

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Conservation & Design Advisory Group
Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder
12th July 2006

AUTHOR/S: Conservation & Design Manager

PROPOSED CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY PARTNERSHIP

Purpose

1. To consider the proposed development of a formal 'Service Level Agreement' with the County Council to create a county wide archaeology partnership to support specific countryside archaeology work. This would require a potential new funding allocation to be established from 2007/08.

Adrian Tindall, the County Archaeologist, will make a presentation on this item at the meeting.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The proposal seeks to enhance the archaeology service available to the Council by creating a service level agreement, tied to a set of agreed performance indicators relevant to South Cambs.
Village Life	Archaeological sites make a significant contribution to the heritage and character of many of the villages.
Sustainability	The proposal will support the sustainable development of the area while ensuring the preservation and management of heritages assets.
Partnership	The scheme will be a partnership with the County and the 5 districts.

Background

3. Members will recall considering an outline report on this issue at the 26th April 2006 meeting at which it was decided to invite the County Archaeologist to present a more detailed proposal to the 12th July 2006 meeting to enable the exploration of detailed options and the implications for budgets for 2007/08 onwards.
4. At present the Council is supported by the County Council on archaeological issues. The work of the archeologists is outlined below.

Considerations

5. ***Cambridgeshire Archaeology Service***
Cambridgeshire Archaeology Service works in partnership with others to protect, record, enhance and promote the county's archaeology and historic environment. It consists of two teams: the *Historic Environment Team*, which maintains the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record and provides planning and countryside

advice; and the *Archaeological Field Unit* which carries out archaeological fieldwork and provides a programme of outreach and learning.

6. The County Archaeologist now proposes that a form of 'Service Level Agreement' should be developed, tied to an agreed set of performance indicators, to ensure that the Historic Environment Team can support the council in meeting its historic environment objectives beyond 2007. This would be based on an annual payment based on the known archaeological resources in the district and the degree of development pressure it faces.
7. The projected sum would be of the order of £25,000 per annum divided pro-rata between the five district Councils. In South Cambs. the contribution would amount to £7,500. The funding source could be the Planning Delivery Grant if this was considered appropriate and finance was available.
8. The support for the service would be considered on an annual basis commencing in 2007/08 and would have an impact on the revenue budget or Planning Delivery Grant Budget.
9. ***The role of the Historic Environment Team***
The Historic Environment Team has for many years worked in informal partnership with the District Council to protect, record, enhance and promote South Cambs. archaeology and historic environment. This includes :
 - i. Advising on around 120 development proposals and 30 archaeological contracts each year in South Cambridgeshire, in line with government planning guidance. Recent and current projects include the new settlements at Cambourne, Northstowe and Longstanton West, infrastructure schemes such as the Huntingdon-Cambridge Guided Busway, and road schemes such as the Papworth By-Pass and A428 improvements. The team also advises on archaeological policies in the local development framework.
 - ii. Maintaining and managing the Historic Environment Record (HER) of nearly 15,000 sites, monuments and finds in the county, of which around 5,000 sites are in South Cambridgeshire. The HER responds to over 1,000 enquiries each year from planners, developers, utilities, archaeological contractors, researchers and the general public. The HER is expanding to embrace all aspects of the historic environment, including historic buildings, registered parks and gardens, industrial and 20th century remains. It also curates the archive of finds from archaeological fieldwork in the county.
 - iii. Advising farmers and landowners on the protection, management and enhancement of archaeological sites and monuments in the countryside. This includes advice on Environmental Stewardship and Woodland Grant schemes, and active enhancement and interpretation of sites such as Bartlow Hills Roman burial mounds, Fleam Dyke Anglo-Saxon earthwork and the medieval castle at Giants Hill, Rampton.
 - iv. Working in partnership with English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund, central government, district councils and community groups on projects to enhance our understanding and management of Cambridgeshire's historic environment. These have included projects to survey Cambridgeshire's historic towns, characterise its historic landscape and map its archaeological finds.

