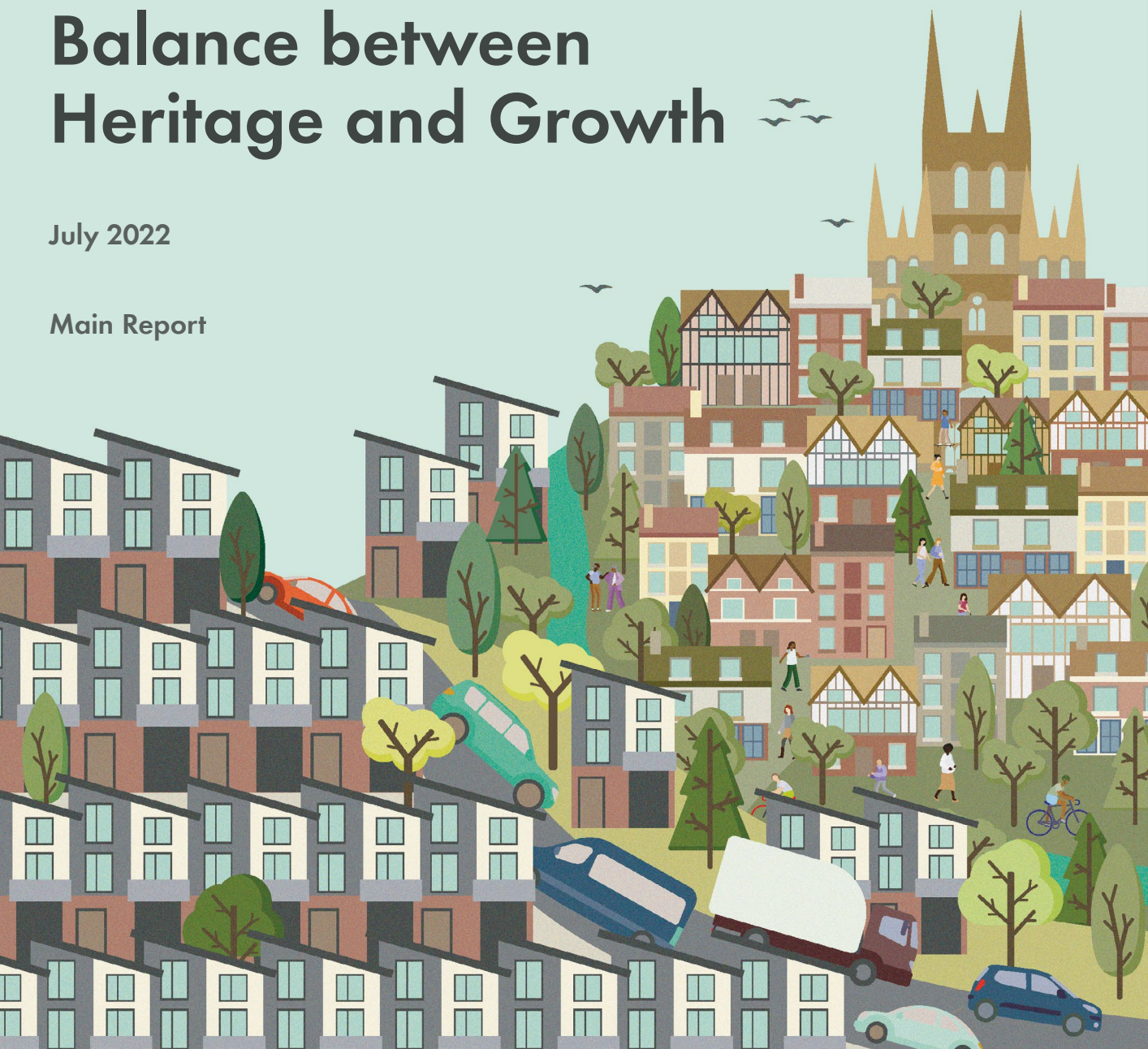# Towards a Better Balance between Heritage and Growth

July 2022

Main Report

Foreword

England's historic towns and cities have reached a state of crisis. On one hand, the Government's desire to provide more houses for more people at an affordable prices is not unreasonable, as home ownership is now out of reach for many.

On the other hand, large parts of town and city centres have become overly-dependent on commercial chain-store retail activity and have consequently been devastated by the recent Coronavirus closures. They are threatened further by global changes in how people shop. If you can buy what you want on your computer, then what are our town centres for?

How this is all resolved needs more care than to simply allow developers to build what they want, where they want, around the edges of historic cities and towns, just so that the problem can be dealt with quickly and within the immediate political time scale. And despite what the developers might argue, the solution does not lie with the weakening and dismantling of the planning system.

This will only frustrate the democratic channels necessary to demand higher quality and more considered development before irreparable damage is caused to the character and settings of historic places.

With an energy and environmental crisis already upon us, it is no longer acceptable to build swathes of scattered and car-dependant suburban housing estates on the fields that surround our historic cities. It is necessary to look much harder at what a sustainable and urban community might need to be, so that where we live, work, educate our children and enjoy happy and fulfilling lives can be achieved for perpetuity.

The clue to answering this challenge already exists in our historic towns and cathedral cities; the places included in this study. These are the towns where commercial activity, houses, shops and schools often exist within walking distance of one another and where successful long-established and secure communities already exist. These are the towns that

potentially hold the key to how new communities might be made both within existing settlements, where mono-cultural commercial retail areas are becoming redundant, or outside of them. This is not a plea for physically replicating the "olde worlde" towns, which could never be possible, but just a call to look very carefully at what works and what does not in terms of layout, density and disposition of streets and parks.

This study is particularly unique bringing civic and professional views together, but joins a long line of reports urging the same message - for more care to be taken with historic cities which demonstrates that we cannot rely solely on housing developers alone to answer the housing need. Their expertise lies in the efficient creation of mass produced houses. This experience needs to be harnessed with the help of urban designers, local authority officers, Historic England and all those involved with the well-being of our historic environment such as civic societies, so that

places can be created that will be worthy of our successors. A computer housing logarithm will never achieve this, and it is frankly preposterous to even imagine that it might. This is an urgent task but of huge importance where all relevant expertise is required; perhaps indeed the potential subject of a Royal Commission. It is urgent not just because of a pressing housing need, but to avert the wrecking of our historic towns, the twelve of which that are included in this paper being merely the tip of a very vulnerable iceberg.

Ptolemy Dean OBE

President, The Canterbury Society

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Produced in collaboration by the Historic Towns and Villages Forum, the Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns and Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners.

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Civic Societies supporting heritage and sustainable growth

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Contents

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES - a detailed analysis of the research findings are available in a separate report

Executive Summary

This research was initiated by a group of civic societies whose members were concerned about the impact of new development on historic towns and cities. In 2015 this led to the setting up of the Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns (ACT) and to a pilot study which suggested that many civic societies across England shared this concern.

Having heard the findings from the pilot study at a Civic Voice conference in 2016, the then Deputy Director of Historic England invited ACT to submit a proposal for a more extensive project. This would use a civic society-based, case study approach to investigate how heritage and growth could be better balanced in historic places. The work began in 2019, was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the final report was published in 2022.

Figure 1 **Peterborough Cathedral**

Aims of the research

1. Investigate the impacts of recent developments on the character, setting and heritage assets of historic cathedral cities and towns.

2. Identify ways in which growth and change can be accommodated without losing the character of historic places.

3. Investigate the impact of local authority budget cuts on heritage and planning for growth.

4. Determine the national and local policies and guidance needed to protect historic cities and towns and to conserve their heritage.

5. Enable civic societies and other community groups to make more effective contributions to the planning system.

6. Consider in what ways advice about the protection of heritage should be adapted to respond to climate change.

7. Assess the challenges to historic high streets and town centres from the Covid-19 pandemic, and from recent changes in working patterns and retail behaviour.

Methods of the research

The USP of this study is that it reports from the grassroots level on key current issues by carrying out interviews with civic societies in twelve case study places. Parallel interviews were also carried out with local authority officers in the same places.

Twelve places around England were chosen to take part in the study, with the choice based on their characteristics, locations and on the willingness of local civic societies to be involved. Places were selected to be as varied as possible in terms of their size, location, economic circumstances, landscape characteristics and degree of pressure from growth.

The data-gathering process comprised three stages:

- Interviews with representatives of local civic societies were carried out face-to-face by members of the ACT team, using a questionnaire tested in a pilot interview. The discussions were recorded and supplemented by visits round the town or city to set the data in a broader context.

- Interviews with local authority officers were carried out virtually by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, who spoke to members of the planning team in each place, including a conservation officer, as well as officers from economic and regeneration departments, and some councillors.
- Additional data came from Local Plans, Heritage Strategies, Transport Strategies, Open Space Strategies, Conservation Area Appraisals, 5-Year Housing Land Supply papers, maps and other sources.

In this study light is thrown on the topic from two different perspectives, and so no single 'right' answer emerged on how to create the balance sought. Civic societies and local authorities have different responsibilities and priorities, so often responded differently to the same question, creating a rich and complex picture of heritage and planning in England now.

Key Findings

Balancing heritage and growth

Two thirds of the civic societies said that there was 'strong' or 'some' support for growth at the expense of heritage in current local planning strategies as a consequence of the pressure for housing. Two thirds of civic societies said that support for the conservation of the historic environment by local authorities was 'poor' or 'moderate'. Only two places said it was 'good'. So the study tapped into the real concerns of many historic cathedral cities and towns.

Conserving the historic environment was particularly challenging in places which were struggling economically, where growth was seen as a solution for economic problems. However, it was also problematic in thriving places, where the historic environment tended to attract universities and other prestigious employers, as well as affluent retirees, leading to increases in house prices and pressure for new development.

Resourcing

All twelve of the cases study places confirmed the damaging effects of budget cuts. This has led to the neglect of heritage assets, loss of staff in the planning team, loss of expertise in conservation, urban design and landscape architecture, the employment of less experienced staff and a general overloading of the staff who remain.

A lack of time is a challenge and local planning authorities have had to adapt by sharing resources, contracting out master planning work and revising pre-application planning fees charged to developers.

Politics and local democracy

In two thirds of places the historic city was part of a much wider district. In some of these the council was dominated by councillors from the wider district, in contrast to the small number of members representing the city itself, who frequently came from a different party. This could lead to neglect of the concerns or conflicts about priorities for the historic town or city.

Growth strategies

Historic cities and towns are situated in locations which reflect their history. Of the

twelve case study places all but one is on a river, many have flood plains and flood risk implications. Five adjoin Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), while another three have an AONB near the city. Eight have Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) adjacent to or near the city. So there are real landscape and environmental constraints to growth. These constraints need to be better reflected in the algorithms used to calculate targets for new housing.

In half the case study places development was taking place largely on land around the periphery of the city, partly because it was easier and cheaper. Many civic societies commented on the traffic and pollution problems that this was creating. Fewer places were focusing on intensification and infill in the city centre.

There was considerable variance in the number of new homes being planned relative to the existing population. The average expected population uplift for the local planning authorities involved in the study was 17 per cent, over the Plan period, but many planned for more. Managing views across the city could be a challenge. Taller buildings in the city centre or excessive growth on the outskirts can damage the very qualities which make these places valued. Several civic societies argued for the creation of new settlements which could ease the pressures on existing historic towns and cities.

