

Much of the Forum's interest under this priority concerns the management issues arising from the emerging Heritage Protection Review, the management of Conservation Areas and learning from good practice.

Historic towns and cities can be seen as models of sustainability which were established during previous low carbon economies.

- **Local distinctiveness**

Every historic town and city is individual. Protecting and enhancing their distinctiveness is fundamental to maintaining the high quality of life and richness of experience for those people who visit, live or work in them.

All towns and cities must evolve if they are to prosper. Managing change in a way which is sensitive to a town's existing character demands a particular set of skills. Whilst we are all familiar with unsuccessful examples of new buildings in historic contexts, there is much to be learned from those (fewer) examples where it has worked well. The Forum aims to facilitate the networking needed to promote this and to identify and share good practice.

- **Delivering high quality public realm**

The character of historic towns and cities is not only derived from the buildings, but is also a product of the spaces between the buildings - the streets, squares and parks, known collectively as the 'public realm'. Management of the public realm, and the ability to engage with highways engineers, is an area where the unique multi-disciplinary nature of the Forum can play a crucial role.

- **Managing traffic in towns**

One of the most damaging aspects of accommodating 21st century lifestyles in historic towns and cities continues to be traffic. The Forum's **Manual for Historic Streets** was published in 2008 to address many of the current issues. However, the Forum believes that there is still a need for updated guidance on park and ride as one of a number of potential solutions to traffic congestion and how this should sit within an integrated parking strategy.

The specific issue of traffic in smaller towns where park and ride is not a viable option is another priority which the Forum needs to address.

The principles put forward by the Historic Core Zone project (1998) continue to offer a set of guidelines for traffic management in historic environments.

- **Managing growth**

The current downturn in the economy has given local authorities a welcome respite from pressure for growth, which may provide a useful opportunity to reflect on the means for creating a sense of place in future urban extensions, how they link to existing historic towns and cities and the impact that they have.

The Strategic Priorities will be reviewed via the next Strategy Meeting and Membership survey.

What we propose to do

The **Action Plan** (Appendix 1) sets out in detail the activities which the Forum will undertake in order to deliver on these priorities.

Historic Towns Forum

Business Plan

2010 - 2012



Summary

The Historic Towns Forum

... promotes the prosperity and sustainability of historic towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

We believe that each of our historic towns and cities:

- Offers a unique and distinctive **quality of life** and **richness of experience** that needs both protecting and enhancing
- Is an inherently **sustainable form of development** that is entirely in tune with today's thinking and concern about climate change and carbon footprints
- Should be managed in order to **develop and adapt to 21st century demands and lifestyles**
- Is a testament to their robust nature as they have survived the varied demands of centuries of habitation including **low carbon economies**.

Our key activities are to:

- **Promote an integrated approach** to the planning and management of historic towns and cities
- **Facilitate a network for practitioners** in local government and other public, private and voluntary sector agencies
- **Develop, promote and disseminate good practice** through organising affordable events, conferences and seminars; publishing guidance documents and developing web-based information exchange facilities; and promoting European links
- **Influence government and other policy making bodies** on issues affecting HTF Members through the statutory consultation processes and by undertaking projects on key issues
- **Develop partnerships** in order to achieve these aims and objectives.

Our current (2010-2012) strategy is to focus on:

- Historic towns and cities as **sustainable communities**
- Protecting and enhancing their **local distinctiveness**
- Delivering **high quality public realm**
- **Managing traffic** successfully, and
- **Managing growth** in order to maintain, or create, a sense of place.

The Historic Towns Forum

Introduction

Promoting the prosperity and sustainability of historic towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

This is the first Business Plan of the newly formed Historic Towns Forum (HTF) - the natural successor to the English Historic Towns Forum that was formed in 1987. Like its predecessor, the Forum remains unique in being the only organisation in the UK to represent the many different disciplines and sectors involved in the management and planning of historic towns and cities.

This **Business Plan** will:

- Set out clearly the Forum's **overall aims and objectives**
- Provide an **overview of its operation**
- Establish its **strategic priorities** for the period 2010-12.

What do we stand for?

The Historic Towns Forum exists to:

... promote the prosperity and sustainability of historic towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

This it does by:

- **Promoting an integrated approach** to the planning and management of historic towns and cities
- **Facilitating a network for practitioners** in local government and other public, private and voluntary sector agencies
- **Developing, promoting and disseminating good practice** through organising affordable events, conferences and seminars; publishing guidance documents and developing web-based information exchange facilities; and promoting European links
- **Influencing government and other policy making bodies** on issues affecting HTF Members through the statutory consultation processes and by undertaking projects on key issues
- **Developing partnerships** in order to achieve these aims and objectives.

What are our current strategic priorities?

The Forum identifies its strategic priorities in conjunction with its Members (see Operation of the Forum below). To that end, a Membership survey was undertaken during August 2008 and a Strategy Meeting was held on 8 October that year; these established the following as the Forum's priorities:

- **Historic towns and cities as sustainable communities**

Promoting the development of historic towns and cities and managing their adaptation to the demands of the 21st century is entirely in tune with today's concerns about the impact of our lives on the environment and climate change.