



Historic England

Places Strategy





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1. Background

This document has been prepared in accordance with the Historic England Internal Documents, Place making and Urban Panel Scoping Paper (Sept 2017), Place making Strategy Brief (Dec 2017) and Place making Strategy Project Design (March 2018) and with reference to the Wellbeing and the Historic Environment” report (HE 2018)

It has been written following conversations with staff across Historic England, the Urban Panel and with various sector and governmental bodies, including the Arts Council England, Homes England, The Big Lottery (Local Trusts), DCMS, MHCLG, the British Property Federation, RIBA, the Planning Officer’s Society, the Urban Design Group, the Glass House Project, and Design Council (CABE). It also takes into account work done by the RICS, Landscape Institute, Public Health England, Farrells, the GLA, the Academy of Urbanism and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

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2. Historic England's vision for place making

No country has a greater diversity of historic places. They delight and intrigue, they are sources of prosperity and wellbeing, and heritage lies at their heart. Time and again, historic buildings, town and cityscapes, landscapes and our archaeological inheritance are the focus of a dramatic transformation for the better.

Up and down the country, people are re-imagining the places they love with the help of Historic England, using the power of heritage to unlock their value, socially and economically. Newly confident commercial partners have been shown how this can be done by example and through research, encouraging investment. This has provided a canvas for a cultural revival that has re-connected and re-vitalised communities.

Historic England's trusted advisory services provide the practical and tailored help that makes this possible. We inspire change, broker co-operation, and help to navigate the sort of design, management and delivery issues that can only be addressed by the breadth of expertise, statutory locus, local knowledge and national perspective that defines us.

2.1 What success will look like in 5 years?

We will work hard, with partners, to consolidate and reimagine our engagement with places, influencing and convening the wider sector, using the historic environment as the place making "glue". We will draw together the best of what we do already and continue adding value through our statutory roles and core services. But we will move our engagement to a more strategic level, adopting a more place-based approach to casework and integrating our services in a more streamlined way. We will have a renewed focus on working in places to deliver good for communities. This work will have benefits for Historic England in terms of influence, reputation and income, as well as the golden outcome of creating public value in communities across the country.

So, how will we define success in five years? Our action plan at the end of this document will lead us to success, which we observe and measure in six main ways:

- 1. an accepted sector view that heritage is central to good place making, and the establishment of Historic England as a key influencer in this field.** This will be evidenced through our engagement in successful schemes, testimony from the sector and communities, and us having an influential 'place at the table' in strategically important place making gatherings.
- 2. the establishment of a compelling language and a joint working proposition with developers.** We will have empirical evidence and case studies to demonstrate how profit can sit alongside the protection and enhancement of heritage with added social dividends. Our engagement will convince of the need to work closely with Historic England, manage risk, create more immediate and long term value and contribute to the betterment of places for public good;



- 3. a diverse range of communities across the country valuing the historic environment.** This will be achieved by Historic England championing local heritage and working with communities and other agents to honour local distinctiveness and character in a way that also delivers what is needed for communities to thrive, whether urban or rural. We will have evidence that understanding and respecting heritage can genuinely help with community cohesion;
- 4. an enhanced public understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment and an increased cultural participation, audience and social impact among groups who are less likely to walk through the doors of cultural organisations.** A more place-based approach to public programming among arts and culture organisations (including museums, galleries, theatre companies, literary and music organisations) with Historic England's influence and leadership will ensure that their curatorial, storytelling and public engagement skill is brought to bear on the historic environment through incentivisation and successful collaboration at place level.
- 5. an abundance of evidence from an ever-increasing suite of places that have been revitalised with heritage and good design at the heart.** Places where the community has a confident, shared vision for its future, where its buildings are fully occupied by homes, businesses or community uses, and where well cared for public spaces host a vibrant cultural life underpinned and stimulated by a shared awareness and valuing of place that extends to every part of society.
- 6. increased resources for investment in the historic environment by collaboration with other public bodies and from income derived through the skilful implementation of new charged-for services.** This will enable us to maximise the public value of all our activity.

3. Introduction

Place making is a broad term. Here it is defined as the process by which we work in partnership to shape existing cities, towns and villages, and the landscapes in which they sit and which form their setting. Rooted in community-based participation (including, critically, through local authorities), place making is multi-disciplinary in nature. Place making brings together diverse interests to improve a community's economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

This strategy sets out how we will help communities transform the places they love, using the historic environment to deliver public value. It responds directly to Aims 1,2,3,4 and 6 of Historic England's corporate plan.

3.1 Historic England's unique offer

Historic England (and previously English Heritage) has an outstanding record in place making dating from the establishment of the Commission in 1984, augmented by our amalgamation with RCMHE in 1999. Historic England's statutory functions of listing, grant giving and planning advice, our research capabilities, our educational and training programmes and our engagement and campaigns give us a unique opportunity to influence and bring people together in our role as enabler. Place making is the arena in which we use all of these resources strategically and in concert to effect transformational change.

3.2 The Public Value context

Sir Michael Barber's report, *Delivering Better Outcomes for Citizens* (HM Treasury 2017) identified the need for improved productivity in the public sector ("to do most good"), by focusing on outcomes rather than outputs, and being able to measure these effectively. Place making, where impact on the economy and on society can be more accurately assessed and where various public sector bodies can work in concert with other partners, is the ideal context for this.