Design quality

Out of the 12 case study places, eight had a Heritage Strategy and five had Heritage Champions. There was concern that having a Heritage Champion could make this a niche activity and not a corporate responsibility. Five have Heritage and Design Forums which review planning applications, although in some places this job is done by the civic society.

Most council officers said that elected members grasped the importance of heritage, but civic society members were more sceptical. In particular the civic societies commented that many councillors would benefit from training in the conservation of historic buildings and the protection of the natural environment, and education about the value of heritage, including its economic value.

Civic societies were also concerned about the quality of new developments. They highlighted the need to meet much higher environmental and design standards and to develop active travel links, green spaces and green infrastructure.

Stakeholder engagement

Several authorities acknowledged the contribution which Neighbourhood Plans can make, seeing them as a useful way of engaging the community in heritage matters. However, civic societies felt frustrated by the process and by the constraints imposed by the higher status of Local Plans.

It was generally agreed that public engagement with planning needs to be improved. Officers tended to see this in terms of improving public knowledge about the planning process, while civic societies wanted to see engagement taking place at a stage when there was still time to influence decisions. Several civic societies valued close links with council officers and discussions with them, as recommended in the Toolkit in this report.

Climate change

All 12 of the case study places have declared a climate emergency, but many civic societies questioned whether this declaration had been translated into action. Some said that they were waiting for more robust policies and guidance, perhaps from Historic England.

Town and city centres

All respondents were concerned about the current situation in town and city centres, with vacancy rates running as high as 15 per cent in 2020. Council officers described the efforts that were being made to encourage the conversion of retail facilities to residential accommodation and the development of arts and cultural initiatives to bring old buildings back into use and support the vibrancy of town centres.

There was a consistent view among civic societies that more could be done to support tourism, for example, by promoting the story of the place and its heritage assets.

Many lamented that funding cuts had led to the closure of tourist offices, museums and historic buildings. There was concern about recent changes to the Use Classes Order which could lead to a loss of control of historic city centres, although not in Conservation Areas, which can use Article 4 Directives to claim exemption.

Key Recommendations

For National Government

A   Recognise that funding local authority staff and expertise is key to the conservation and growth of historic towns and cities. Without this investment, many decisions will continue to be made on an ad hoc basis, which will erode the very historic character upon which England's economic prosperity depends.

B   Devise future house building algorithms to calculate housing numbers which are informed by what can be absorbed locally, with more extensive data and appreciation of heritage and the natural environment taken into account.

C   Promote the retention and re-use of existing historic buildings to reinforce local character and respond to climate change.

D   Ensure that the views of local communities are given more weight in the planning process, for example, by ensuring that planning procedures are better understood and that consultation takes place at an earlier stage, when it is still possible to shape decisions.

For Historic England

E   Provide more guidance and support to local authorities on the weight to give heritage in Local Plans and publicise training for councillors and officers on heritage and design.

F   Update and reissue the *Heritage Counts* studies on the economic value of heritage, while also promoting recent guidance on adapting historic buildings to climate change.

G   Provide a library or resource for local authorities of best practice examples on the sustainable refurbishment of historic buildings, and their economic and 'green' value.

For Local Authorities

H   Create a culture which recognises the economic, social and cultural value of heritage by developing heritage and design expertise as a fundamental part of local authority planning and development teams, as well as early involvement in Local Plan reviews.

I Ensure that all councillors receive regular training on heritage and design to make sure that they understand how to maintain and enhance the character of historic places.

J Promote greater understanding of, and emphasis on, heritage through the production of a Heritage Strategy with a clear delivery plan with recommended actions.

K Ensure that planning committees represent the full range of places within the local authority area so that decisions about historic places are made by representatives of, and for the benefit of, those towns and cities.

L Support Heritage and Design Forums which can play a valuable role in protecting heritage and in reviewing emerging strategies and applications.

M Encourage civic societies and other community groups to engage with their local authority on heritage and growth at all stages – from Local Plan reviews to commenting on reserved matters applications for individual development sites.

For Civic Societies

N Develop close positive relationships with elected council members and heritage and design officers, in order to work collaboratively in protecting heritage and fostering good design.

O Support local authorities in encouraging greater involvement in planning consultations by local people, especially among harder-to-reach and more diverse groups in the community.

P Bring local experts to the attention of planning, heritage and design officers and councillors so that they can make a positive and informed contribution to planning.

About the Authors

This research was initiated by the Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns (ACT) and they have been supported by the Historic Towns and Villages Forum and Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners.

Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns (ACT)

The Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns was established in 2015 by a group of civic societies in cathedral cities, under the umbrella of Civic Voice, the national body for civic societies across England. The setting up of Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns (ACT) reflected the fact that civic societies in a number of cathedral cities and historic towns had become increasingly concerned about the tension between the conservation of the historic city/town and varying degrees of population, housing and economic growth. At the same time a number of other groups were highlighting the need to protect and enhance historic cities and towns, which have enormous economic, as well as cultural and social value to the country.

Historic Towns and Villages Forum (HTVF)

The purpose of the Historic Towns and Villages Forum is to provide support, training and information to organisations, professionals and the public involved in the planning and management of historic cities, towns and villages. This is to ensure that historic towns are not just conserved for future generations, but that they realise their full economic potential. The Historic Towns and Villages Forum sees heritage as a major element in delivering sustainable economic development.

Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners

Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners was formed in 2011 through the merger of architectural practice Allies and Morrison with planning, urban design and consultation practice Urban Practitioners. The Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners team undertakes all aspects of masterplanning and planning, including planning policy, planning applications, masterplans and Area Action Plans. The Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners team has undertaken a number of research studies and helped to produce guidance on a range of topics related to planning and design.

In 2013, the practice published *The Changing Face of the High Street: Decline and Revival* on behalf of Historic England with the HTVF - a review of retail and town centre issues in historic areas. In 2017 the practice undertook a ground-breaking study of London's characterisation and density for Historic England in 2017 - *London's Local Character and Density*. The work reveals a finer grain picture of urban character, which is now informing a more nuanced framework for planning and development. The research won a RIBA Award for Research in 2017, and was followed in 2020 with the publication of *Complex City: London's Changing Character* - the result of a more extensive research programme looking at how context and character can inform the growth and intensification of places across the country in a sensitive and heritage-led manner.

Figure 2 **Barton Park development, Oxford**

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of the research

1.1.1 This research study looks at how growth is being accommodated in historic towns across England, seeking to learn how heritage and growth can be balanced better.

1.1.2 The need for new and affordable housing is critical and this is driving the national target to build 300,000 new homes every year. The revised National Planning Policy Framework of July 2018 and subsequent versions increased the pressure on local planning authorities to supply houses in potentially contentious places. Reform of the planning system is underway with the 2020 Planning White Paper and 2022 Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill proposing significant changes in how land is released for development. This raises the stakes in finding suitable means of accommodating development, particularly when local authority staff has been heavily cut back, including conservation officers.

1.1.3 The basis of the study is that legislation and policy for protecting heritage tend to come into force at the level of the individual building, historic site or limited locality (e.g. conservation areas). There is no legislation devoted to historic towns and cities as a whole, yet many are now struggling to balance heritage and the demands of growth or the need for investment.

1.1.4 Whilst this research has focused particularly on historic towns and cities, the lessons apply to all settlements - small and large, historic and modern. A key driver behind the research was to identify the conflicts that are happening between heritage and growth, and to highlight the mechanisms that places have used to avoid, address and manage these. An important output of the study is a toolkit to help local authorities to tackle the challenges of growth in relation to heritage, and empower local communities to assist in this.

1.1.5 The research was built around the contributions of civic societies in identifying local character and challenges to heritage. These are organisations who champion heritage on a day-to-day basis. Through bottom-up research and interviews this research gives insight into different approaches to protecting local historic character and enhancing it with new development.

1.2 Research objectives

1.2.1 The research sought to investigate the following issues:

- The pros and cons of various approaches to managing and enhancing these assets in the context of new growth.
- Solutions or mechanisms that could improve the relationships between local government and residents to harbour successful conversations and actions by the two groups.
- The impact that local authority budget cuts were having on heritage and planning for growth.
- The degree to which the relative economic prosperity of a place affected the value placed on heritage.

1.2.2 The research was driven to find answers to a number of questions:

- How can growth and change be accommodated without losing the character of historic places, where and in what quantity?
- Can practical planning guidance address the protection of existing historic character at the urban scale?

- Are there different ways to manage growth and change – and are these the same or different from one historic place to another?
- What is the difference between places that have successfully managed growth and others in terms of the processes used? Is this a major consideration at the outline planning consent stage or later with subsequent reserved matters applications?
- What are the planning policy ingredients for making heritage-led regeneration successful?
- How significant are town centres and historic high streets compared to other less central parts of urban settlements in terms of the effects of growth?
- Where local authorities are undertaking historic landscape and townscape characterisations to understand their towns and districts better, does this help to inform the decision-making processes or are they hard to use in practice?
- Does declaring a climate emergency have an impact on the attitude to heritage protection, the management of existing buildings and the overall growth strategy?

1.2.3 Over the two years of interviews and visits in which the research was carried out it became clear that some of the hypotheses and anticipated issues behind the research objectives were too broad for this scale of study. As the research progressed it became clear that many of the issues and problems experienced were much more process-based. Very often the issue was about the timing of information, discussions and advice rather than the lack of information, discussion and advice.

1.2.4 The long term results that the research is seeking to achieve are:

- To enable greater benefits to historic towns and cities from development growth, whether in areas under development pressure or promoting heritage-led regeneration.
- To anticipate and mitigate any potential damage to the historic characteristics of settlements from new development.
- To contribute to on-going local and national planning policy formulation focused on the growth challenges in historic towns and cities as a whole.
- To enable civic societies and others to make more strategic and targeted contributions to the planning system.
- To help to strengthen relationships between communities, local historical societies and local authorities in the protection of heritage generally.

Figure 4 **Chester Northgate scheme (Source: AHR Architecture)**

1.3 Method

1.3.1 The research draws primarily on the knowledge and experience of 12 case study civic societies and local authorities in England. It brings evidence from the grassroots and reflects the views of those who live in places going through change.

1.3.2 The method involved three core stages of work: data gathering, interviews and then analysing and reporting.

Stage 1: Data Gathering

1.3.3 Invitations were sent out to 25 civic societies who had expressed an interest in the previous *Historic Cities and Growth* research by the Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns (ACT) or their work more generally. These invitations included an initial questionnaire on population size, heritage characteristics, economic resilience, location of planned growth and Local Plan status.

1.3.4 From the information received, a short list of 12 places were chosen. When choosing the case studies, every effort was made to ensure that they were representative - covering different geographical regions in England, different economic circumstances, different townscape and landscape characteristics, and different growth pressures and locations.

1.3.5 A pilot study was carried out on the city of Wells before refining a longer questionnaire which was completed by all of the case study civic societies. This set of questions probed much deeper to understand the context to their current status, and the key issues being experienced.

1.3.6 The research team supplemented this with extensive further research, data gathering and document reviews to appreciate the full picture.

Stage 2: Interviews

1.3.7 The next stage focused first on site visits and interviews with civic society members in each location. These visits and interviews were conducted by ACT members with local civic society representatives. Each were completed face-to-face during the least restricted periods in the pandemic.

