in summer 2006. A stage 2 project is under consideration.
- Colne Valley HLC: A partnership project with the Colne Valley Park to complete HLC mapping for the Colne Valley and provide a deeper understanding of change and survival in the urban fringe. To be funded by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (subject to confirmation).
- North-West Green Arc: A Countryside Agency Initiative. A preliminary proposal for completing integrated HLC coverage around the Arc from Surrey to Hertfordshire has received an promising response. To be investigated further.
- Strategic Environmental Character System: A BCC initiative to bring together historic, natural and landscape character into an integrated system to inform strategic planning and green infrastructure planning. BCC core funding with partnership funding to be sought.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

English Heritage web site.

Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning. Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and Environment Agency, 2005.

Aylesbury Environs Study. Historic Environment Assessment. BCC, 2005.

Milton Keynes Urban Expansion. Historic Environment Assessment. BCC, EH and MKC, 2004.

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