The report also sets out a framework by which projects can be measured in terms of public value to enable the targeting of resources. This sets four yardsticks:

- pursuing goals
- managing inputs
- engaging users
- developing capacity

Public value is now a common thread running through government policy and review, including the Culture White Paper (DCMS 2016), the Industrial Strategy (MHCLG 2017), The Heritage Statement (DCMS 2017), The NPPF (2018 draft), the Mendoza Review (DCMS 2017), the CASE (the DCMS Culture and Sports Evidence programme) Place Shaping Report and *Healthy High Streets* (Public Health England (2018).



“Good growth” is closely related to the delivery of public value. *Good Growth* (Price Waterhouse Coopers and Demos for the Royal Society of Arts, 2011- on-going) and *Growing London* (Mayor of London 2016) set out an approach which is, broadly, an extension of sustainable development principles that go beyond planning into wider place strategies. *Translating Good Growth for London’s Historic Environment* (HE 2017) develops this concept and demonstrates through case studies how heritage-led development and place making can contribute to sustainable growth.

3.3 Place making and the historic environment

The historic environment collectively comprises what generations of people have made of the places where they live. It is a precious inheritance which, when well-managed, can be a valuable source of prosperity, wellbeing and community cohesion. The importance of place to current Government policy is evident in the recently published Areas of Research Interest (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/areas-of-research-interest>), being directly relevant to the interests of DCMS, BEIS and MHCLG. The value of historic surroundings is recognised in legislation, through designations that enable a wide range of interests to be balanced for the public good using constructive conservation principles.

Economic success is directly linked to the quality of the historic environment (CASE, 2016, Industrial Strategy (p217)). However, many of our cities, towns and villages are affected by a lack of confidence that stops them from reaching their full potential. Sometimes the value of what we have and what it could become needs to be revealed to inspire communities and businesses to take action.

This strategy is about the special role Historic England plays in inspiring that confidence, engaging the public, developers, businesses, investors, and institutions with dynamism, ideas, passion and energy through harnessing the power of place.

3.4 Place making and Wellbeing

The emerging focus on Wellbeing reflects a shift to a more inclusive model of success beyond gross domestic product. This is something now reflected in the Treasury’s Green Book, where *cost benefit* analysis has moved to *social cost benefit* analysis.

In 2010 the UK government defined wellbeing as:

“a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, and that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships, strong and inclusive communities, good health, financial and personal security, rewarding employment, and a healthy and attractive environment.”

The work of Historic England in historic places already contributes much to wellbeing, but a more concerted, strategic approach to place making brings with it the opportunity to do a great deal more to improve outcomes, and how they are measured and understood in terms of both physical impact (a conserved and enhanced historic environment) and in terms of wellbeing through community engagement and community action to care for that environment (such as the HE *My Castle Gateway* project in York). See *Wellbeing and the Historic Environment* (HE 2018).

3.5 Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) and Priority Places

Concentrating our resources is critical to our effectiveness in place making. Heritage Action Zones are our flagship programme for this, with ten underway and a further eight in development. We also identify “Priority Places” in our regional plans, and these will henceforth reflect a specific emphasis on place making. These priority places can be incubators for potential HAZs and can also indicate where particular Historic England involvement and resource is required for a planning or enabling reason. As HAZs will inevitably also be priority places, this strategy uses this term to encompass both.

Recommendation #1: Priority Places in regional plans will reflect an emphasis on place making and will respond to nationally set criteria.

Analysis of current HAZs reveals significant variation in terms of activity; this is inevitable in any responsive, place-based work. However, the balance between outputs and public value outcomes and impact is an obvious area where practice will evolve to more consistently respond to the evaluation framework.

Need, significance and the prospect of public value outcomes are intimately connected. The greater the significance and need, typically the greater will be the potential for transformational change. Partnerships that address a range of social and economic agendas and initiatives are the key to realising this. Historic England is ambitious about the scale of problems it seeks to address and will therefore choose where to focus strategically.

The following sets out the current activity and future recommendations for HE’s place making work in a number of areas: Engagement, Understanding, Building Confidence, Investing, Advising and Protecting, Facilitation, and Skills and Capacity.

4. Engagement

4.1 The heritage cycle

The tools we decide to use, and the timing of when we use them is important. The model for strategic engagement is the heritage cycle: a virtuous circle of understanding, valuing, caring and enjoying. Where people are on this cycle will inform the nature of our engagement. Of course, communities and stakeholders are not homogeneous, and there will be a spectrum of attitudes. It takes sustained local engagement to understand what approaches are most likely to succeed, and to be successful it will be necessary to have a very clear idea of who we are engaging with and why.

4.2 Stakeholders

Establishing relationships and trust underpins this understanding and is a critical foundation to place making activity. In urban areas the challenges to being heard can be particularly acute due to the variety of voices in play. In more rural contexts opening up debate can be equally challenging. Getting to know what motivates stakeholders and seeking common ground can however lead to some of the most fruitful partnerships. Sometimes this starts with inspiring and empowering a single influential individual.

Our national scope brings with it the opportunity to use our network to help us in this. The ability to facilitate introductions between places and people facing similar issues can be revelatory and mutually beneficial. In the words of one Urban Panel member, Historic England has a vital role in inspiring, influencing and knowledge sharing and we must seize this in our place making work for the good of all communities, urban and rural alike.

Recommendation #2: Our capacity to demonstrate good practice in the field in addition to sharing principles is something we will develop further by sharing intelligence more effectively between regions, and with our partners. We will publish case studies in print, in film and online to demonstrate good examples to a broader pool, and use our network to facilitate introductions between stakeholders in different places that face and have addressed similar issues.