Figure 6 **Research process**

Stage 1: Data gathering	Stage 2: Interviews	Stage 3: Analysis and reporting
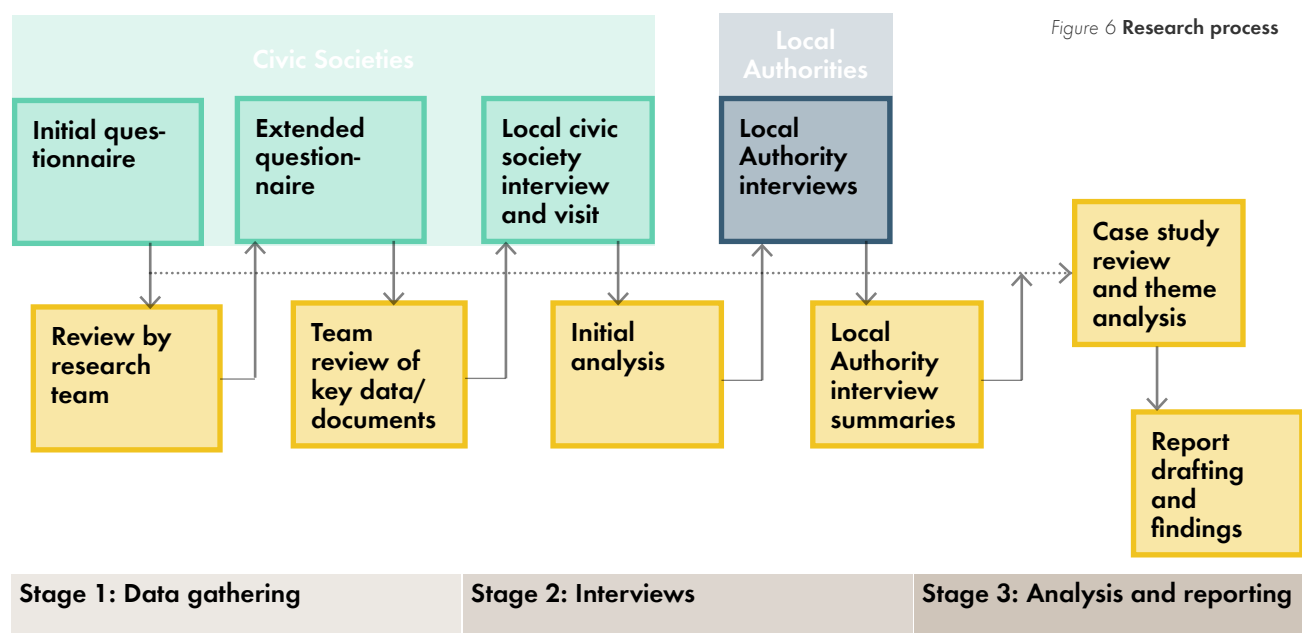
1.3.8   Following each site visit and interview the key messages were distilled to the Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners team who set up interviews with officers at the corresponding local authority. Virtual interviews were then conducted with officers in the planning team including a conservation officer, as well as economic development or regeneration departments. Where possible key councillors were also interviewed to gain their insights.

Stage 3: Analysis and reporting

1.3.9   Following the data gathering and interviews the team analysed the information and collated views. Key themes were identified and the conflicts highlighted. The research sought examples of local authorities or civic societies overcoming problems experienced by other case study places. The detailed analysis can be found in the separate *Issues and Opportunities report*.

1.3.10 A Toolkit of the optimum planning timeline and process, as well as the opportunities for civic societies and local communities to be more involved, was developed.

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Figure 7 **Aerial view of central Oxford** (Source: © 2022 Google, Landsat/Copernicus, Data SIO, NOAA, US Navy, NGA, GEBCO)

Growth:

"An increase in the size or importance of something"*

Cambridge Dictionary, 2021
*For the purposes of this research growth includes both physical and economic growth

Heritage:

"All inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility."

Historic England, Conservation Principles, 2008

The Historic England Corporate Plan 2018-21 identifies as one of its challenges and opportunities:
"Making sure that heritage is a positive contributor to the country's increased need for development, from housing to infrastructure, and is seen as such."

2 Background

2.1 Balancing heritage and growth

2.1.1 Each historic town or city has its own unique character. Heritage is often significant in that character or even defining of it. With modern pressures for growth arising from population increases, demographic and household changes and from the jobs, homes, retailing, education and leisure facilities which follow, change in historic places is an ever-present planning and design challenge.

2.1.2 The land use planning system is the primary mechanism for adjudicating between multiple interests when deciding what should be built, how much of it, where and in what form. Legislation and policy for protecting heritage tend to bite at the level of the individual building (listed buildings and buildings at risk), historic site (such as a scheduled monument or registered park and garden), or limited locality (conservation area). There is no heritage or planning legislation devoted to historic towns and cities as a whole, so practice at this scale is a matter of local judgment, and the outcomes are highly variable.

2.1.3 The challenge of accommodating urban growth while protecting the character of historic towns and cities has been addressed by two particular previous studies. *The Sustainable Growth of Cathedral Cities and Historic Towns*, by Green Balance and Burton-Pye, October 2014, was commissioned by English Heritage. Its central feature was to examine how nine different mechanisms for reconciling growth with heritage had been applied in eight cities, for the most part as good practice. None were necessarily better than others, but the report recommended that each city should use the method or methods most appropriate to its circumstances - whether this be historic characterisation, a skyline strategy, urban intensification or urban extensions. Various overarching and cross-cutting themes were identified which were also likely to be significant in affecting the degree to which outcomes were likely to be acceptable in heritage terms. *Cathedral Cities in Peril*, by Foster + Partners, March 2015 was prepared for the Kenwood Group,

but is not widely available. It used case studies to identify the housing demands being placed upon English cathedral cities, the methods of accommodating growth by the local authorities responsible for them, and comparisons with European historic cities where the challenges had been handled better. Recommendations were made for good practice and tested in principle in King's Lynn.

2.1.4 This research offers a very different perspective on the same issue. Unlike the previous research which identified solutions and studied how they had fared, this study has taken a bottom-up approach starting from the impact of recent development on the character of the town or city. This research recognises that the most appropriate ways to accommodate development will vary between places. The solutions are likely to be more far reaching than the good practice locations studied by Green Balance or the unusual case of King's Lynn with its extensive brownfield land.

2.1.5 The research also sees heritage as a positive contributor to the country's increased need for development, but looks for answers to why many people feel that their historic towns and cities are being 'spoiled'. This is not always about the loss of valuable buildings or features, rather it is due to:

- poor quality or inappropriate new development in close proximity to the historic city;
- changes to their surroundings, settings and views across the city; and
- the poor integration of new development (especially housing), the lack of accompanying infrastructure and the resulting traffic congestion and air pollution.

2.1.6 This research seeks to show how new development does not have to have negative implications, but can instead be harnessed to bolster the distinctiveness and vitality of the town or the city as a whole.

2.2   Changing times

2.2.1   The last decade has seen significant shifts in priorities and trends. Even during the process of undertaking this research the world has changed signficantly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of these shifts have heightened the pressure and urgency to address heritage and growth. At the same time climate change is now a policy imperative with significant increased emphasis in an evolving planning system.

2.2.2   **Housing crisis:** The demand for housing continues to grow as house building rates fail to keep up with targets. Many families are trapped in unsuitable or unaffordable accommodation. House prices continue to rise, with average UK house prices doubling in the last 20 years. The attractiveness of many of the country's historic cities and towns is one of a range of reasons that they often find themselves in the list of least affordable places to live: Winchester was found to be the least affordable location in England in 2021 according to research by the Halifax.

There are 23.3 million households in England *(an increase of 3% over the last 5 years).*
Office for National Statistics - Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2020

17.5 million people are trapped by the housing emergency
YouGov Plc research for Shelter April 2021

The UK average house price rose by 23.3% in the last 5 years
National Statistics - UK House Price Index 2021 and 2016

Target of 300,000 new homes per year
Conservative manifesto 2019

243,770 new homes were delivered in 2019/20
MHCLG - Dwelling Stock Estimates: 31 March 2020, England

£18.4 billion was spent on heritage tourism (i.e. heritage related visits and trips in 2019)
Heritage and the Economy, Historic England 2020

74% of councils have declared a Climate Emergency
Climate Emergency UK

"High streets could lose between 20-40% of their retail offerings as a result of the accelerated shift to online commerce"
KPMG, The future of towns and cities post Covid-19, 2021

"Post-COVID we are unlikely to see a return to old commuting habits, with a significant proportion of those able to work from home doing so for at least part of the week."
KPMG, The future of towns and cities post Covid-19, 2021

2.2.3 **Climate change:** At the same time the threat of global climate change is looming large and increasingly urgent, with increased climate events such as flooding in historic towns. The UK government has committed to achieving net zero carbon across all sectors of the economy by 2050. Since 2018, 74% of local authorities have now declared a Climate Emergency, many with commitments to achieve net zero well in advance of this target. Additionally, Historic England has published a Climate Change Strategy, as of March 2022.

2.2.4 **Covid-19 pandemic:** In March 2020 the country entered an unprecedented national lockdown. Over the following months life changed dramatically and huge economic and social shifts have occurred which continue to play out. Key changes were the effective closure of city and town centres, the reduction of commuting, with all but key workers working from home for long periods of time. As the world emerges from the pandemic, trends have been significantly altered with likely long term changes in movement, lifestyles, local economies and communities. Some key areas which require attention are the drop in public transport use and the associated financial challenges this brings to sustainable transport ambitions, the rise in importance of the public realm and outdoor space, and the drop in visitor numbers and the need for more investment in tourism.

2.2.5 **Retail economy:** The pandemic has also sped up trends that had been in progress for some years on the high street. The rise in internet shopping and a corresponding drop in high street retailing has reduced the viability of comparison retail floorspace

Average growth in UK GDP was +1.95% per year pre-2020
Office of National Statistics (2021) Gross Domestic Product: Year on Year growth

Central government grants to local authorities were cut by 37% between 2009 and 2019
Institute for Government (2022) Local government funding in England

In 2011, built heritage tourism in the UK provided 134,000 direct jobs and £5.1bn economic output
Historic England (2014) Heritage Counts - The Value and Impact of Heritage

There are 58 Unitary authorities in England (out of 333)
GOV UK (2021) Local Government Structure and Elections

in town and city centres. Many retailers have made huge leaps towards more internet and delivery based consumer shopping since March 2020. Whilst the experience of shopping on the high street as an activity in itself still has a draw, the balance of uses and activities in the town centre continues to change with an increasing emphasis on uses other than shopping.

2.2.6 **Local government finance:** Over the last decade cuts to local authority budgets have significantly reduced the resources available to councils. Many have had to cut services, focus resources on statutory services and re-organise departments. The continuing reduction in budgets poses real challenges for heritage protection and management.

2.2.7 **Government-led reorganisation:** Over the last three years the Government has brought forward a series of proposals and White Papers to address structural issues. The *Planning White Paper* (2020) proposes major changes to the planning system with new emphasis on data-led strategies and locally informed design codes. At the same time proposals to re-organise local authorities and devolve responsibilities are being considered on the back of the Devolution Bill. The publication of the *Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill* (2022) has set the stage for further investment and re-organisation. Each will have important implications for managing growth and heritage.

2.3 Key players

2.3.1   National bodies, local government and amenity groups have an interest and a role to play in heritage and growth. This research is focused on understanding the real needs of those working at the coal face of balancing heritage and growth and then finding tools to aid them. In doing so, it is important to understand the existing roles of some of the key players and potential sources of support.