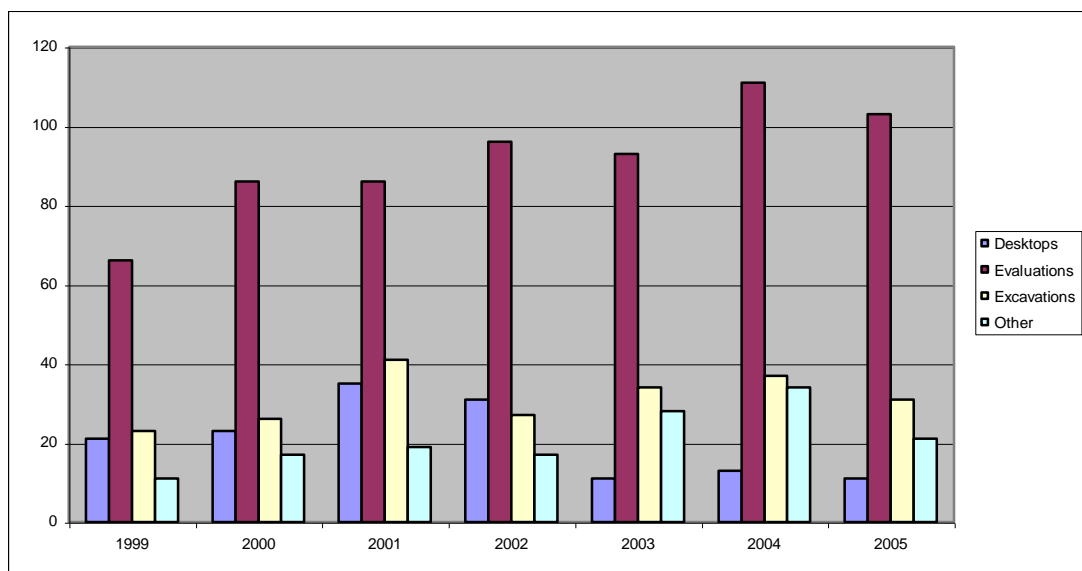
- v. Contributing with national and regional bodies to the government's historic environment agenda, including the proposed Heritage Protection Review, PPG15/16 Review, HELM, and statutory HERs.
- vi. Contributing to the Archaeology Service's highly successful Outreach and Learning programme.

10. **The need for change**

In recent years the Growth Agenda has led to a steady escalation in the workload of the Historic Environment Team. Cambridgeshire is the fastest growing shire county in England, and Regional Planning Guidance points to an unprecedented scale of development within the sub-region by 2021.

11. This has been reflected in a proportionate increase in the demand for specialist information and advice on the impact of development on Cambridgeshire's historic environment:

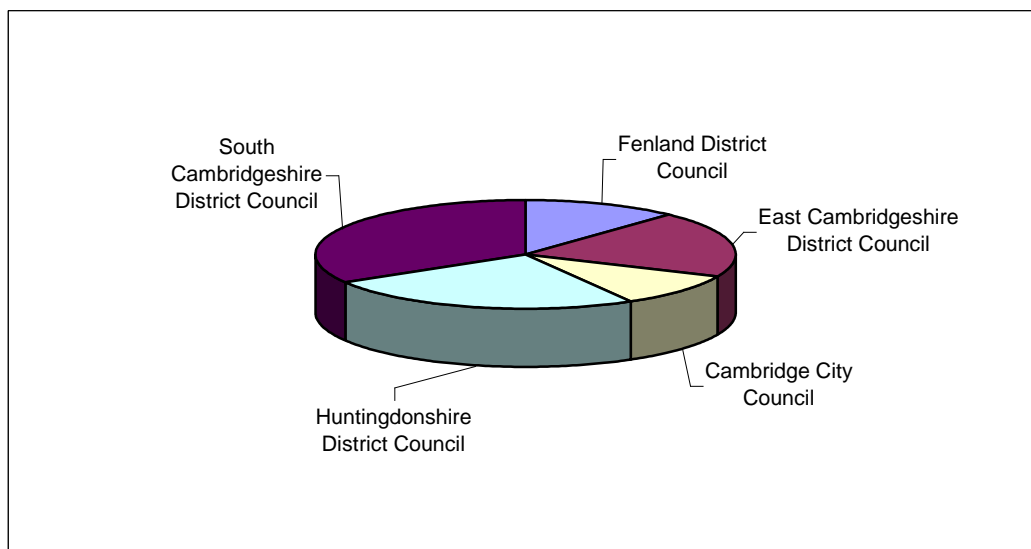
Figure 1: archaeological work in Cambridgeshire, 1999-2005



12. In parallel with this, the government is strongly promoting its agenda for more integrated management of the historic environment through
- (a) Creating a unified Register of Historic Sites and Buildings of England, with a simplified and devolved consent procedure
 - (b) Amalgamating PPGs 15 and 16 into a single PPS on *Planning for the Historic Environment*
 - (c) Formulating national Performance Indicators for the Historic Environment
 - (d) Requiring local authorities to establish and maintain, or have access to, an Historic Environment Record
 - (e) Supporting local authorities through HELM and Historic Environment Champions.
13. Over half of the Historic Environment Team's work is undertaken on behalf of district partners, but without any financial support from them in return. In the face of the pressures described above, it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain the present level of service without a more formal financial arrangement with district partners.