Demonstrating inspiring leadership (whether from the local authority, developer or community action group) and working in partnership, (such as with local businesses, institutions, higher education institutions and neighbourhood associations) are key to good place making, as explained in the Culture White Paper.

Training can also be used as a key plank of engagement. Running HELM events in priority places where they will address place making needs is a highly effective way of improving capacity and establishing relationships and trust.

4.3 Communities

Generally, the public is interested in heritage, and people are naturally curious and care about the places that they live in, work in and visit. Our work involves the understanding, protection, and management of change of these places and is potentially of great interest to a broad spectrum of people. Our work in recent years to ensure a broader narrative of England's heritage has helped with showing relevance to an even wider constituency. Communicating the interest and importance of



our shared national story as manifest in heritage should not simply be part of the strategy, but inform every part of it to re-connect people with their common inheritance and with each other. This re-connection extends to enabling active participation and providing opportunities for control.

Recommendation #3 Historic England will develop its practice in community engagement in priority places to encourage and facilitate community action relating to the historic environment, with anticipated outcomes ranging from engagement with the planning system through to taking ownership of heritage assets and volunteering.

The Mendoza Review recommended that museums take an active role in place making by engaging communities and through partnership activity. The RIBA is interested in creating spaces where engagement and learning about place making can happen through the establishment of “Urban Rooms”, in accordance with the recommendations of the Farrell Review (2014). Partnerships with the RIBA, local planning authorities, higher education institutions, the Architectural Heritage Fund, Locality, local groups, museums and schools could allow such places to become a focus of place making activity for the whole community, bringing diverse groups of people together. This could also further the attainment of public value outcomes from archaeology as set out in the recommendations of the Southport Report (Southport Group, 2011) on community engagement.

Recommendation #4: Historic England will work with local and national partners in priority places to engage local communities in place making, bridging the gap between arts, culture, heritage and health. Our approach will include incentivising and championing good practice among museums and galleries, local authorities and health organisations and charities, encouraging learning and participation as stimuli in ways that respond to the strategic objectives set out in *Wellbeing and the Historic Environment* (HE 2018). As part of this, we will develop our respected Heritage Schools programme to link with place making activity in those areas, and develop guidance to encourage ‘Enriching the List’ workshops in communities.

4.4 Digital

The use of digital technology to provide access to advice and information to a variety of audiences complements our more personal, tailored engagement with stakeholders and communities.

Our place making web pages will showcase place making successes from around the country, and distil the lessons learned into helpful guidance and ideas. Sharing success stories is a way in which the fruits of our activity can be used to inspire a variety of audiences to engage with the historic environment. The development world is one where we have the ability to make a decisive contribution. Illustrating how heritage has added value to developments and giving hard economic evidence to underpin it will encourage others to enter the market.

Providing the tools to help communities record what they value so they can engage with change is equally important. *Knowing Your Place*, HE’s online advice on community-led planning is an example of this. We will also develop online resources for schools to help ensure the relevance of heritage is embedded in the classroom.

Recommendation #5: We will invest in digital technology to develop more innovative ways of engaging the public and we will continue to regularly update and evolve the place making pages on the Historic England website with case studies, research, advice, tools and educational resources.



Social media allows ad-hoc networks to be created, allowing ideas and information to be exchanged instantly and connections made between communities working on similar issues. The HE social media channels, including those managed by place-based teams, can be a tool for disseminating interesting facts and photographs of good historic places in action. Additionally, emerging technologies can help people to visualise and share their local heritage in new and exciting ways.

Recommendation #6: We will engage with social media by providing stimulus for discussion and sharing, and work in partnership with community development organisations (such as Locality) to develop ways in which information can be shared and used.

4.5 Campaigns

Campaigns such as *Keep it London* and *I Love Mills* engage the public about important issues, using powerful advocacy tools such as exhibitions, film, themed stories and narrative on social media with a common hash tag (for example #ILoveMills) to influence policy or inspire action in a certain place.

The future of London has been the subject of national news stories following the loss of beloved pubs and entertainment venues for housing development. The *Keep it London* campaign has linked our communications work, our research programme and our statutory advice to influence the draft London plan. The overarching message has been to keep London's special character at the heart of its future growth. Reports such as *London's Local Character and Density*, (Allies and Morrison, 2016) look at density using characterisation and comparison with other capital cities, giving authority to our advice and hard facts to inform debate. The *I Am London* exhibition of 60 portraits of diverse Londoners each with a meaningful building is a softer approach to advocating the importance of place and local character to people. Often it will be the strategic combination of different products (research reports, exhibitions, a batch of new listings and a communications response to a high profile planning decision) and approaches that gives a campaign credibility and success.

4.6 Celebrating success

Taking the time and care to celebrate success is sometimes overlooked in an understandable keenness to move on and replicate it elsewhere. This misses the opportunity to reinforce the benefits of heritage by promoting its enjoyment. Events based on successful projects can be the magic dust which inspires others to get in on the act, and can broaden and deepen support for the overall place making strategy. It is the opportunity for everyone touched by a project to share in the delight of its completion, strengthening the links between partners, stakeholders and the community.

Partnership with organisations, such as Locality and the British Property Federation (BPF), could help us do this at a national level. A presence at the London Festival of Architecture and a "road show" of best practice are two options to consider.

Recommendation #7: HE will pull together our knowledge of successful case studies, the general principles of heritage-led place making and tools for doing it well into a number of products to reach different audiences: a visually arresting, principle-driven booklet to reach developers and influencers; a film to capture the power of good place making and community involvement, and images and messages on social media to reinforce the principles across all our audiences. We will use of 'before and after' images to demonstrate value, and will include voices of how good place making has changed lives.