2.3.2   Many local amenity groups exist and each is able to engage with the local planning agenda and help to steer the management of heritage. **Civic societies** often have an active role in towns and cities. They have a long history of engaging with and promoting planning, having first emerged at the end of the 19th century driven by an increasing public desire to maintain local distinctiveness and by a concern for the quality of life of local people. They gained real traction with the advent of the Town and Country Planning Act in 1947 and the designation of the first conservation areas in the 1960s, and have been promoting heritage and sensitive planning ever since. **Neighbourhood Plan Forums** have been established widely to draw up Neighbourhood Plans and so have policy-making powers. Neighbourhood Plans sit under national policies and Local Plans, and need to comply with them, providing more detail at the local level. Many Neighbourhood Plans are led by civic societies or town and parish councils.

2.3.3   At the local level, in most locations **county councils** provide transport planning and infrastructure investment, while **district, borough or city councils** provide most other functions including the planning and conservation service. Where **unitary councils** exist all these services are provided together. The district or unitary planning team is responsible for developing the Local Plan which directs growth and sets the parameters for change. They also prepare heritage appraisals and set management plans for conservation areas, prepare design guidance and determine planning applications.

2.3.4 **Landowners and developers** have an important role to play in supporting placemaking objectives in cities and towns. They must work within the parameters set by local planning policy when submitting applications (and pre-applications). In some instances developers are involved in promoting sites through the Local Plan process. In these cases it is important to establish clear expectations of any housing development including context-led design, integration and land value capture. Developers can also work jointly with councils on larger schemes to agree masterplans and design codes.

2.3.5 At the national level, the **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities** (formerly Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government) has responsibility for setting growth targets, directing the planning system and housing provision, and targetting investment to support local economies. The Department is responsible for setting the housing formula or algorithm - "the standard method for calculating housing need" - which results in the housing targets each local planning authority must accommodate through their Local Plan. The **Department of Transport** oversees transport infrastructure investment including road building as well as public transport.

2.3.6 **Historic England** is the statutory body for the historic environment and the government's advisor. Historic England provides a range of services to support people involved in managing change to the historic environment, including the provision of local planning advice through six regional teams of experts. They support placemaking activities through urban characterisation and Historic Area Assessments, as well as providing grants such as the High Street Heritage Action Zones programme.

Figure 8 **Chosen case studies**

3 The case studies

3.1 Introduction to case studies

3.1.1 The research is based on the experience of 12 cities and towns in England:

- Canterbury
- Chester
- Chichester
- Lancaster
- Lichfield
- Malvern
- Oxford
- Peterborough
- Wakefield
- Wells
- Winchester
- Worcester

3.1.2 Each has common features - they are all historic settlements with similar geographical settings (on rivers, in valleys with valuable surrounding landscape), most have cathedrals at the centre and all have conservation areas and listed buildings at their heart. However, there are many physical and socio-economic differences between them, and these make them representative of the range of historic towns and cities across the country.

3.1.3 The case studies are spread around the country, chosen to take in those close to major cities such as London, Leeds and Birmingham as well as those more isolated such as Lancaster. They vary in population size and spatial extent from the small city of Wells to the large city of Oxford.

3.1.4 Some have been held up as exemplars for conservation planning for decades such as Chester, whilst others like Peterborough or Wakefield have found it harder to bring heritage planning to the fore.

3.1.5 All are under pressure to accommodate growth, albeit to different degrees, and this pressure has played out differently in local planning strategies. In some places, civic societies have formed strong working relationships with the local authority and feel involved in the challenge of balancing growth and heritage. Whilst in other places, civic societies feel ignored or unable to influence the trajectory that their town or city is taking.

Canterbury

Figure 9 **Canterbury Cathedral** (Source: Stu Smith)

Figure 10 **City within Canterbury District**

Key information

Local Authority	Canterbury City Council
Civic Society	Canterbury Society
Defining attributes	Roman and Saxon legacy A World Heritage Site with three parts: Christ Church Cathedral and precincts, the ruins of St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church Medieval parish churches and city walls Medieval and post-medieval street pattern Diverse architecture from all periods Geographical setting in a river valley, Stour water meadows, near AONB and historic woodlands
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisals Shopfronts SPD Design Review Panel
Heritage strategy?	Yes
District population	166,762
City population	55,000
District geography	City plus other towns
District growth	800 homes pa
Location of growth	Primarily periphery

Chester

Figure 11 **Chester Rows**
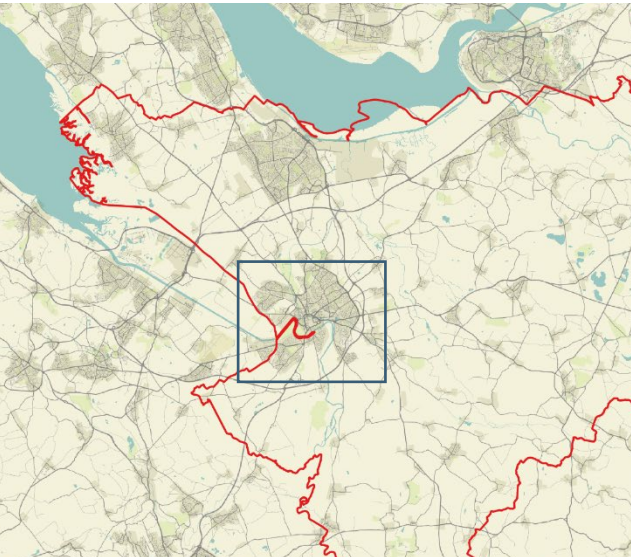
Figure 12 **City within wider Cheshire West and Chester District**

Key information

Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Civic Society	Chester Civic Trust
Defining attributes	Intact Roman and medieval walls Compact network of streets and lanes Landscape setting by River Dee Many timber framed buildings, including the Rows Roman fortress Medieval abbey, now Cathedral, in red sandstone Eastgate and Victoria Jubilee clock
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisals Rows Characterisation Study Heritage Impact Assessment Background Paper Design Review Panel
Heritage strategy?	Yes
District population	343,823
City population	81,300
District geography	City plus other towns
District growth	1,100 homes pa (of which 350 homes pa focused on city)
Location of growth	Centre and periphery

Chichester

Figure 13 **Chichester Cross** (Source: Grassroundsgroundswell)

Figure 14 **City within wider Chichester District**

Key information

Local Authority	Chichester District Council
Civic Society	Chichester Society
Defining attributes	Compact city centre in four quarters (Pallants) Cathedral (landmark spire) and Close City walls 15th century Market Cross Georgian architecture in the Pallants Priory Park
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisals AONB SPD Shop Fronts SPD
Heritage strategy?	Yes
District population	121,508
City population	23,730
District geography	City plus other towns
District growth	492 homes pa
Location of growth	Periphery

Lancaster

Figure 15 **Lancaster Town Hall** (Source: IK's world trip)
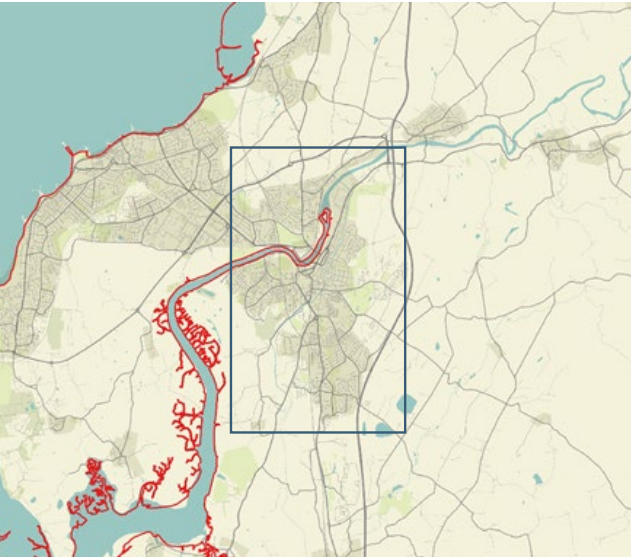
Figure 16 **City within wider Lancaster District (which stretches up to 30km north and east of the city)**

Key information

Local Authority	Lancaster City Council
Civic Society	Lancaster Civic Society
Defining attributes	Norman castle keep and Shire Hall Custom House Edwardian Town Hall Grand Theatre Green setting including Williamson Park
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisals Heritage Impact Assessment
Heritage strategy?	Yes, update in progress
District population	148,119
City population	52,234
District geography	City plus other towns
District growth	555 homes pa
Location of growth	New settlement and brownfield sites

Lichfield

Figure 17 **Lichfield Cathedral** (Source: Michael Kooiman)

Figure 18 **City within wider Lichfield District**

Key information

Local Authority	Lichfield District Council
Civic Society	Lichfield Civic Society
Defining attributes	Cathedral with three spires ("Ladies of the Vale") major landmark Local setting of Stowe Pool 12th century grid of streets Georgian architecture of strong group value
Evidence base / support	Landscape Character Assessment Historic Environment SPD Heritage Impact Assessments Historic Environment Character Assessment Lichfield Extensive Urban Survey Report
Heritage strategy?	No
District population	105,637
City population	32,319
District geography	Small city plus other towns
District growth	477 homes pa
Location of growth	Edge of centre and periphery

Malvern

Figure 19 **Malvern Priory** (Source: Hugh Llewelyn)

Figure 20 **Great Malvern within much wider Malvern Hills District (which stretches up to 30km from the town)**

Key information

Local Authority	Malvern Hills District Council
Civic Society	Malvern Civic Society
Defining attributes	Spa resort Regency and Victorian architecture Parks and gardens Terraced hillside setting of Malvern Hills including Priory Park and Worcester Beacon Malvern College Norman Priory Church of St Mary's
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisals Local List Malvern Hills AONB Farmstead Characterisation Study and colour assessment tool
Heritage strategy?	No
District population	79,445
Town population	29,626
District geography	Series of merged settlements make up the town and then large district with many villages
District growth	412 homes pa
Location of growth	New settlement

Oxford

Figure 21 **Radcliffe Camera** (Source: Tejvan Pettinger)

Figure 22 **Oxford City and District boundary**

Key information

Local Authority	Oxford City Council
Civic Society	Oxford Civic Society
Defining attributes	Ancient seat of learning of world renown Rivers Cherwell and Thames run through and meet south of the city centre, the floodplains constrain growth of the city Buildings in every style of English architecture from late Anglo-Saxon, including university buildings from the 12th century and outstanding contemporary architecture Protected skyline of university and church spires Many landmarks including Carfax, Radcliffe Camera, Ashmolean Museum
Evidence base / support	Character Assessment Toolkit Heritage Asset Register Heritage Plan Views Study Heritage Energy Efficiency Tool Design Review Panel
Heritage strategy?	Yes
District population	166,762
City population	166,762
District geography	City only
District growth	544 homes pa
Location of growth	Mixed

Peterborough

Figure 23 **Peterborough Cathedral** (Source: Spencer Means)

Figure 24 **City within Peterborough City District**

Key information

Local Authority	Peterborough City Council
Civic Society	Peterborough Civic Society
Defining attributes	12th century cathedral with spectacular west front Market Place and Guildhall Georgian houses in Priestgate Setting by River Nene New Town growth in 20th century
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisals Local List Shop Fronts SPD
Heritage strategy?	Yes
District population	210,570
City population	187,700
District geography	Single city in wider district with small villages
District growth	972 homes pa
Location of growth	Mixed