14. **Possible funding options**
 There appear to be two options for sustaining the present level of service to the District Council: recharging fees pro rata, or delivering the service through a Service Level Agreement. Recharging has the advantage to the district of greater flexibility, but an SLA would allow more effective budgetary planning, simpler administration and longer-term security. For these reasons an SLA would be the preferred option.
15. During 2005/6 the five Cambridgeshire districts were approached with a proposal to form a Cambridgeshire Archaeology and Planning Partnership (CAPP). This would take the form of a Service Level Agreement, tied to a set of agreed performance indicators, in return for an annual payment based on the known archaeological resource and the degree of development pressure it faces, and perhaps funded from a source such as the Planning Delivery Grant.

Figure 2: archaeology and development, by district



Options

16. The Conservation & Design Advisory Group are requested to consider the following :
- To support in principle the concept of developing a service level agreement with the County Council and district partners, and recommend that the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder allocates appropriate funding sources for 2007/08 subject to the identification of suitable and sustainable resources and without compromising other key Conservation & Design objectives.
 - To decline to support the concept of developing a service level agreement with the County Council and district partners, stating the reasons for this option.

Financial Implications

17. At present there is no revenue contribution made to the archaeology service. Cambridgeshire Archaeology Service is seeking a total contribution from the districts of £25,000 per annum, commencing in April 2007. In South Cambridgeshire, the *pro rata* contribution would amount to £7,500 per annum.

18. Such an arrangement would be extended to include other partners who call upon the expertise of the Historic Environment Team, including County Council departments and services, Diocesan Advisory Committees, neighbouring local authorities, and so on.
19. As well as sustaining the present service, it would allow enhancements such as the provision to partners of digital GIS datasets and upgrades, a more accessible and compliant HER, active membership of planning and infrastructure groups, and a regular and more formal reporting procedure.
20. This archaeology service is highly valued, however, without additional resources, it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify and sustain the level of service currently provided without some form of supplementary support.
21. The proposed Service Level Agreement would have an impact on the revenue budget or Planning Delivery Grant budgets, anticipated to be an average annual cost of around £7,500. SCDC's contribution would be greater than some of the other districts due to the greater number of archaeological sites and the extent of the development agenda.
22. Funding may be available through the Planning Delivery Grant if an appropriate Service Level Agreement can be developed and approved by all 5 districts.
23. SCDC currently provides *capital* funding of £3,500 to the County to maintain Scheduled Monuments, under the "Monument Management Programme".
24. Members will be aware that the budgetary process for 2006/07 has yet to commence. The comments of the Finance Section will be reported at the meeting.

Legal Implications

25. None the proposed Service Level Agreement would be discretionary.

Staffing Implications

26. The proposed Service Level Agreement would support a dedicated countryside archaeological post, based at the County Council.

Risk Management Implications

27. It is important that a full range of archaeology support is maintained in the light of the huge development agenda in the district. Funding however, needs to be sustainable and secure.

Consultations

28. Further consultation will be undertaken with the other districts and heritage bodies in the event of the support for the concept. It is hoped to determine the reaction to the proposed new county-wide partnership at a meeting of the Development Control Forum in September 2006 to enable budgets to be developed for 2007/08.
29. Further consultation with the Finance Department will be reported at the meeting.

Conclusions/Summary

30. It is evident that it is important to ensure that the level of archaeological support available to the district, both in terms of development control advice and the management of scheduled sites should not diminished. This is particularly the case as it will have a significant role to play in delivering the new development agenda. The development of specific targets and indicators tied into a Service Level Agreement could ensure the better targeting and maintenance of the service for the benefit of the district.

Recommendations

31. That the Conservation & Design Advisory Group area recommend that the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder :
- (a) supports *in principle*, the concept of developing a 'Service Level Agreement' with the County Council and district partners, to develop and maintain the countryside archaeological service,
 - (b) authorises officers to attempt to identify suitable and sustainable funding resources, potentially including the Planning Delivery Grant which may be allocated without compromising other key Conservation & Design or portfolio objectives.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Letter from County Archaeologist – 4th January 2006.

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