5. Understanding

5.1 Historic places investigation

Understanding is a key aspect of place making, and our place based research is widely respected. *Studies in Conservation* (1968) produced for York, Chester, Chichester and Bath used such scholarly research to inform masterplans for each city, to support the 1967 Civic Amenities Act's creation of conservation areas by demonstrating that conservation could accommodate change while preserving what was valued. More recently, characterisation (such as the Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey and Lincoln Townscape Assessment), Historic Area Assessments and our accessible Informed Conservation Books (numbering 33 titles including several quarters each of Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle) and our online research reports are authoritative and trusted sources of information on the urban historic environment. Our studies of rural landscapes, especially our work on farmsteads and rural settlement have transformed understanding at a local and national level. What they reveal about a place's significance is often catalytic to the establishment of a shared vision and informs its realisation. Archaeological interventions have proven the ability for the excitement of discovery to contribute to local economies (consider the economic impact of the discovery of Richard III or the Staffordshire Anglo-Saxon Hoard), and to add to a sense of local pride (the deep past of rural communities often forming the fundamental backdrop to Neighbourhood Plans, for example).

Recommendation #8: Place-based research will be an integral aspect of our place making activity in all of our priority places. We will use it extensively in communications to engage the public and to act as a stimulus for work with communities and in collaboration with local partners, including museums and local planning authorities.

5.2 Strategic research and social and economic research

Our strategic research provides insights and evidence that informs the way we and others work, including in place making. Historic England's Research Strategy and Research Agenda identify current research priorities to guide activity and inspire research partnerships. Our status as a Public Sector Research Establishment and our recent recognition as a UK Research and Innovation Independent Research Organisation have created opportunities to work with other organisations – particularly Higher Education Institutions – in new ways, increasing our capacity to provide research-led insights into the value of heritage and engagement with it.

The HAZ evaluation framework links strategic research to local evidence, and the data gathered from HAZs will be analysed once a sufficient period has passed for this to happen. The outcomes will be a critical measure of our effectiveness and will inform our activity.

Recommendation #9: Evidence-led national decision making has a direct link to outcomes, and supports the case for government funding. We will therefore:

- embed data gathering and evaluation in our place making activity at a local level
- work in partnership with academic institutions to deliver our wider research agenda
- develop a more sophisticated data analysis function using diverse datasets (including open source data) to provide better evidence from which to learn.



We also undertake social and economic research. Attracting investment in historic buildings and areas by the commercial sector is critical to place making success, but rooted in this are characteristics that have wellbeing at their core. “Liveability” is a frequently referenced characteristic of great places that is directly linked to viability.

Recommendation #10: Historic England will undertake a continuing programme of research to demonstrate what characterises successful and profitable developments in historic locations, and to develop a communications strategy to convey the findings and engage the development sector, government and the public.

Place making is an opportunity to identify exemplars backed by sound empirical evidence, enhancing the desirability of engagement as its benefits are demonstrated. In this context, place making will complement our wider activity by populating a constantly updated “prospectus” which will be communicated to the development sector via (for instance) the British Property Federation and other bodies. The BPF, RICS and MHCLG intend to undertake research on viability, and we will seek opportunities for collaboration.

This understanding of development economics will extend through research to local markets to underpin our recommendations and improve their likelihood of success. The recruitment and deployment of Development Economics Surveyors will assist in this.

6. Building confidence

Nothing creates or expresses a lack of confidence in a place more clearly than vacant buildings and the associated problems, and poor quality and under-cared for public realm. A perhaps less visible but equally worrying place issue is under-occupancy, particularly in upper floors. To tackle these Heritage at Risk issues we will employ a variety of approaches:

6.1 Development appraisal

The prospect of investing in an historic building or site can be daunting for the uninitiated. The uncertainty about what will be required can divert resources to places that seem more straightforward. Commissioning development appraisals can resolve many of these fears and establish the confidence to invest. In the case of strategically important places, Historic England can make a difference by doing just this.

An example of this, for a whole asset type, has occurred in Yorkshire and the North West, with *Engines of Prosperity* (HE 2017) which focuses on mill buildings in the North. This has gone on to form a campaign, and has captured the public's and developer's imaginations, resulting in a partnership with Homes England and a Local Economic Partnership (LEP) that will result in more worked-up proposals. Further opportunities for this type of partnership will be explored.

Historic England will also be enabled to produce development appraisals in-house, using multi-disciplinary teams drawn as appropriate from existing staff resources, and with the addition of the new Development Economics Surveyors posts. This will enable us to be responsive in cases where for a variety of reasons the commissioning of such work may be impractical or less desirable than doing it ourselves. It will also develop our reputation in this important field, and contribute to Continuing Professional Development for those involved.

6.2 Business rates

There is the potential for 3-400,000 homes above existing shops, according to the Federation of Master Builders report *Homes on Our High Streets*, and at the same time shop units are falling increasingly vacant. The vitality of the high street is directly related to numbers of people living within walking distance, and this is also related to public health and wellbeing (Public Health England 2018).

A main source of income for local authorities in the near future is likely to be Business Rates, twinned with existing income from council tax. Business rate discounts for bringing upper floors into use offset by council tax raised could deliver increased revenues, reinvigorate high streets and make thousands of historic buildings more sustainable and thus reducing risk to the historic environment.

Such economically-driven solutions would change the local retail economy and civilise streets by introducing passive surveillance or "eyes on the street" to quote Jane Jacobs. Further measures could include Local Development Orders (LDO's) to give prior consent and development appraisal to create an investment model.

