

HERITAGE PROTECTION REVIEW

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 21st September

Authors: Report by the Senior Archaeological Officer

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To introduce a presentation on the national Heritage Protection Review (HPR) by Mr Paul Stamper of English Heritage and highlight some emerging issues.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

2 The Forum is invited to:

- a **DECIDE** whether it wishes to make comments on the proposed new criteria for listing buildings and a mechanism for doing so
- b **SUPPORT** the proposal to assess the costs and other implications of complying with the draft national HER benchmarks
- c **CONSIDER** how else it might engage with the Heritage Protection Review

C. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 3 The resource implications of the HPR are unclear at present. The current initiatives are aimed in part at clarifying that cost. It is estimated that the assessment of the SMR against HER benchmarks will involve up to 30 days work by the SMR Officer and require the involvement/support of Conservation Officers.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 In June 2004 a Ministerial Statement by the Heritage Minister set out the Government's intention to implement a major reform of the heritage protection system. The statement represents the latest step arising from a consultation process initiated by the Government in 2000, commitments made in the Government's policy statement "*A force for our future*" published in November 2001, and the consultation paper "*Protecting our historic environment: Making the system work better*" of June 2003. The Ministerial Decision Statement includes 20 specific decisions, divided into a **Short Term Package** not requiring primary legislation and to be commenced in April 2005 and a **Longer-Term Package** requiring primary

legislation to be the subject of a White Paper and put before Parliament probably in 2006/7. The Longer-Term Package includes provisions for a single unified "Register of Historic Sites and Buildings of England" with different types of historic asset integrated into a single register entry on some sites. English Heritage will be given statutory responsibility for national designation with local designations the responsibility of local authorities. A unified consent regime merging listed building consent and scheduled monument consent would be administered by local authorities and conservation area consent may be merged with planning consent. In addition Government will require local authorities to establish and maintain Historic Environment Records or have access to one.

- 5 English Heritage is holding regional consultation seminars in September and October to explore various aspects of the new system. In the meantime, a consultation has been issued on new detailed technical criteria for the listing of buildings under the temporary arrangements of the "short-term package". The full consultation document "Revisions to Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings: Planning Policy Guidance Note 15" is available on the DCMS website:
www.culture.gov.uk/historic_environment/heritage_protection_review.htm

The deadline for response is 17th October.

- 6 A consultation paper issued by DCMS in August 2003 on the future of Historic Environment Records, sought responses on benchmarks for good practice, statutory status, location and accessibility and the crucial role of information technology. It suggested broadening the scope of records from recording archaeological "sites and monuments" to cover historic buildings and landscapes and also broadening their use from planning to encompass outreach and education. The proposed Benchmarks for Good Practice set out a checklist of measures for User Services and Access, Information Coverage and Content, Information Management and Organisation Management. Measures were divided into two tiers. Stage 1 is described as "essential good practice" whilst stage 2 is for "developed" HERs that "form part of integrated information systems for the historic environment". Currently the Buckinghamshire SMR meets or is near completion of 21 of the 23 Stage 1 Benchmarks and 8 of the 15 Stage 2 Benchmarks. The main unresolved issues relate to system documentation, extended data content (especially building records), networked data sharing and collaborative projects, particularly the relationship of the SMR to the work of the district conservation officers. It is therefore proposed that a scoping project should assess the resource and other implications of meeting these benchmark targets within the timescale of the HPR. The support of District Conservation Officers will be required to achieve this.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

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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