

Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officers' Report

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

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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 resources**

- b strategic issues and projects**

- c recent planning-related archaeological work**

- d progress in securing publication of archaeological reports**

C. RESOURCES

- 3 The County's archaeological service forms part of the Planning, Advisory and Compliance Service's Environment Team within Place Services. Following the departure of Sheila Keene, Simon Newell was appointed as Environment Lead Officer in September 2014. Philip Markham is the Senior Archaeological Planning Officer, Eliza Alqassar the Archaeological Planning Officer (part-time), Julia Wise the HER Officer.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 **Strategic Issues/Projects**

High Speed 2 – The County Council submitted a formal petition to Government in Summer 2014, and HS2 Ltd has responded to this. Following discussion with our HS2 Team we have given our response to the HS2 response. It is expected that BCC will attend the select committee after the election and following the formation of a new select committee. The Heritage Sub Group meetings are continuing and discuss the revised documents as they are released. The generic written schemes of investigation (WSIs) for archaeology and the built environment have been supplied but they are not what we would normally expect to see. They give an overview of standards but no detail. Camden Council has offered to take the lead on heritage but this

is questionable as they do not employ an in house archaeologist. A meeting took place on the 16th February to discuss the Historic Environment Research and Delivery Strategy. It is very early days for this and it was raised that shouldn't the base line information be finished first. Discussion will be ongoing.

Strategic Planning – all four appeals for major developments around Aylesbury (Fleet Marston, Hampden Fields, and Land North of Weedon Hill) were dismissed in January 2015. Two of the major developments were refused on environmental grounds, in particular impact on landscape character and the impact on the setting of a designated heritage asset (St Mary's Church LB grade II*).

Eaton Leys – This update is confidential and contains commercially sensitive information. It is intended for information purposes only and should not be distributed outside of Buckinghamshire County Council

MoLA undertook a geophysical survey on land bordering Milton Keynes and Great Brickhill (Bucks). The survey produced fantastic results of the Roman town Magiovinium and associated roads and possible settlements further south.

New National Designations

DCMS has recently listed the war memorials at Beaconsfield and Chesham Bois, both at Grade II.

6 Planning related archaeological work

Volume measures	3rd Quarter 2014	4th Quarter 2014
Total number of consultations handled	138	103
Number of planning applications handled	112	81
Planning applications responded to within 21 days (target 90%)	100%	95%
Number of development-related archaeological fieldwork projects	17	19
Success rate at appeal (target 50% annual success rate)	0 of 0	0 of 0

A full list of development-related fieldwork (July to December 2014) is provided as Appendix A.

Significant archaeological investigations include:

Aston Clinton - Excavation of an Iron Age – Roman settlement at Aston Clinton has revealed a large section of a major routeway, most probably the Lower Icknield Way.

Buckingham – a large evaluation of land south-west of Buckingham has revealed a significant Roman site adjacent to St Rumbold's Well (designated heritage asset).

Solar farms – several applications received. Evaluation of sites confirmed presence of Romano-British settlement remains in most cases. Mitigating the impact through use of concrete footings or by taking these areas out of the development proposal.

7 Publication update (Appendix B)

We are working towards getting the Sanderson Site, Denham published. In 2005 MoLAS undertook an excavation of a nationally-important Mesolithic hunter-gatherer site adjacent to Three Ways Wharf. This work was never published but negotiations are underway between the developer and Cotswold Archaeology.

Northamptonshire Archaeology's report on the excavations at Bridge Street, Buckingham was supplied following discussions at the previous BHEF meeting.

8 Historic Environment Record (HER) report

The HER database was migrated to the latest version of the HBSMR software at the beginning of October. This uses a SQL server platform but retains the Access front-end, so users will not notice much difference although operating functionality is much improved.

The HER performance indicator statistics are shown in the tables below:

Performance Indicator	3rd Quarter 2014	4th Quarter 2014
Historic Environment Records data inputting backlog (targets: reports < 30 by March 2015)	Reports = 31 Collect = 518 Total = 549	Reports = 38 Collect = 518 Total = 556

Volume measures	3rd Quarter 2014	4th Quarter 2014
Number of Higher Level Stewardship applications handled	1	0
Number of reports received by the HER	10	22
Number of Historic Environment Records enquiries handled:		
commercial	30	20
non-commercial	23	12
	7	8

HER enhancement and volunteer projects

Steady progress is being made by one of the HER volunteers on the milestones project, whilst the other volunteer is up-to-date with recording public houses and has moved on to recording railways. The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research and Recording Project is making rapid progress with three reports completed, 8 reports in draft and work underway on a further 7 gardens.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Archaeological Reports submitted to the Bucks HER

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