6.3 Local Development Orders (LDOs)

The NPPF promotes the use of LDOs as a means of streamlining the planning process. This is a form of prior consent designed to give confidence and flexibility to the development sector in taking on difficult sites. Such tools have been used to good effect in Bradford, where an LDO has been teamed with a Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO) to give prior consent for the conversion of mills into a variety of uses. The development of design codes is closely allied to this.

Recommendation #11: Historic England will produce in-house or commission work externally that promotes the re-use of vacant floor space in priority places.

Recommendation #12: Historic England will work in partnership with Homes England, Local Economic Partnerships (LEPS) and other locally-based organisations to bring forward vacant buildings for residential conversion, following and developing the Yorkshire example.

The use of development economics to influence the market is an essential plank of the strategy, but potential also lies in combining our efforts with that of other cultural organisations in the delivery of their activities (Farrell 2014). The use of vacant historic buildings as pop-up work/gallery/event space for instance could excite public attention in these buildings at the same time as providing an interesting home for cultural activities to happen. As an example, we have been supporting regeneration in Margate through partnership with Arts Council England with a project that encourages members of the town's creative industries community to use empty and neglected historic buildings as work and project spaces. The Cultural Development Fund and the Creative Industries Sector Deal enhances the potential for the wider application of this type of partnership. The presence of successful creative industries is intimately connected to a high quality historic environment (CASE 2017).

Recommendation #13: Historic England will seek opportunities to work with other cultural and community development organisations to promote the use of historic buildings for creative workspace.

7. Investing

7.1 Partnership

Partnership grant schemes are undertaken with (and run by) local planning authorities to revitalise historic places, and can be a “magic bullet” in place making terms. The results of this have been most recently chronicled in “Derby PSiCA Monitoring and Evaluation Report”, which provides evidence on vacancy, rental yields, footfall, floor space and jobs.

High streets (or town centres) still host some of the highest levels of real-world social and economic transactions, but many are struggling with the disruption that has come with the advent of online shopping. They also contain some of the highest concentrations of heritage assets, but as conservation areas they are also the ones most commonly at risk, and can look particularly uncared for at street level. Grant assistance can restore value and confidence to these places by providing help to those who wish to repair their property or reinstate lost historic features – frequently shop fronts. By their nature they create a broad partnership, which often triples our investment and engages a diverse range of people in heritage projects, frequently for the first time.

Recommendation #14: We will deploy partnership grants in priority places where this would further the place making strategy for that area, and make the necessary adjustments to our HAR targets to enable this to happen.

Partnership approaches to grant assistance have also been shown to provide benefits in rural areas. This is chronicled in *Building Value – Public benefits of historic farm building and drystone wall repairs in the Yorkshire Dales National Park EH & Defra.*, work chiefly funded by Defra and delivered by the Rural Development Service (now part of Natural England). Similar, smaller projects were also run by English Heritage in the form of Conservation Area Partnership Schemes (CAPS) in the 1990’s.

7.2 Repair grants

We focus our grants on those sites which are most in need of repair and where, without our grant, a project would not be able to go ahead. Through careful prioritisation, many such grants have contributed to wider place making strategies precisely by helping to save buildings that are vital to the significance and future success of that place.

We can also use these grants to effect enhancements in conservation areas, or enable planning authority partners to take statutory action. This is currently not widely promoted, but could frequently be deployed to support place making.

Recommendation #15: We will coordinate our repair grants to ensure that we maximise the strategic benefit of such grants where they can support planning authorities in priority places to enable enhancement or statutory action where without our grant this would not be possible and where this clearly supports an agreed place strategy.



7.3 Building capacity

We can offer funding for activities and projects which are local or regional in coverage and which promote the understanding, management and conservation of the historic environment. As an example of their application, all HAZ Project Officer Posts are funded in this way.

Recommendation #16: We will offer grants for project based partnership posts in priority places where this is necessary to deliver the place strategy.

8. Advising and protecting

Historic England engages with a large number of statutory bodies (including local planning authorities) most regularly through our functions of advice and listing. In doing this we look for opportunities for strategic engagement, to further our relationship with the planning authority in question. This can be the first step towards a place making partnership.

8.1 Development Management advice

Statutory casework is the largest area of work for Historic England (in terms of resources), and while inevitably reactive to a degree, commensurately important to place making. It is currently only measured as an “output” though, rather than in terms of public value. This is driven by the requirements of MHCLG (21 days), which HE have been successful in meeting. With the shift in emphasis to include outcomes assessing the impact of our advice will become increasingly important.

Recommendation #17: We will monitor and evaluate the outcomes of our statutory case work to assess its impact and inform and improve engagement, and in doing so capture examples of HE engagement with design for the betterment of schemes that have broader place impacts.

Development Management casework at application stages is the “front line” in statutory terms, but this often means the “end of the line”, as we can be working backwards to unravel well advanced schemes to which the applicant is already committed. If we have not been involved in pre-application discussions (including with the local authority), then we often have limited opportunity for meaningful engagement at this stage and can be forced to object. Many councils use design review panels to improve the quality of proposals prior to submission. Involvement in this can enable us to influence much further upstream, and has wider networking and capacity building advantages.

Recommendation #18: We will attend and inform Design Review Panels in those priority places that have them for those cases where the historic environment is a factor.

The success of our advice is directly connected to how early we can engage in the design process, and the relationships and trust established over time with staff at LPAs and the development sector. By focussing on priority places using a multi-disciplinary, multi stranded approach the ability to do this will be significantly enhanced.

