



English Historic Towns Forum

Business Plan 2007/09

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English Historic Towns Forum Business Plan - 2007/09

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Executive Summary

EHTF mission statement: to promote the prosperity and sustainability of historic towns and cities.

The EHTF is unique in representing the various practitioners involved in the planning and management of historic towns and cities and strongly advocates an integrated management approach as essential if the special qualities of each historic town and city are to be protected and enhanced.

After 20 years of activity and growth, it is to be expected that the Forum should revisit some of its operational practices and embrace change in response to the issues arising.

This **Business Plan 2007/09** is in three parts:

Part 1: states the overall aims and objectives of EHTF, defines its role and provides a general overview of its operation;

Part 2: establishes the strategic priorities for 2007-09 following the membership survey carried out in November 2005 and the Strategy Meeting held on 1 March 2006;

Part 3: looks at resource and other management issues.

The way in which the Forum works is examined in the document and the significant changes which are proposed are summarised below.

Membership: A review of some of the Membership categories has been undertaken to ensure the membership properly reflects the full range of practitioners and stakeholders involved in the protection and enhancement of the historic built environment and who share the values and objectives of the Forum. 'Full Membership' will be replaced by 'Local Authority Membership' and 'Affiliated Membership' will be replaced by 'Associate Membership'.

The Executive Committee: In order to improve inclusivity, membership will be widened, with representation invited from all categories of membership, up to an agreed maximum total number and with the following limits:

- Local Authority Members – 6 members (Officers – ie: Chair, Vice-Chairs & Honorary Treasurer – will be elected annually from this category)
- All other categories – 3 members
- Partner / Sponsors – 1 member

The Executive Committee has the power to co-opt, as and when appropriate.

Tenure of the Chair: In future the Chair will be elected from the Executive Committee for a period of one year (instead of two), supported by a Vice-chair and the out-going Chair, who will serve a further year as a second Vice-chair. There need not be an assumption that the in-coming Vice-chair becomes the Chair.

Expanding the membership and operation of the Forum to include Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be considered. A feasibility study will be carried out in 2007 to assess the potential support and full range of implications of UK-wide membership.

Legal Status: EHTF is currently an 'association'; however, the time has come to become a legal entity and all options will be explored and brought to a conclusion during the first year of the Business Plan.

Strategic priorities 2007-09: The Membership has indicated that the following issues are those they consider the Forum should address:

- **Historic towns and cities as sustainable communities**
- **The importance of local distinctiveness**
- **Major developments/urban extensions**
- **Traffic in historic towns**

An action plan has been drawn up in response to these priorities; however, the Forum remains flexible in order to respond to relevant issues as they arise.

Membership fees: A new scale of fees will be implemented from January 2007. This will reflect a small increase for unchanged categories, in line with current practice, and introduce a new, fairer scale of fees for Local Authority members, as outlined in Part 1, reflecting their size and therefore ability to pay.

Income from events and publications: It will be necessary to balance the need to maintain affordability and value for money with the need to meet the increasing costs whilst continuing to deliver high quality events for practitioners and other professionals. All methods of dissemination of guidance (cd, web-based etc) will be explored and the most cost effective and appropriate medium used.

Risk Management : A full risk assessment will be carried out in 2007.

Workforce Planning: Staffing requirements in both the short and longer term will be re-appraised regularly in order to avoid over dependence on a small number of individuals.

Technology: Hardware and software, as well as staff competencies, have to be maintained and from time to time updated. Budget planning needs to allow for this.

Introduction to Business Plan 2007 / 09

England's rich and varied character depends on the local distinctiveness of its many historic towns and cities. Indeed, the quality of life these places offer, and hence their own prosperity, is intrinsically linked to their individual character and a sense of a unique experience. ***It is a testament to their robust nature that they have survived the varied demands of centuries of habitation.*** However, for those involved with their planning and management, today's pressure for development and change is growing to an extent that demands a particular portfolio of skills and knowledge of best practice, if the distinctiveness of the historic environment is to be maintained.

The English Historic Towns Forum (EHTF) was founded in 1987 to establish and encourage contact between local authorities having responsibility for the planning and management for historic towns and cities. It acts as a forum and to campaign for an integrated approach to historic towns and cities and for the exchange of information about best practice in planning and management. The Forum retains its independence and autonomy by adopting diverse funding streams and through regular contact and consultation with its members.

The Forum is unique as the only organisation in England representing the many different practitioners involved in with the management and planning of historic towns and cities.

