

## **AGENDA ITEM 10**

### **Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officer's Report**

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 20th September 2006

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

- 1 To advise the Forum of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last BHEF meeting.

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

- 2 **The Forum is particularly invited to NOTE:**
  - a **the Service's Performance Indicators and contribution to national indicators BV 205 and 219**
  - b **progress with strategic projects**
  - c **recent fieldwork**
  - d **progress in securing publication of archaeological reports.**

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

- 3 At present the service comprises three core staff and three externally funded posts funded by the Chilterns Conservation Board, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 4 Archaeology Service Performance Indicators

Service volume measures and Performance Indicator statistics collected for the service as part of the County Council's performance management system are presented for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of 2006. The service contributes to national BV indicator 205 – a checklist of Quality in Planning Services and, through information supplied from the SMR, to the Conservation Area Appraisal BV 219.

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>1st Quarter 2006</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2006</b>
Planning applications responded to within 14 days (target 90%)	89%	90%
Success rate at appeal (target 50% annual success rate)	0 of 0	0 of 0
Percentage of evaluations with a positive outcome (target 60%)	100%	80%
Sites and Monuments Records data inputting backlog (target: reports < 30; collections < 3500 by April 07)	Reports = 29 Collect = 3556 Total = 3585	Reports = 28 Collect = 3546 Total = 3574

<b>Volume measures</b>	<b>1st Quarter 2006</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2006</b>
Total number of consultations handled	131	166
Number of planning applications handled	94	116
Number of development-related archaeological fieldwork projects	10	12
Number of reports received by the SMR	60	44
Number of Sites and Monuments Records enquiries handled:		
commercial	42 21	48 19
non-commercial	21	29

### 5 Strategic Projects

This section provides a summary of projects with a strategic, conservation and/or interpretation nature. Most of these projects are being pursued in partnership with other organisations and involve drawing in substantial amounts of external funding.

The **Monument Management Project** has secured the production of a Conservation Management Plan for Danesfield Iron Age Hillfort (Medmenham) by Albion Archaeology. Further consultation will take place with the site owners leading to staged implementation of the plan.

The **Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past** is due for completion this financial year. All education modules have been completed in draft form and resources piloting is underway in schools. Work has started on the site visits module. There have been delays to the IT consultancy programme but delivery of a working web-site to BCC is now imminent.

English Heritage listed building data has now been added to the SMR. Work commenced on the **SMR Audit and Action Plan Review** to quantify the impact on the SMR of the forthcoming Heritage Protection Review, however this has been postponed by other workload pressures reflecting the new expected consultation period for the white paper in the spring of 2007.

The **Historic Landscape Characterisation** project has produced five reports for the Aylesbury growth area in conjunction with Aylesbury Vale District Council (Aylesbury, Wendover, Winslow, Hadenham and Buckingham). The **Bucks HLC report** is now published. A consultation draft report on the **Chiltern HLC project** is in preparation. Funding has also been secured from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for a six month **Colne Valley HLC project**, which is now underway. Also the HLC Officer is working on **Buckinghamshire Environmental Character System (BECS)** with other country council partners, to date the historic environment data strand has been completed and work is ongoing on the biodiversity, topographical and land character assessment components.

SMR data provision for the **Solent-Thames Research Framework Project** has been completed and 6 out of 8 draft period resource assessments submitted. A consultative meeting is to be hosted by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2007.

Archaeological and historic landscape information and advice was provided for the **Newton Longville Conservation Area Review**.

## 6 Archaeology and Development

A list of development-related fieldwork from January to the end of June 2006 is provided in appendix A. The most significant cases are:

Excavations in advance of construction –

Excavations at **Walton Street Car Park** by Archaeological Solutions have revealed a series of Saxon pits and ditches dated to the 5<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century AD, representing the edge of settlement activity recorded at the adjacent site in the 1973-4 excavations. The second phase of activity on the site was mainly 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century consisting of coaxial boundary ditches and a cluster of inter-cutting pits. Further excavation and watching brief recording is programmed for this site.

Evaluations at **Springfield Quarry, Beaconsfield** have revealed traces of a Late Bronze Age field system. Further work to follow.

Work begun on the **Weedon Hill MDA** excavation in August and is revealing Bronze Age and Roman settlement activity. It is hoped that an opportunity for site visits can be secured.

## 7 **Publication update (Appendix B)**

Further progress can be reported on the matter of archaeological publication. There remain a few delayed and “difficult” cases; including **Rose Cottage, Penn** where the developer has gone into voluntary liquidation and the District Council has recently completed a land registry search on the new owners and is considering whether to take enforcement action.

## E. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Archaeological Reports submitted to the SMR

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