8.2 Planning Policy advice

HE engagement with the development plan process is an effective method of influencing the form of settlements, as identified in the LUC/Green Balance/Fosters reports on housing growth. Town and village extensions have profound implications for historic settlements in terms of effect on their setting and the future of their existing centres. This presents a need to create hooks for place making activity to inform proposals with tools such as characterisation, masterplanning and grants. This is happening in Grantham, Lincolnshire, where housing growth is part of a strategy to stitch the town centre back together, using a combination of policy and masterplanning advice and grant intervention.



Recommendation #19: Historic England will identify opportunities for place making support in areas of housing growth where this would engage with substantive historic environment issues (such as HAR, effects on character and appearance, setting, archaeology etc.), and assist local authorities in taking full advantage of these.

8.3 Local Industrial Strategies

The Industrial Strategy has raised the prospect of LEPS changing to become more accountable. Part of this will involve the production of Local Industrial Strategies (LISs), although timescales for this have yet to be established. The pivotal role of LEPS in providing funding means these will be important opportunities to secure funds for the historic environment.

What is clear is that LISs will need to be well evidenced to demonstrate how they will contribute to productivity. HE is potentially in an influential position in terms of providing ideas based upon the unique qualities and needs of that area that can be evidenced using our national and place based economic and social research. Early engagement with the LIS process will be important to influence their direction, and in priority places this may require sustained effort requiring a variety of approaches to make the case.

Recommendation #20: HE will engage with LISs proportionately, using national and place based research to make the case for investment in the historic environment.

8.4 Listing

The designation of a building on the National Heritage List for England (“the List”) can profoundly change the way a place is seen and can have implications far beyond the building that is listed. The ability to propose buildings for listing is a form of engagement that directly links communities to the process of caring for a place. The retention of a building that would, but for listing, be lost establishes a character “hook” in redevelopment areas that can be the difference between something that can be understood as an evolving piece of historic townscape and a bland, character-free re-development. The strategic importance that a single listing can have should not be underestimated.

Listing is a crucial measure of significance and is one end of what we recognise is a spectrum of values and significance across the historic environment. Responsive listing cases give the impression that value is ‘either or’ meaning that assets can only be considered in terms of national importance or special interest. Not meeting these criteria is often taken to mean that there therefore is no heritage value to be found, using the opportunity to reinforce positive local values in such cases helps to create an environment in which local communities can engage with, value and manage their historic environment locally.

Recent initiatives such as Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) enable us to be more responsive in the places we wish to focus on, allowing us to begin teasing out the spectrum of values and establish mechanisms for recognising and managing them.

The potential of listing to garner local support has been seen in action in Basford, Nottingham. Over 50 local residents helped to propose buildings for the local list, a shortlist from which will be taken for national consideration, helping to identify value across the spectrum while ensuring the protection of assets at the top end through Listing. Engaging communities in articulating the value of their heritage in this way through area surveys promotes a greater sense of ownership and engagement, and enables



communities to then make decisions about how places are managed and cared for. It also allows us to update the Heritage List to capture these values for Listed assets, lending a structured approach to List enhancement.

Enriching the List is adds another dimension to public engagement, allowing the vast pool of local knowledge to contribute to our understanding of buildings, sites and landscapes and giving the opportunity to tell more personal stories and share photographs to support the statutory record.

Recommendation #21: We will undertake targeted listing surveys in priority places to consider the state of the List in that place and look for opportunities to capture and celebrate the special interest of a place, alongside providing policy hooks to help shape the character of future development.

8.5 Enhanced Advisory Services (EAS)

HE has been providing a suite of charged-for services since 2015. The main intersection with existing place making activity has been with our pre-application and statutory consultation responses. Our advice is directly to applicants and is confidential by default.

The Treasury sets where HE can charge based upon a framework developed by HE using public value and private interest to determine when a service should be charged for. Currently all HAR is exempt except for conservation areas, where some of the most challenging sites are located.

Recommendation #22: We will consider an exemption from EAS for priority places where (in the opinion of the local team) public value (in place making terms) is the key consideration. This will clearly articulate the “prize” in prospect, which needs to be proportionate to the time spent. For substantial gains this time may be considerable.

There are opportunities to expand our EAS offer. Design review is a service supplied by a number of providers, however, this is typically for quite fully developed proposals and none have the combination of historic environment expertise and statutory locus. A Design Workshop service, consisting of a multi-disciplinary team to stimulate and inform the design process at a formative stage could have potential value to the development industry.

Recommendation #23: We will work towards the establishment of a Design Workshop service as part of EAS, using the experience of working in priority places to inform this process.

9. Facilitation

9.1 The Urban Panel (UP)

The UP is a group of external experts in various fields relating to the historic environment, including practitioners and academics, who are invited to historic places around the country to hear from stakeholders what issues those places are facing and provide ideas and insights about their future. It was established in 2000 by English Heritage and CABE, and has to date made 57 visits, all of which are brokered and organised by the local HE office with assistance from the HE secretariat.