Part 1 of this **Business Plan** states the EHTF's overall aims and objectives, a definition of its role and provides a general overview of the Forum's operation. **Part 2** goes on to establish the Forum's strategic priorities for the period 2007-09 following the membership survey carried out in November 2005 and the Strategy Meeting held on 1 March 2006. A targeted Action Plan is proposed in response to these priorities. Finally, **Part 3** looks at the resources of the Forum and sets out any resource and other management issues.

After 20 years of activity and growth, it is to be expected that the Forum should revisit some of its operational practices and embrace change in response to the issues arising.

This Business Plan identifies issues that will require exploration and resolution in the near future.

Part 1 Overview of the Forum

Mission, objectives and activities

The EHTF is unique in representing the various practitioners involved in the planning and management of historic towns and cities and strongly advocates an integrated management approach as essential if the special qualities of each historic town and city are to be protected and enhanced.

EHTF mission statement

To promote the prosperity and sustainability of historic towns and cities.

In order to realise its mission the EHTF will:

1. Promote an integrated approach to the planning and management of historic towns and cities
2. Facilitate a network for practitioners
3. Develop, promote and disseminate good practice
4. Influence government and other policy making bodies on issues affecting its Members

This is achieved by:

1. Acting as a forum for local authorities responsible for the planning and management of historic towns and cities
2. Facilitating contact between these authorities and other public, private and voluntary sector agencies
3. Supporting practitioners by organising affordable events, conferences and seminars
4. Researching and producing good practice guidance, drawing on collective expertise
5. Influencing key policy making bodies
6. Promoting European links and exchange of good practice
7. Undertaking leading edge projects on key issues

Membership

The EHTF is a membership organisation which provides a variety of services and an opportunity to campaign and influence with a collective voice on issues of concern, relating to the historic environment. A wide and strong membership base is therefore essential to the wellbeing of the organisation. This is important not only in financial resources terms but also in terms of the expertise and commitment made available to the organisation in order to pursue its aims.

There are currently six categories of membership, in addition to which the Forum enjoys a reciprocal relationship with a number of organisations. The total number of members presently is 208¹. The membership structure of the EHTF has developed over the years on an incremental basis.

The opportunity now arises for a review to ensure the membership properly reflects the full range of practitioners and stakeholders involved in the protection and enhancement of the historic built environment and who share the values and objectives of the Forum.

The following table sets out the new categories alongside the previous criteria, for the purposes of comparison.

¹ As at July 2006

EHTF membership categories

EHTF welcomes all stakeholders and practitioners who support the organisation's aims and objectives.

Category	Previous Criteria (July 2006 numbers)	New Criteria
Full	Confined to English local authorities which have within their administrative area recognisable historic centres which possess an outstanding architectural heritage, the qualities and character of which have been substantially maintained (70)	"Local Authority Membership" English local authorities; to include county, borough, district, and city councils.
Corporate	Commercial or professional organisations which support the Forum's objectives (49)	As before
Affiliated	Local Authorities with an interest in the work of the Forum but not eligible for full membership (eg County Councils); Governmental and non-governmental organisations; Educational institutions; Professional institutes; and national amenity groups, charities and campaigning organisations (active outside of historic towns) (28)	"Associate Membership" RDA's, URC's, Governmental and non-governmental organisations; educational institutions; professional institutes; national and regional civic and amenity groups, charities and campaigning organisations etc; town and parish councils
Individual	Individuals with an interest in historic towns and cities; eg: independent consultants, retired persons, students etc. (29)	As before
Civic/amenity	Local Civic or Amenity Societies active in an historic town (19)	Local Civic or Amenity Societies
Honorary	Honorary personal membership can be bestowed on individuals in recognition of their personal contribution to historic towns and cities. (3)	As before
Reciprocal	National bodies with shared interests and with whom co-operation will benefit members and partners (10)	As before

Full details of all of the current Members are set out in the Members' Directory and on the website. Subscription levels for the above categories are set out in Part 3 and will continue to be reviewed at each AGM.

Partners / Sponsors

In addition to its subscribing Members, the Forum has a special relationship with selected private sector companies, each representing a particular area of interest. These companies provide substantial support and enjoy unique benefits and a high profile within the Forum and the partnerships demonstrate the high regard which each party has for the other.

Regular liaison with high level representatives from the partner organisations facilitates an information exchange which benefits both parties. These relationships bring expertise on a range of topics to the Membership and facilitate contact between the public sector practitioners and private sector providers, through joint projects and events.

