

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE IN MILTON KEYNES

**To:** Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

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### A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To inform the Committee of current archaeological matters in Milton Keynes.

### B. FIELDWORK PROJECTS

2. Attached is a list of fieldwork projects (Events) that have been undertaken in the Milton Keynes area between July and December 2008.

3. Highlights include 2 excavations:

- i A 1.5 hectare open area excavation close to Radcliffe School, Wolverton revealed a single-phase 7<sup>th</sup> century Saxon cemetery. The excavation recovered 75 inhumations, and 2 cremations. Many of the inhumations contained grave goods including: a silver necklace and pendant; a millefiori inlaid disc brooch; and a set of scales. The site may be related to the Saxon settlement revealed to the north at Wolverton Mill.

- ii A 1.6 hectare open area excavation to the north of Broughton village contained rectilinear Iron Age and Roman enclosures and a small late Iron Age / early Roman cremation cemetery. The final phase of the site comprised a single Sunken Featured Building containing early Saxon (c.5<sup>th</sup> Century AD) pottery, triangular bone comb, bone needles and thread picker etc.

### C. PLANNING

4. Between 1<sup>st</sup> July and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007 there were 148 consultations in respect of archaeology as a direct result of planning applications, pre-development enquiries, schemes by English Partnerships, Anglian Water, and Eastern Electricity.

D. SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

5. The Sites & Monuments Record was visited by researchers 8 times between July and September
6. The English Heritage response to the SMR Audit has identified the following additional work to bring the HER up to stage one benchmarking standard:
  - Creation of an access and charging policy
  - Development of an outreach programme
  - Data exchange agreements with adjacent authorities
  - Enhance the HER with C20th development information
  - Produce guidance notes for the SMR
  - Compliance with MIDAS and INSCRIPTION standard
  - Create a digitisation, collection and disposal policy
  - Create a Disaster Recovery Plan
  - Provide a structure Plan showing the position of the HER within the organisational structure

These works should be completed by September this year.

8. The Senior Archaeological Officer has completed work on the Milton Keynes Historic Development Atlas which provides details of many of the building and landscape developments within the city area. This information will be available as a GIS layer on the MKI Observatory website from early April: <http://www.mkiobservatory.org.uk/mapping.aspx> A short article on the project has been put in the News section of the Heritage Gateway website: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/News/Milton+Keynes+Feb+08+News+Article.htm>
9. It is proposed to make sections of the HER online via MKi Observatory. As the first stage of this development, the Senior Archaeological Officer has restructured the HER to make the tables ORACLE compliant. It is intended to make background information such as field names, historic woodlands and the eighteenth century road pattern available as mapped layers at the same time as the Milton Keynes Historic Development Atlas. Archaeological sites as point data will be included later in the year.
10. During July and August the archaeology section hosted a part-time student placement who assisted in creating a digitised record of all the listed building cards for Milton Keynes.

E. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 11 Shane Dower, the council's Heritage Development Officer, is in the process of developing Milton Keynes Heritage Strategy as part of the Council's Cultural Strategy. This is focussed on delivering the major heritage changes required for the Milton Keynes Growth agenda. A series of workshops held in 2007 and 2008 have examined the twelve priority objectives of the four part Heritage Vision. Both the council's archaeological officers have contributed by proposing five archaeological projects to be included in the strategy and advising on the Historic Environment element. Details of the heritage Strategy can be viewed at <http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/displayarticle.asp?DocID=16893&ArchiveNumber=>

F. OUTREACH

- 12 On November 17<sup>th</sup> the Archaeological Officer organised the first MK Council Archaeology Day. This event, held in the Local Studies Library was a great success and was attended by over 100 people. The day centred around a series of presentations by professional archaeologists on recent work in Milton Keynes. Stands from active local field work groups also proved popular as did Ros Tyrrell (Finds Liaison Officer) on finds identification duty. A successor event is to be held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and a Historic Environment E-Newsletter is also in preparation.

G. PROPOSED ACTION

- 13 The Committee is asked to note this report.