Wakefield

Figure 25 **Wakefield Cathedral** (Source: Stephen Bowler)

Figure 26 **City within Wakefield City District (which stretches 15km east of the city)**

Key information

Local Authority	Wakefield Council
Civic Society	Wakefield Civic Society
Defining attributes	Georgian parades and squares 15th century Cathedral Imposing Victorian civic buildings – Town Hall and County Hall Industrial legacy – former warehouses
Evidence base / support	Heritage Impact Assessments PPG Areas of Sensitivity
Heritage strategy?	No
District population	351,592
City population	99,251
District geography	City plus other towns
District growth	1,400 homes pa (of which 280 homes pa focused on city)
Location of growth	Periphery

Wells

Figure 27 **View across Wells city**
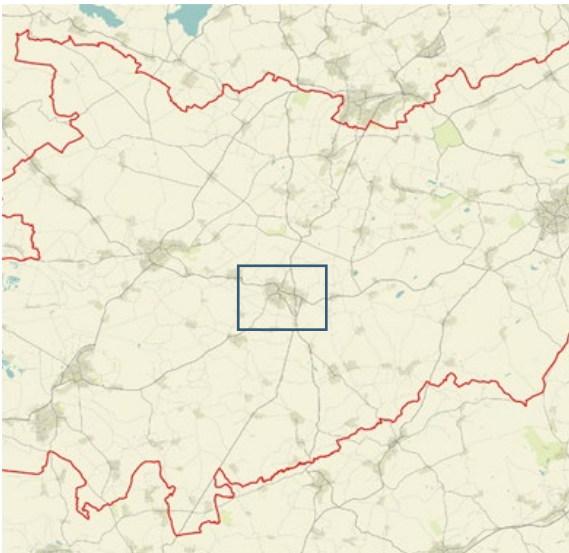
Figure 28 **Wells City within wider Mendip District**

Key information

Local Authority	Mendip District Council
Civic Society	Wells Civic Society
Defining attributes	Cathedral with west front towers and medieval statuary Exceptional ecclesiastical precinct including Cathedral Green and Vicars Close Intimate scale, small and compact centre Saxon or early medieval street pattern with burgage plots Town Hall and gatehouses High Street and Sadler Street Bishop's Palace and Palace Fields
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisal Shop Fronts SPD Draft Local list Design Statements Draft Listed Buildings Users Guide Design Review Panel Heritage at Risk register Landscape Character Assessment
Heritage strategy?	No
District population	116,288
City population	10,356
District geography	Small city plus other towns
District growth	419 homes pa
Location of growth	Periphery

Winchester

Figure 29 **View across Winchester**

Figure 30 **City within wider Winchester District**

Key information

Local Authority	Winchester City Council
Civic Society	City of Winchster Trust
Defining attributes	Roman legacy Former capital of England Saxon town within Roman walls Ancient street pattern Cathedral and close, including Old Deanery and Pilgrim's Hall Landscape setting in a hollow– St Giles Hill, St Catherine's Hill, Itchen watermeadows Winchester College Wolvesey Palace
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisals Shop Fronts SPD
Heritage strategy?	No
District population	125,925
City population	45,184
District geography	City plus other towns
District growth	666 homes pa
Location of growth	Centre and periphery

Worcester

Figure 31 **Central Worcester** (Source: Oliver Mallich)

Figure 32 **Worcester City and District boundary**

Key information

Local Authority	Worcester City Council
Civic Society	Worcester Civic Society
Defining attributes	Setting on eastern bank of the Severn Worcester Cathedral (Norman and later) College Green Guildhall St Helen's Church Timber-framed buildings in Friar St Georgian houses in Foregate St
Evidence base / support	Conservation Area Appraisals Local List Design Guide SPD Heritage at Risk Register
Heritage strategy?	No
District population	100,265
City population	98,700
District geography	City only
District growth	882 homes pa
Location of growth	New settlement (in Malvern Hills District), intensification and infill within urban extent and periphery development

4 Research findings

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 This chapter provides an overview of the research findings. For the detailed analysis of issues and opportunities please see the separate report.

4.1.2 The case studies were chosen as representative of a range of historic towns and cities and based on the capacity of the civic societies to get involved. The study's emphasis was on looking at common issues and experiences, rather than the places themselves.

4.1.3 The interviews and visits to each case study identified a series of common concerns held by civic societies. Many of these were corroborated in interviews with local authority officers. The conflicts between heritage and growth were evident to differing degrees, as well as the difference in opinion and perspective between civic societies and local authorities. One aspect that became resoundingly clear during the research was that many of the conflicting opinions and views between parties were often as a result of a lack of understanding of the planning system, and the appropriate points at which evidence is most impactful and decisions on key topics are made.

4.1.4 The charts that follow (p46-47) highlight the consistency and divergence in the primary issues and concerns raised by civic societies and local authority officers.

4.1.5 There are a number of common concerns across both groups, these include:

Funding - both civic societies and local authorities emphasised that cuts in local authority funding have significantly impacted the resources and staffing in conservation and planning teams.

Resources - the quantity and quality of historic environment conservation and design expertise within local authority planning teams has been impacted negatively by funding cuts. This has reduced the resources available to steer growth strategies and development applications.

Housing numbers - the pressure to deliver housing targets is acute and is an overpowering objective. Many of the case study locations were struggling to accommodate these numbers sensitively.

Figure 33 **Barton Farm development to north west of Winchester** (Source: JTP)

Most common civic society concerns
(in no particular order)

1 Funding - The damaging effects of cuts in funding to local authorities.

2 Resources - The reduction in the numbers of staff working in conservation departments and the hiring of less qualified and less experienced staff.

3 Physical/character constraints - The importance of taking account of geographical, environmental and spatial constraints, which may limit the land available for development, particularly in historic places.

4 Natural character - The importance of natural heritage, open spaces and waterways, and the need to protect and enhance these areas.

5 Site development - A perceived lack of control that planners have to limit and steer new developments, leading to a feeling that developers can ignore traffic problems created by new development and can fail to build to carbon neutral standards.

6 Sustainable transport - The lack of provision for cycling and walking, both currently and in plans for the future and the need for better and cheaper bus services to reduce dependence on car transport.

7 Pollution - The challenge of air pollution and of levels of pollution which threaten health.

8 Views - The importance of views across historic places and the threat of new developments which interrupt the skyline.

9 Member expertise - Lack of interest in heritage among elected members and their need for training in heritage and design.

10 Local control - The lack of control over historic places when the representatives of those places are outnumbered on planning committees by representatives of other parts of the district.

11 Affordability - The cost of housing and the need for housing for rent which local people can afford.

Most common local authority concerns
(in no particular order)

1   Resources – The depletion of specialist skills, the inability to keep up with workload with reduced capacity, and the challenge of retaining staff given limited resourcing to provide competitive salaries.

2   Housing targets - Housing growth targets for local authorities are challenging, and they have to find space for development or risk losing control of where growth goes (e.g. a lack of 5 year housing land supply exposing them to permissions won at appeal).

3   Collaborative working - Officers would like to work collaboratively with Historic England, other partners and other departments within councils.

4   Heritage economy - Heritage can feel like a costly burden at times. There can be conflict with economic development - whether this be as a perception, within policies or within planning decisions. At the same time heritage tourism is vulnerable, along with other nationwide retail trends – and this is seen as a threat to prioritizing heritage objectives in city and town centres.

5   Undervalued assets - Some locations felt that they had more heritage assets than were formally recognized, and these could be overpowered by other or better recognised assets.

6   Peripheral development - New schemes located on the urban fringe are less likely to be protected by heritage policies, as these policies tend to focus on town and city centres. Local people and civic societies seek more protection for these out-of-town sites, however, the pressure to permit development and reach housing targets can override these concerns.

7   Design style - There is a negative perception from the public and local politicians of contemporary architecture. Everything is expected to be of traditional standards and there seems to be a push back on anything but that.

8   Guidance - There is not enough guidance at all scales regarding heritage matters for local authorities to use within decision and plan making.

9   Local input - Public consultation is key and needs to be established from the outset. There can be tense relationships with civic societies. Groups tend not to understand when they should best intervene to have their desired impact.

4.2 Resourcing

4.2.1   Resourcing was a concern across the board. All civic societies cited this as a headline concern and believed the cuts in funding and the reduction of conservation staff at local planning authorities were having a damaging effect on the scope to protect and enhance existing heritage assets and local character.

4.2.2   Many local authorities had found new ways of working to enable them to continue to deliver conservation, design and planning tasks with reduced staff numbers and specialist skills. This included sharing resources across councils, restructuring internal processes and adjusting the timing of conservation and design inputs. Nevertheless, workloads are significant and many officers felt they had to focus on priority sites and schemes.

4.2.3   Overall it is clear that budget cuts have produced a deficit in the quantity and quality of staff, their services, and the resources to invest in conservation advice.

Good resourcing – Malvern and Worcester

Malvern Hills District Council is not unitary, but it shares operations and staff with its neighbour Wychavon. This arrangement gives both councils access to specialists for ecology, conservation, design, trees, and the wider natural environment. In addition, Worcester City Council has worked jointly with these two authorities to establish a joint growth strategy, allowing them to manage housing targets more sensitively across a wider area.

Figure 34 **Great Malvern view** (Source: Honza Soukup)

> *"Unless we can accommodate the growth without further urban sprawl, we will destroy a jewel."* Civic Society

> *"Locations for growth on the periphery have been chosen in many cases because they are the least harmful."* Local Authority Officer

> *"Density should be determined on a site-by-site basis considering both the immediate area distinctiveness and local needs."* Civic Society

4.3 Growth strategies

4.3.1 Historic settlements are a product of their settings, and the landscape and their characteristics are firmly interrelated whether due to a challenging topography, flood plains or a river valley or other factors. These natural features have created boundaries limiting the size of the settlement, the spread of development and access to local facilities. Managing a growth agenda in these historic environments can be hugely challenging.

4.3.2 There is no single approach to the way an analysis of the historic environment should inform a growth strategy. Some places have been steered primarily by the constraints of the settlement's character and location, whilst others have prepared detailed townscape and landscape character assessments to inform locations and capacities for growth. Across the case studies the majority were experiencing growth at the periphery - some planned through least sensitive site allocations, some unplanned and unsupported by the local planning authority.

Good impact assessment – Lancaster

To support the preparation of the Local Plan for Lancaster District, Heritage Impact Assessments for Allocated Sites were prepared by Lancaster City Council. These assessments informed the choice of options for the growth strategy. For each of the potential sites, the assessments have described in depth: the heritage assets affected (designated and non-designated); the site's contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) identified; an assessment of the impact on the significance of heritage asset(s); consideration of what enhancements could be achieved or ways to mitigate harm; and conclusions and recommendations on the potential allocation.

Figure 35 **Lancaster view** (Source: Mark McNeill)

4.4 Politics and local democracy

4.4.1 The research indicated that in broad terms, most councillors are well aware of the heritage value of their leading towns, not least in terms of branding and tourism. Genuine civic pride seems widespread, even if heritage may not always be high up the electorate's agenda.