During this time it has been involved in some of the most significant regeneration and place making successes the country has seen. It was independently reviewed in 2010 by Alexei Marmot Associates and in 2018 by a survey of HE regional Historic Places teams, who also undertook analysis of each visit's report. Both reviews confirmed very high levels of respect for the Urban Panel and its work, and a unanimous desire to see its vital work continue. There were also areas for refinement and development identified that can be distilled into nine proposals, which have been further refined in consultation with the Urban Panel:

1. Review papers will focus on recommendations to enable greater responsiveness.
2. Second visits will be scheduled at the outset to closely follow the first, and timed with the release of the draft review paper.
3. Communication of the recommendations will be integral to our wider engagement strategy for the area.
4. Preparation will include canvassing local stakeholders for issues, then reporting the panel's findings to them afterwards.
5. Subject to agreement, the UP could offer the option of post-visit support in the form of enablers/mentors from the panel.
6. Membership will be widened to increase the diversity (e.g. ethnic, age and gender make-up of the Panel) and expertise of its membership to make it more resilient and responsive.
7. Visits to Heritage Action Zones and other priority places will be prioritised where appropriate.
8. The places the panel can visit will be expanded to include outer London boroughs, with co-operation between it and the London Advisory Committee.
9. The work of the UP and its hosts will be showcased in an annual day seminar.
10. The organisation of the Panel will be more closely integrated with the core governance structure of HE.

Recommendation #24: We will re-launch the Urban Panel by focusing its engagement role in priority places, more effectively disseminating its advice within and outside HE and showcase its work in an annual seminar.

9.2 Masterplanning

Masterplans are a key tool in place making and a regular recommendation of the Urban Panel, allowing various interests to be reconciled at an early stage in the planning process in pursuit of a vision. They provide a context where true collaborative partnership working can be facilitated with communities and stakeholders. There is good potential for working with public and private sector developers here too, and sharing best practice.

Recommendation #25: Historic England will pro-actively engage in masterplanning in priority places, using tools such as Placecheck and Building in Context and guidance such as Streets for All to secure high quality place making with community and/or stakeholder engagement, with local authorities as key partners. For larger, more complex areas the assembly of a multi-disciplinary team may be necessary. This could also build on our place based research to become holistic place making exercises that encompass the full heritage cycle.

9.3 Heritage/place strategies

A place strategy can marshal a wide variety of people and interests to effect change for the better. Urban areas and large local authorities experience the same difficulties in achieving concerted action due to their diverse nature. Educational and cultural institutions, LEAs, BIDs, planning, housing, highways and property departments, museums and amenity societies can co-ordinate their efforts however by concentrating on place. Nottingham City Council has done this with their award winning Heritage Strategy (2016), allowing them a level of engagement and integration previously unheard of, at the recommendation of the UP.

Recommendation #26: We will develop a methodology for creating place strategies, promote their use and assist local authorities who wish to create them in priority places.

9.4 Place Identity

Branding can turn a place into a destination. For place branding to succeed it has to speak to the essential qualities of that place and what it aspires to be, and then implement a management strategy that will safeguard and promote these qualities. Place branding can therefore have a great deal in common with place strategies and with opportunities for partnership working.

Recommendation #27: We will explore opportunities for joint working with Visit England and local visitor organisations to develop place brands based on the unique heritage of priority places.

10. Skills and capacity

Historic England employs practitioners in almost every field of historic environment discipline. Introducing more flexibility into their roles would allow us to be more effective in place making.

For example, our architects in HAR teams do vital work on repair grants. Their technical and creative abilities could also be more widely applied as the need arises. The same is true for landscape architects.

Our Inspectors and Advisers are deeply knowledgeable on various aspects of archaeology, architectural history, landscape development and urban morphology. The same is true for colleagues in our Research, Conservation and Engagement teams. The communication of this knowledge and enthusiasm could be more often employed to improve the understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment of a wider audience.

Within each discipline there is untapped expertise that will be identified and opportunities offered to use it more widely. This will not only improve our responsiveness, but could also give greater job satisfaction to those who feel their knowledge is being more fully used and recognised.

One such opportunity may be in analysis and creative problem solving, from larger sites to individual buildings. The ability to assemble a team of mixed specialists as need arises to produce an alternative (or any) vision can change the debate about its future.

Recommendation #28: Historic England will do further work to imagine what these teams would look like and develop a plan to enable the formation of such teams in priority places, as needed.

Each local office has colleagues with urban design qualifications and knowledge, and the Historic Places Advisor has a leading role in providing urban design advice locally. This knowledge is most often used for the vital work of negotiation, critique and diagnosis rather than in design work itself. However, design work can give unique place making insights that would greatly enhance our ability to broker change on complex sites, and could also facilitate community engagement through masterplanning workshops. Sometimes a particular specialism (for instance, knowledge of the local property market) is necessary that may not be present in-house, and in these instances a framework agreement with a suitable local consultancy may provide a solution if no internal resource is available.

Recommendation #29: We will employ more dedicated urban designers to engage in pro-active project work, and will consider where these skills already exist in our teams to fully develop staff potential for engagement.

A strand that runs through all of our place making activity however is the need for communications to be more strategic and embedded in our everyday work.

Recommendation #30: We will therefore recruit additional specialist communications staff to serve each region to enable us to engage with communities directly and through the media as an integral part of our approach.

10.1 Training

Historic England is a large, constantly refreshed repository of expertise and ideas garnered from what we do and from our work with others. To capitalise on this communication is vital to ensure that it is shared, so that opportunities are not missed and practice remains current and innovative. The two HE staff conferences held to date have been tremendously successful in providing dedicated time for networking and learning. The establishment of an annual Urban Panel day seminar could do much to augment this.

This type of activity is excellent as an introduction to ideas, but for more detailed technical understanding a more structured approach is also needed. In addition to understanding how successful projects have been achieved, it will also be important to learn from where projects have failed, and have objective and constructive discussions about the causes of this.

Recommendation #31: We will develop a programme of training and opportunities for idea sharing for staff on place making topics, delivered by internal and external partners as appropriate, using priority places as a focus for learning and debate, informed by the work of the Urban Panel. This will take the form of regionally based events and online activity through the Fuse learning management system. Critically, the programme will include training on communication, to enable all staff to contribute to training and also to wider advocacy and engagement as necessary.

