

**HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION**

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 21st September 2005

Authors: Report by the Senior Archaeological Officer/Presentation by the HLC Officer

**A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1 To report progress with the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Historic Landscape Characterisation Project.

**B. PROPOSED ACTION**

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

- a) **NOTE progress towards completion of the HLC project**
- b) **COMMENT on the attached list of proposed consultees for the draft report**

**C. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 3 Funding has been provided by English Heritage with management and other support provided by Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council.

**D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 5 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. The outputs of an HLC project are a digital map and database held on GIS (a Geographical Information System) and a report of the main conclusions. The data will be held as part of the Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record (forming an essential part of its development into a fully-fledged Historic Environment Record) and will be made available to all through the "Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past" web site. For Milton Keynes, the data will be available through the Council's SMR.
- 6 The Buckinghamshire project commenced in 2002, has completed its mapping phase and produced a draft report which is currently being edited internally before being sent out for external "peer review". David

Green (HLC Officer) will give a short presentation of the reports key findings.

- 7 The project design has been prepared at a time when major changes are anticipated to Buckinghamshire's landscapes as a result of the proposed growth agenda. HLC has already been used in reports to inform growth at Aylesbury and Milton Keynes and is also proving valuable in promoting rural conservation and community involvement.
- 8 A follow-on "deepening" project is underway for the Chiltern Conservation Board and further related projects are planned for the county's towns and for the Colne Valley.
- 9 HLC is seen as part of a suite of information also covering the physical and natural aspects of landscape, access, visibility and perceptions which together go to make up an integrated landscape characterisation. Such a robust evidence base is essential to achieving good environmental quality in spatial planning.

#### 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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## **Buckinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation: Proposed Consultees**

Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society

Buckinghamshire County Council: Community Services Policy Advisory Group

Buckinghamshire County Council: Strategic Plans Policy Advisory Group

Buckinghamshire County Council: Strategic Plans Team

Chiltern Conservation Board

District Councils: Conservation Officers

District Councils: Chief Planning Officers

English Heritage

Milton Keynes Council

National Trust

Professor Michael Turner, Hull University