4.4.2 In a number of the case studies, the council was dominated by councillors from the wider district in contrast to the small number of members representing the city itself, and frequently from a different party. This causes tensions in prioritising heritage concerns.

4.4.3 One of the key findings from the interviews was the importance of heritage training and awareness amongst elected members. This was considered essential in underpinning robust context-led planning strategies and planning decisions. Many civic societies would like to see local councillors have more training on balancing heritage and growth, as well as sensitive design. The appointment of a Heritage Champion was working well in many places.

Good training – Lichfield

Elected members in Lichfield District Council receive training from the Principal Conservation and Design Officer. These are undertaken regularly, including two sessions very recently for members which were well received. These covered the legislation and the policy on which members make decisions and explained some of the jargon. These sessions are part of the planning training provided by the wider Development Service at the Council – available to both planning committee and non-committee members.

Figure 36 **Lichfield Cathedral** (Source: Andrew Gustar)

"It should be possible to build more 'character' into new housing – rather than putting up 'off the shelf' estates."
Civic Society

"Anything you add has a much bigger impact here because of the heritage."
Local Authority Officer

4.5 Design quality

4.5.1 A constant theme from respondents was the importance of design quality. All of the civic societies were concerned about the nature and quality of new proposals. This disquiet ranged from major development sites to small extensions.

4.5.2 In general, the status of distinctive historic towns means applicants are more likely to come forward with above-average design proposals. However, it is still a frequent concern in the less prosperous historic towns that economic viability arguments will be used as a counter to paying for good design. Some authorities have to push hard to demand good quality proposals, at the risk of deterring much needed investment.

4.5.3 Most of the case study towns had found it difficult to establish a common vision on architectural design. Local residents and sometimes civic societies can have a strong desire to see traditional design. By contrast, local planning teams are generally more open to contemporary architecture sitting comfortably alongside the historic fabric.

Good context-led growth – Winchester

The northern extension of the city has been informed by visual and character assessments to ensure it does not negatively impact on the setting of the city. In addition, the masterplan has been steered to ensure integration, support a clear character response and avoid it becoming an island development. Local engagement has been actively used to shape the masterplan and layout. The architectural style has been controversial, and there are concerns about the density being too low. Overall, the proposals show how development at the periphery can be steered well.

Figure 37 **Barton Farm urban extension** (Source: JTP)

"We need a big education push on what powers we have and don't have. We disappoint 50% of the planning committee audience before you've opened your mouth."
Local councillor

"Our city is an area of significant social deprivation, particularly around the city centre. Perhaps, as a consequence, many local people are sceptical about "heritage" and "culture", seeing them as elitist and not relevant to their economic needs. However, there is a sense of local identity and civic pride." Local Authority Officer

4.6 Stakeholder engagement

4.6.1   Part of the background to this research was a concern that relationships between civic societies and local planning authorities were deteriorating. The research has found that tensions and conflicts undoubtedly exist. However, there were also many instances of positive working relationships and situations resolved through joint working and dialogue.

4.6.2   A key factor fuelling disquiet was a misunderstanding of the planning system. Civic societies often put great effort into commenting on detailed planning applications only to find the comments go unheeded or are not addressed. This frequently is due to civic societies commenting on aspects such as transport or density, which have already been addressed much earlier in the process at the site allocation stage.

Good collaboration – Peterborough

The relationship between Peterborough Civic Society and Peterborough City Council is strong and as such the civic society has been able to support the planning team's work. This has been valuable during times of stretched staff resources. In particular times of pressure, when the conservation officers have been diverted onto other work, civic society members have stepped into the breach to help out. The civic society is also very active in local listing work. The Local List was revised and greatly expanded by the Society, on behalf of the then overstretched conservation officer, some years ago.

Figure 39 **View of Peterborough Cathedral from the river**

> *"There are plans within the Climate Action Plan to 'develop net-zero retrofit skills' etc. but no specific acknowledgement that refurbishment is 'greener' than rebuild."*
> Civic society

> *"It would be great to have a central source of information for examples in relation to climate change...It should be a national resource, and then used and added to locally. Councils can bring their local experience and learning to help enrich this resource."* Local Authority Officer

4.7 Climate change

4.7.1 Climate change was a key discussion point in the research and a joint priority for planning authorities and civic societies. The declaration of a climate emergency was considered an important step in demonstrating to local people that climate change is being taken seriously. However, there were doubts about whether the local authorities were acting on their commitment. Whilst civic societies were pleased with the initiative, around a third felt that their local authority was not treating it with the required urgency. In particular, the following were lacking:

- Associated action plans;
- Guidance relating to heritage and climate change and the inter-relationships;
- Meaningful engagement to influence change.

4.7.2 The civic societies expressed concern that although councils encouraged the re-use of existing buildings, their local plans and other mechanisms rarely made any specific commitment to favour refurbishment over demolition.

Good climate change advice – Oxford

Oxford City Council has published comprehensive guidance documents and tools to support greater energy efficiency in historic buildings and new developments. It has policies in its corporate plan, as well as specific schemes, to tackle climate change: Connect Oxford, Zero Emissions Zone, Flood Alleviation Scheme. Oxford City Council has implemented the Oxford Heritage and Energy Efficiency Tool to help assess the energy performance of historic buildings, driven by the recognition that historic buildings have a role to play in reducing carbon emissions.
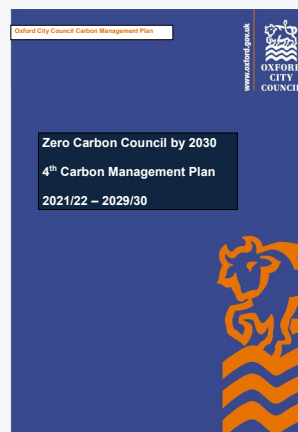
Figure 40 **Zero Carbon Management Plan**

4.8 Town and city centres

4.8.1 By their nature, the centres of historic cities are multi-layered, complex and fine-grained places. There is a legacy of care and protection in these centres. Their importance as tourist destinations as well as commercial and cultural hubs is generally well appreciated.

4.8.2 Each of the locations are experiencing increasing threats to the historic fabric and economic viability of their centres as a result of declining retail space demand. Almost all the case studies were concerned about finding new uses for vacant buildings and enabling sensitive adaptation.

4.8.3 The pressure for retail development outside the central area can be particularly pronounced in historic towns. A fine grained historic character has for some case studies been an obstacle to accommodating retail growth in the past, resulting in the development of retail parks or shopping centres on the outskirts of the settlement (e.g. Canterbury) or around an inner ring road (e.g. Chichester).

Good centre management – Chester

The Rows Conservation Management Plan 2018 (draft) helps to clarify the complex guidelines on development, responsibilities and how the area is managed - to enhance and protect the character of the buildings within the framework of existing policy and best practice. It sets out the key opportunities for dealing with problems and recommendations for actions which together will help to care for and sustain The Rows. A supporting Gazetteer has also been produced which provides useful information and advice for occupiers, agents and enquiries relating to The Rows.

Figure 41 **The Rows, Chester** (Source: Mike McBey)

Good heritage strategy – Canterbury

Canterbury's Heritage Strategy has been recognised as a comprehensive piece of work. The council undertook extensive community and stakeholder engagement and drew on the expertise and input of the Canterbury Society. The Heritage Strategy was followed by an Action Plan which aimed to deliver long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits to Canterbury while continuing to maintain and celebrate heritage. The challenge now is to deliver on the Action Plan in the context of a funding crisis.

Good collaboration – Wakefield

Wakefield have been able to hold effective and frequent consultations with the public and wider stakeholders both in person and digitally. Engagement regularly includes the civic societies, key developers, stakeholders, Wakefield College, Theatre Royal, Network Rail, the Canal & River Trust, the Gardens Trust, Georgian and Victorian Societies, and the Church Diocese.

Figure 42 **St George's Street, Canterbury** (Source: Bob Hall)

Figure 43 **View across Wakefield** (Source: Tim Green)

Good design protocol – Chichester

Chichester District Council prepared a Design Protocol in 2013 which sets out clear expectations and guidance around delivering high quality design in developments. This document sets out the character of the district clearly and succinctly, emphasising what is particularly special in each locaation. It includes a list of key views and vistas which is supported by an appendix on landscape and visual amenity assessment. The Protocol highlights the key issues for applicants to consider in the design process, as well as a set of design principles to follow including "understanding the place" and "sensitive to existing landscape and topography".

Figure 44 **Chichester cathedral view**

Good public realm – Wells

The challenge of managing vehicular access whilst supporting local businesses has been an ongoing debate in Wells city centre. The Covid-19 pandemic period proved to be an opportunity to test removing vehicle access. Because of the success of this temporary measure, part of the Market Place is now closed to traffic and cafés have tables outside, which has proved very popular. Part of the Market Place still has to have vehicular access as it is a thoroughfare to the Town Hall and Bishops Palace as well as a number of shops. Residents continue to lobby for further reduction of cars in the city centre.

Figure 45 **Wells Market Place**

5 Recommendations

5.8.1 The wealth of opportunities highlighted in the research represents multiple changes that can be made to better balance heritage and growth in every settlement.

5.8.2 This section sets out headline recommendations that will have the greatest impact and need to be adopted urgently to facilitate sustainable and sensitive planning. These are listed according to those responsible for actioning them, whether it be:

- National government - through adjustments to the planning system, changes in emphasis in how planning strategies are brought forward, or changes to taxing regimes.
- Historic England - in their role as principal advocate and advisor on the historic environment, and their ability to disseminate guidance and good practice.
- Local authorities - principally through their planning function, but also how they prioritise heritage corporately and use their own land holdings.
- Civic societies - as key local voluntary groups with a strong interest and expertise in heritage and stewardship of local places.

5.8.3 All are urged to recognise their roles and responsibilities in the future success of historic places, given the growth that is being planned.

National government

1. Deep and unsustainable cuts in local authority budgets have had many damaging effects on historic towns and cities. This includes the state of the public realm, the condition of local roads, the staff employed by councils, and the ability of councils to build the housing that is needed. These cuts need to be reversed. Funding is crucial to the conservation and growth of historic towns and cities.

2. Establish a much clearer picture of the planning system emphasizing how and when local people can best engage with plans for growth in their area.

Figure 52 **High density and high quality homes can be sensitively introduced through context-led design**

3. A new housing algorithm must be informed by what can be sustainably and sensitively absorbed. In adopting a more data-led planning system, appropriate strategic data on heritage and environmental capacities must be used to inform local housing growth allocations.

4. The housing targets allocated to local planning authorities must be better informed by the geography of each district. In some cases adjusting local authority boundaries could allow growth to be better planned around historic towns and cities.

5. Embed a much stronger mechanism for land value capture in the planning system to ensure the benefits of new development are properly felt locally.

6. Give greater confidence in the role of Neighbourhood Plans to set additional local policies on character and design, and add greater weight to Local Lists.

7. Remove VAT on all building refurbishment, which will encourage the re-use of existing buildings, enhance local character, and support climate change and circular economy measures.

Figure 53 **River corridors form sensitive environmental assets in towns like in Worcester (Source: Oliver Mallich)**

Figure 54 **Refurbished Victorian terrace houses providing affordable family housing**

Historic England

1. Encourage local planning authorities to undertake character studies to inform early growth strategy and capacity threshold work as part of the Local Plan evidence base stage. Establish guidance on how this can best be done (leaning on work the Greater London Authority and Historic England have done in London).