10.2 Governance of the Places Strategy

The focus on places brings an even greater emphasis on local decision making within a national framework. Refinements to our structure set out in the Change Programme reflect this, with augmented regional teams each delivering a range of services, and deciding on which places to prioritise.

This will continue to involve preparing the ground for HAZ applications and making recommendations to the HAZ board. Local teams manage the delivery for Historic England, with Places Teams leading on co-ordination.

The Urban Panel is administrated by Secretariat, with local teams responsible for designing the visit, local liaison and providing the briefing. An HE lead has yet to be identified, but with them will reside (among other responsibilities) the governance on the programme of visits.

The free flow of information is central to how we inform our decisions and then report on the results, internally and to a variety of audiences. At a national level communication between the new Policy and Evidence, Operations and Engagement groups will be a key driver to continuous improvement, ensuring that outcomes remain the touchstone of our work.

11. Action plan

No.	Action	Corresponding Recommendations	Timescale (Indicative)	Lead
1	Set national criteria to identify Historic England “priority places” in team plans which reflect an emphasis on place making.	All	Short	BIU/RD/ P&E/PE
2	Forge links between our network of local partners and stakeholders to share best practice by introducing people and places. We will also share intelligence more effectively between regions and publish case studies in print, digital and film to demonstrate good practice to a wider audience.	2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	On-going	RD
3	Create full time Urban Design posts in Regional Delivery to pro-actively engage in vision building for priority places.	11, 28, 29	Short	RD
4	Use the full range of our work in priority places to engage the public, with communications (including digital) as an integral element of our local place making strategies in collaboration with local and national partners such as museums and schools. To achieve this we will create full time regionally based communications/ community engagement posts.	All	Short	RD/PE
5	Undertake a continuing programme of research and evaluation using data gathered locally and from other sources (including open source) to establish a fuller understanding of what constitutes successful place making, to provide an evidence base for decision making, engagement, advice, bids for resources and for communications.	5, 7, 9, 10, 17	Medium/on-going	P&E/BIU
6	Engage in national research on development economics in historic environment contexts (with potential collaboration with governmental and sector partners such as the BPF, RICS, DCMS and MHCLG), to demonstrate returns on investment, sharing the outcomes through a range of media and a “Roadshow”.	7, 9, 10	Medium	P&E
7	Undertake place-based research in priority places to contribute to, stimulate and inform local place strategies and for use in partnership with museums, schools, local authorities and health organisations to engage communities.	4, 8, 30	On-going	RD/P&E

8	Invest in projects that address problems of vacancy and under-use in priority places, where possible in partnership with national and local partners. This will include formation of in-house teams, the funding of posts, research projects and grant assistance.	11, 12, 13,14, 15, 16	On-going	RD
9	Use an expanded and diversified Urban Panel to engage more fully in priority places and hold an annual seminar to communicate the results of its visits with local partners.	3, 23, 24	Short/on-going	RD/P&E/PE
10	Pro-actively engage in statutory and non-statutory strategic planning work in priority places with communities, stakeholders and local and national partners as appropriate.	3, 4, 19, 20, 24, 25	Short/on-going	RD
11	Expand job descriptions to allow fuller use of staff talents and enable the creation of “action teams” to problem solve for difficult sites and buildings, and explore the potential of this to form an EAS offer more widely.	23, 27, 29	Medium	
12	We will seek an exemption from EAS for priority places where (in the opinion of the local team) public value (in place making terms) is the key consideration. This will clearly articulate the “prize” in prospect, which needs to be proportionate to the time spent. For substantial gains this time may be considerable.	22	On-going	RD
13	Engage with design panels (where present) for cases in priority places where the historic environment is a key consideration.	18	On-going	RD
14	Develop a programme of training and sharing for staff on place making topics using priority places as a focus for learning, informed by the work of the Urban Panel using FUSE and through regionally based events.	31	Medium/on-going	
15	Pull together our knowledge of successful case studies, the general principles of heritage-led place making and tools for doing it well into a number of products to reach different audiences: a visually arresting, principle-driven booklet to reach developers and influencers; a film to capture the power of good place making and community involvement, and images and messages on social media to reinforce the principles across all our audiences. We will consider the use of ‘before and after’ images to demonstrate value, and will include voices of how good place making has changed lives.	7, 10	Medium	RD/PE

16	Produce an advice note on the creation of place strategies, drawing on the work of the Urban Panel and good practice in Heritage Action Zones and elsewhere.	26	Medium	RD/P&E
17	We will target priority places for listing surveys to consider the state of the list and look for opportunities to capture and celebrate special interest.	4, 21	Short/on-going	RD
18	Use commissions to seed fund and showcase ways in which museums and galleries can develop inside/outside programmes that encourage audiences/the public to explore and engage with the historic environment; invest in digital technology and reweight our imaging work more towards recording and capturing cultural activity in the historic environment and sharing images in the media and on social (eg annual lumiere at Durham/London, miners' gala, street festivals, poetry day celebrations and dance); reweighting our Archive collection policy more towards collecting images of cultural life in response/relation to the historic environment.	3, 4, 30	On-going	P&E/PE
19	Develop our practice of working with communities to encourage and facilitate community action leading to increased participation in the planning system, community ownership and volunteering.	3, 4, 30, 31	Medium	RD

BIU = Business Improvement Unit

P&E = Policy and Evidence

PE = Public Engagement

RD = Regional Delivery