2. Provide early advice at the outset of Local Plan reviews to steer evidence base work, including giving local planning authorities access to useful datasets and examples from elsewhere.

3. Provide advice earlier on key sites - agreeing the priorities and "red flags" for sites with local planning authorities in advance of the pre-application stage.

4. Build a library of best practice examples of view strategies and frameworks to provide a spectrum of options for local planning authorities to consider, and guidance on what works best in which scenario.

5. Strengthen the case for Historic England's policies and advice being further integrated into national policy. Promote this wider understanding of heritage as including the landscape and setting of towns.

Figure 56 **Barton Park by Mosaics, Oxford**

Figure 57 **Storyhouse, Chester (Source: Bennetts Associates)**

6. Lead the campaign on the importance of re-using existing (and historic) buildings as a key part of climate change and net zero carbon strategies.

7. Review and refine Historic England's guidance on the sustainable refurbishment of historic buildings to ensure that clear and authoritive guidance for local planning authorities is available.

8. Consider future funding allocations to emphasize the imaginative re-use of city/town centre buildings, i.e. historic landmark buildings as community assets.

9. Lead a campaign to ensure that all new housing is built to the highest standards, in terms of being carbon neutral, sustainable, well designed and well built. Planning committees should be able to enforce the setting and monitoring of these standards.

10. Direct local authorities and civic societies to data on heritage and character to help build up evidence base documents, and the use of this data in GIS.

11. Well maintained heritage is an economic asset, as underlined by the excellent studies carried out by Historic England in 2015/16 (see Heritage Counts series). These studies could be repeated, or re-publicised.

Figure 58 **Cedar's Hall, Wells**

Local authorities

1. Undertake a Strategic Character Assessment or a more detailed Character Study for each town/city as the very first step of the Local Plan Review. This should then inform everything that follows (see Toolkit section).

2. Develop a context-led Growth Strategy on the back of this which identifies capacity limits of the town or city. This should form a strategic spatial plan or an Urban Design Framework for the whole city, and subsequently inform masterplans for individual sites. Where capacity limits have already been met or are close, alternative locations for growth should be considered including new settlements.

3. Develop heritage and design expertise as a fundamental part of the planning team, and ensure sufficient resources are available to allow early engagement on the Local Plan, producing guidance and site briefs, as well as applications.

4. Promote greater understanding of and emphasis on heritage corportately through the production of a Heritage Strategy, aligning this clearly with a Climate Change Strategy.

5. Consider the appointment of a Heritage Champion as this can help give greater political weight to heritage concerns and sensitivities.

6. Protecting heritage depends on employing appropriate staff, both as planning officers and conservation specialists. Qualified and experienced heritage staff is crucial to maintaining the character and attraction of cities and towns.

Figure 59 **Peterborough Cathedral on the city's skyline**

7. Ensure the time needed to draw on heritage and design officers' expertise is properly reflected in pre-application agreement fees.

8. Heritage and design teams need to develop good relationships with other departments to collaborate, such as enforcement, transport and highways.

9. Encourage civic societies and other community groups to engage with council decision-making on heritage and growth. This could take the form of informal meetings to share information, encouragement to take part in consultations and planning committee discussions, support by the council for civic society initiatives or modest funding for Heritage and Design Forums.

10. Building housing that local people can afford is key. Historic places attract wealthy retirees, capital-rich Londoners and second home owners. Even in places with thriving economies and high quality jobs, the housing in these places is too expensive for many workers. Meeting the affordable housing demand in these locations is desperately needed to ensure the sustainability of the local economy. This requires place-specific Housing Needs Assessments to accurately identify the demand, which is then matched by appropriate affordable housing minimums for residential schemes.

11. Planning committees must represent the range of places within the council area to ensure all decisions are made by representatives of the settlement to which the application is relevant. Ensuring the interests of historic towns are adequately represented is particularly important where they are a minority town in a large district.

Figure 60 **Reclaiming space for the pedestrian in Frideswide Square, Oxford**

12. All councillors should receive regular training on heritage and design. In the past the training provided by Historic England has been highly regarded. If this can continue, councils should be informed about this source of training and encouraged to make use of it, both for councillors and for less experienced officers.

13. Explore joint working opportunities across local authority boundaries to support the development of sensitive and sustainable growth solutions.

14. Ensure sufficient in-house work takes place to support major site allocations (including heritage impact assessments), establishing co-ordinated and strong visions based on masterplanning and engagement with local people before developers are engaged.

15. Work collaboratively across tiers of local government to establish effective transport and movement strategies so that new growth areas are based on sustainable transport modes and are well integrated. Carbon reduction must be at the core of transport strategies and the choice of locations for growth.

Figure 61 **Cathedral Square, Peterborough**

Figure 62 **Broad Street meadow, Oxford**

16. Use design review and forums to greatest effect:

    • Design Review Panels should include local experts as well as nationally-renowned designers and should be drawn on to proactively inform strategies or masterplans as well as to critique applications.

    • Heritage and Design Forums play a valuable role in protecting heritage and should meet monthly to review applications. They should also monitor performance against heritage and design objectives in the Local Plan or Heritage Strategy. Most members will be volunteers but their efficiency would be enhanced by a modest payment to the Forum to employ an administrator to support their work. They could usefully be part of steering groups for the production of Character Studies and act as their guardians once adopted.

    • Conservation Area Advisory Committees should ensure Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans are in place and updated. They should be encouraged to be the collators of data and evidence to support the updates, and to flag up key areas of concern. This should in turn inform specific studies to strengthen decision-making and advice on planning applications and grant funding applications.

17. Ensure the importance of the city/town's heritage and streetscape to the local economy is fully acknowledged (across the council and key groups like Business Improvement Districts) and actively supported through a tourism and visitor strategy.

18. Undertake a shopfront improvement scheme to help to grow local businesses, improve the appearance of the historic city centre and attract visitors.

Civic Societies

5.8.4   Civic societies can be powerful groups in supporting the sensitive evolution of towns and cities - they can include members with great local knowledge and professional expertise. However to have the strongest voice, they also need to be representative of the local community and must actively draw in new members from across their area.

5.8.5   Civic societies can be valuable conduits for encouraging greater involvement and engagement in planning consultations. They should support local authorities in promoting opportunities to engage and accessing harder to reach groups, such as:

1.   Develop a better understanding of the planning system and how best to work within its framework to support balancing heritage and growth (see Toolkit).

2.   Strengthen relationships with the local planning authority on how best to add to its work, from the Local Plan evidence base through to comments on applications.

3.   Regular communication between civic societies, the planning committee and heritage and design officers is strongly recommended. This should be a two-way process, with civic societies proactively finding ways to support the conservation and planning team's work where appropriate.

4. Civic societies should help to disseminate and promote engagement on planning strategies and the protection of heritage. This may be through organising public meetings, putting information up on social media, initiating research on relevant issues or leading campaigns and other actions.

5. Civic societies can play an important role in bringing local expertise to the attention of the relevant council officers and councillors.

6. Civic societies can be instrumental in establishing Local Lists, helping to undertake the research and compile a draft list. Tasks should be collaborative, with the heritage and design team giving guidance and feedback to ensure it has the greatest chance of being adopted.

7. Seek to support the production and updating of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

Figure 63 **Views over housing in Wells**

Figure 64 **Spill out seating in Wells city centre**

6 Toolkit

6.1 Refining the process: a Toolkit

6.1.1   The headline recommendations emphasise how the process of accommodating growth needs to change. Embodied within these are key steps on how and when information and expertise should be shared and used in the planning process.

6.1.2   This section provides a Toolkit of initial guidance to support both local planning authorities and civic societies to balance heritage and growth.

6.1.3   In most cases, local people only engage with the planning system when they are concerned about a proposal that has been put forward as a planning application. This is quite late in the planning process - representing one of the final hurdles before construction. For many it is actually the Local Plan stage that would be far more valuable to get involved in. The evidence base and early work on the Local Plan set the tone and the direction for everything that comes after. Where development goes, how transport infrastructure is improved or the density of schemes are all determined right at the very beginning, and so greater involvement at this stage will have greatest impact.

6.1.4   The first diagram (Figure 65) is an outline of the planning process. This simplifies the Local Plan process as well as the subsequent production of guidance, and the stages of a planning application. Highlighted throughout the process are some of the main issues related to balancing heritage and growth, and the key points at which decisions are made relating to them. In addition, guidance on what needs to be fed in or produced, and when this has the most positive impact, is indicated. The intention of this Toolkit is to help civic societies and local stakeholders understand when they can most usefully input, positively influence and interact with the process. It is also intended to help local planning authority teams know what inputs, studies and data are most effective and at what points to guide the local growth strategy and the delivery of new development on sites.

6.1.5   In general it is recommended that settlement-focused assessments are undertaken to ensure that the growth attributed to a city or town is appropriate and sustainable in all regards.

6.2   From Local Plan to new development

6.2.1   The process diagram overleaf outlines the planning process.

6.2.2   The top half of this timeline shows when key issues are proposed and agreed in the Local Plan process, and the role of other guidance in shaping development proposals.

6.2.3   The bottom half shows the policies, strategies and assessments which can create a better balance between heritage and growth. The best points to seek advice from Historic England are also shown.

when to engage with which key issues?

planning timeline: policy and processes

transport | climate change / landscape character | density and site capacity assumptions

design quality and performance
heritage impact of growth

Local Plan review commences with LPA housing target set by national government (Reg 18)

evidence gathering & early stage consultation (incl. SHLAA)

pre-submission publication

submitted version and examination (Reg 19)

formal adoption of Local Plan

Neighbourhood Plans produced by community

Local List

Character Study

Growth Strategy and thresholds

Heritage Impact Assessments

Heritage Strategy (or earlier)

City or Town Centre Strategy or Urban Design Framework (or earlier)

Update Conservation Area Appraisals & Management Plans

Settlement-wide green infrastructure, landscape, setting and views strategy, tall buildings and skyline studies

Design Protocol

when and what inputs are needed?

Figure 65 **From Local Plan to new development: How to balance Heritage and Growth in the Planning Process**

heights

green infrastructure

sustainable design

site layout

building heights and typologies

density

re-use of existing buildings

access and infrastructure

site layout

architecture roof-scape planting

boundary treatments

environmental impact

design guidance	production of design codes	site development briefs	pre-application stage	application	on-site develop-ment

Public Realm Strategy

Guidance on sustainable adaptation of historic buildings

Neighbour-hood character appraisal

Masterplans for key sites

Heritage information on archaeology, existing buildings and sensitivities

Opportunities for building re-use or adaptation

Design Review Panel for significant applications

Post-occupancy monitoring and sharing of information

key points of engagement with Historic England

6.3 How can your civic society be more involved?

6.3.1 Between the Local Plan process and planning applications being submitted, there are eight key stages shown when civic societies can develop, contribute to, monitor and lead essential evidence gathering work to support better decision-making in local councils.

Issues and options consultation
first opportunity for local people to engage in the emerging direction of the plan, and therefore a crucial stage to highlight any concerns

1. Engagement programme

Important opportunity to engage with the overall programme and to best support consultation and promotion with communities

4. Conservation Area Appraisals

Opportunity to help collate information, photographs etc, and to highlight trends and particular issues that need addressing in the Management Plan

6. Local Lists

Opportunity to lead on the drafting of a Local List and collation of information and evidence to support its adoption

planning timeline: policy and processes

| Local Plan review commences (Reg 18) | evidence gathering & early stage consultation (incl. SHLAA) | pre-submission publication | submitted version and examination (Reg 19) | formal adoption of local plan | Neighbourhood Plans produced by community |

2. Strategic Character Assessment

Opportunity to input information to a strategic assessment as well as be a sounding board as it develops

3. Character Study

Provide insight on local neighbourhood character, the definition of character area boundaries as well as adding historical information - photographs, stories, community value

5. Heritage Strategy

Opportunity to influence the scope of the Strategy by outlining the key issues and priorities to address and suggesting possible objectives for the Council. Civic societies can play a key role in helping stakeholder engagement and encouraging local involvement.
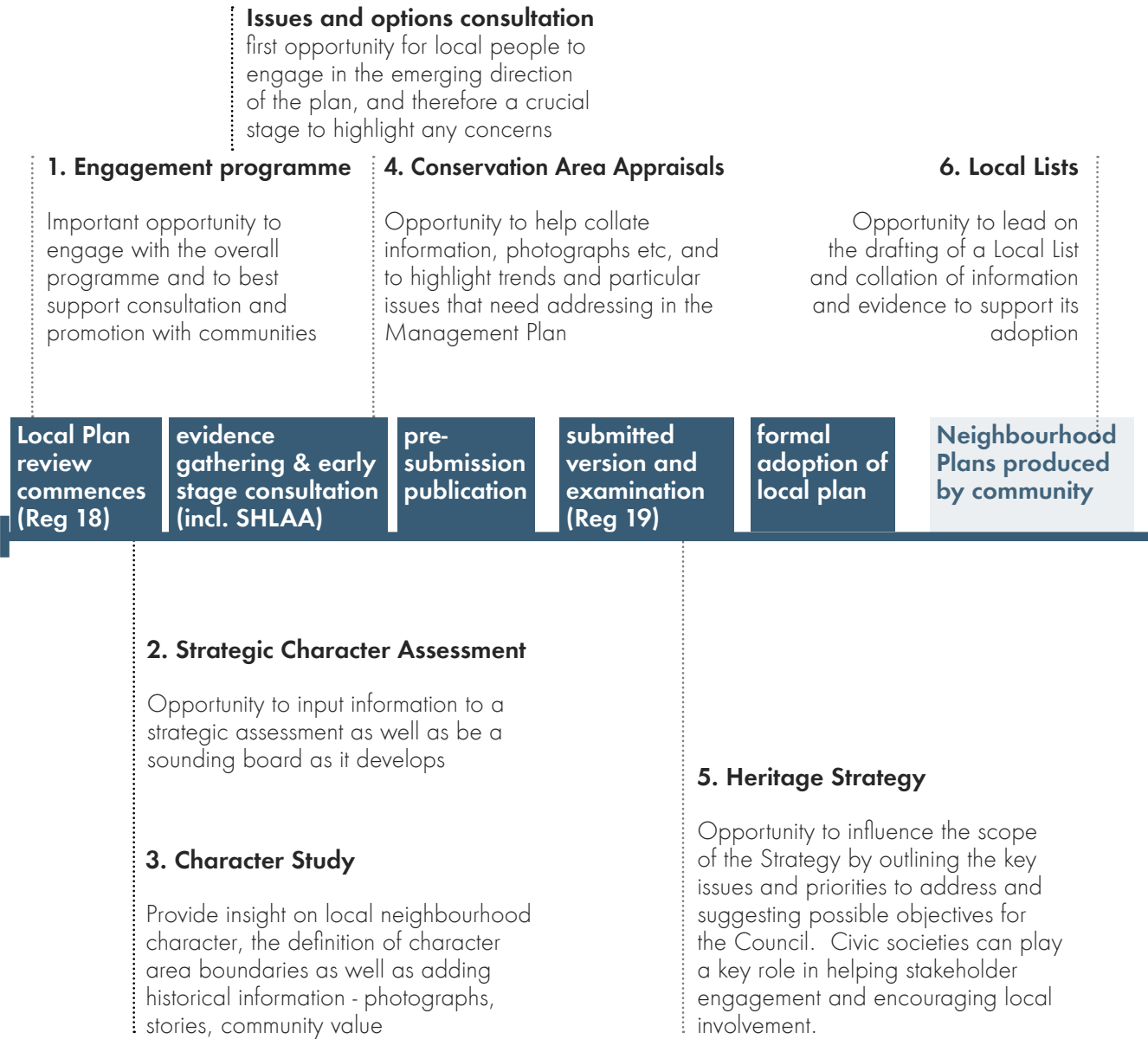
Figure 66 **From Local Plan to new development: How your civic society be more involved**

7. Design Code engagement

Future design codes will involve extensive stakeholder engagement and civic societies can help this process supplying detail on particular areas

8. Planning Application comments

Help local communities to be clear about what aspects are subject to consultation at this stage, the issues that can be raised, and how weight can be added to the decision process

| design guidance | production of design codes | site development briefs | pre-application stage | application | on-site develop-ment |

6.4   Setting sustainable limits: A Checklist

6.3.2   The next chapter of a city's evolution must be informed by its past – greater perspective is needed to ensure change is genuinely sustainable.

6.3.3   Settlement-focused assessments are needed to determine sustainable and sensitive carrying capacity thresholds for settlements. These must consider the impacts on the context of the settlement, views of the settlement core and wider landscape, environmental assets, infrastructure and the ability of the centre to serve an increase in population. The assesments should be informed by an appraisal of the following:

- A **strategic character assessment** to identify key features of the settlement and its setting and 'red lines' which cannot be crossed (including the extent of the urban edge, as well as heights within the urban envelope). This should include mapping the landscape, topography and geology, historical evolution of the settlement, green infrastructure assets; corridors and designations, broad typologies and prevailing building heights, key routes and street pattern, average densities, key historic assets and views.

- A **movement strategy** to avoid the need for new road infrastructure. This might mean mapping 15 mins' walking catchments to understand sensible locations for growth to ensure walking, cycling and public transport are properly prioritised, as well as mapping transport infrastructure capacity and air pollution data to identify infrastructure which cannot deal with any further growth of private car use.

- **Future transport investment,** which cannot just be tied to future population growth; other funding mechanisms must be identified to enable the existing population to change their travel patterns too.
- The **scale of change needed to support existing centres** – an indication of what densification might be needed to support local or town centres and the diversification of uses required.
- The **scope for the existing building stock** to be adapted to support the changes needed e.g. the re-use of historic buildings or re-purposing them for much-needed housing.
- An **optimum population and urban extent** should be established based on the above factors and this should be set as a limit for all future development. This does not mean no future changes within the urban area, but establishes clear parameters within which change should happen.

Figure 67 **Re-using former railway corridors as cycle paths, funded by new housing development in Wells**

"It is important to consider the geography of a place before proposing new development. If there are few suitable sites this may lead to bad decisions, if new building is imposed regardless of local geography"
Civic Society

Key

Character assessments
Asset designations and views
Guidance, SPDs and Management Plans
Other e.g. Heritage Impact Assessments

6.5 Case study resources

Historic town / city	Council type	Geography	Climate emergency?	Evidence base and Guidance
Canterbury	District (city)	City plus other towns	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals Shopfront Design SPD (draft) Character work (emerging)
Chester	Unitary	City plus other towns	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals Heritage Impact Assessment Background Paper Rows Character Study
Chichester	District	City plus other towns	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals Shop Front Guide SPD Joint Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty SPD
Lancaster	District (city)	City plus other towns	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals Heritage Impact Assessments including proposed sites in growth scenarios
Lichfield	District	City plus other towns	Yes	Landscape Character Assessment Heritage Impact Assessments of key sites Historic Environment Character Assessment Lichfield Extensive Urban Survey Report City Centre Masterplan with Character Appraisal Historic Environment SPD

Design review?	Heritage Strategy?	Good practice example
Yes	Yes	Strong Heritage Strategy with early and effective engagement with a wide range of stakeholders
Yes	Yes (heritage and visual arts strategy)	Chester One City dashboard Chester Rows Conservation Management Plan (draft) Collaboration between heritage organizations
No	Yes	Conservation team well engaged and early on applications Design protocol adopted which is strong on character and heritage appreciation
No	Yes (update in progress)	Heritage led regeneration e.g. Moor Lane Mills Heritage assessment and heritage team involvement in growth options appraisal
No	No	Training of elective members on conservation, heritage, and design Town centre masterplan, good active engagement

Key		
Character assessments		
Asset designations and views		
Guidance, SPDs and Management Plans		
Other e.g. Heritage Impact Assessments		

Historic town / city	Council type	Geography	Climate emergency?	Evidence base and Guidance
Malvern	District	Cluster of settlements plus other towns	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals Sensitivities Report (emerging) Conservation Area Management Plan Local List Malvern Hills Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development Malvern Hills AONB Farmstead Character Analysis
Oxford	District (city)	City only	Yes	Character Assessment Toolkit Oxford Heritage Asset Register Oxford Heritage Plan Oxford Views Study Oxford Heritage Energy Efficiency Tool
Peterborough	District (city)	City only	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals Design and Development in Selected Villages SPD Shop Front Guide SPD Local List
Wakefield	District (metropolitan)	City plus other towns	Yes	Heritage Impact Assessments Site specific Design Codes (emerging) Wakefield City Centre Urban Design Framework SPD (including mapping on main areas of sensitivity)

Design review?	Heritage Strategy?	Good practice example
No	No	Joint AONB and local authority toolkit for colour assessment
		Draft South Worcestershire Development Plan prepared in collaboration between adjoining authorities
		Shared design vision with Worcester
Yes	Yes	Views cones assessment
		Design process involving design and conservation
		Climate change guidance
No	Yes	Strong relationship between the LPA and the civic society
No	Emerging	Good engagement with a wide range of stakeholders throughout planning process

Key

Character assessments
Asset designations and views
Guidance, SPDs and Management Plans
Other e.g. Heritage Impact Assessments

Historic town / city	Council type	Geography	Climate emergency?	Evidence base and Guidance
Wells	District	City plus other towns	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals
				Shop Front Guide SPD
				Local List
				Deign Code (emerging)
				Listed Building Users Guide (draft)
				Design Statements
				Heritage at Risk register
Winchester	District (city)	City plus other towns	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals and Technical Assessments
				Shop Front Guide SPD
				Landscape Character Assessment SPD (being updated)
Worcester	District	City only	Yes	Conservation Area Appraisals
				Local List
				Heritage at Risk Register
				Design Guide SPD

Design review?	Heritage Strategy?	Good practice example
Yes	No	Temporary closure of roads during the pandemic has released new public realm and supported enhanced setting of heritage assets
No	No	Strong on visual and character assessments
		Urban extension of Barton Farm good example of site choice and planning
		Community-led shared vision: One Great Win
No	No	Draft South Worcestershire Development Plan prepared in collaboration between adjoining authorities
		Shared design vision with Malvern

7 Bibliography

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14   *<u>Cathedral Cities in Peril report</u>*

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Wells Civic Society
City of Winchester Trust
Worcester Civic Society
The City of Durham Trust
Canterbury City Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Chichester District Council
Lancaster City Council
Lichfield District Council
Malvern Hills District Council
Oxford City Council

Peterborough City Council
Wakefield Council
Mendip District Council
Winchester City Council
Worcester City Council
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