Operation of the Forum

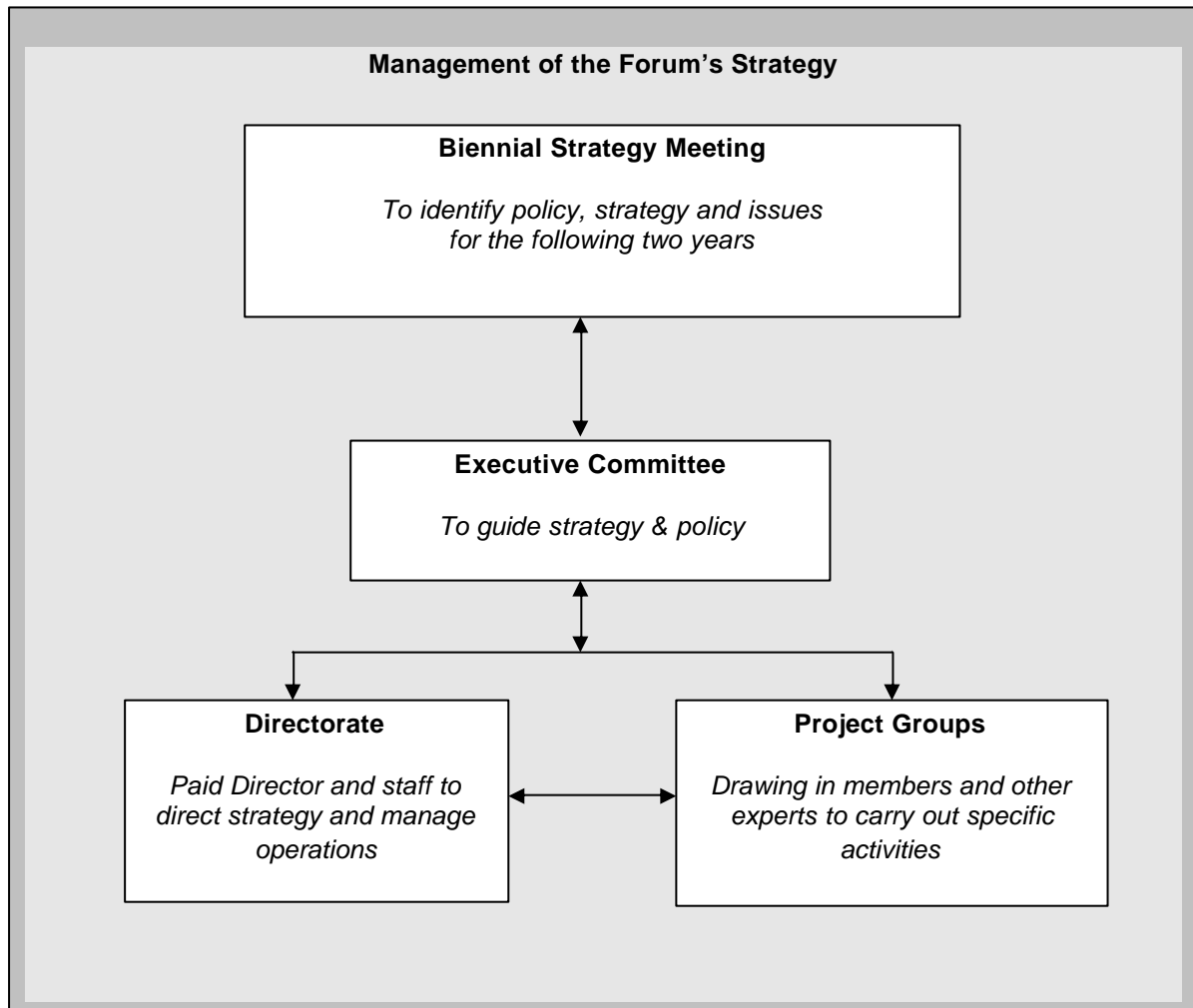
The range of issues impacting on historic towns and cities is immense and in order to maximise its effectiveness, the Forum focuses its efforts in areas in which its members can make the most significant contribution. These strategic priorities are decided by:

- A Strategy Meeting open to the full membership and invited representatives of partner organisations, held every two years
- Membership consultations
- Executive decisions made in response to local and national issues arising

The identified strategic priorities are then tested against the overall objectives of the Forum in order to draw together an Action Plan.

Management Structure

The outline structure is set out in the diagram below.



Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is elected by the AGM, and meets quarterly to agree work programmes based around the strategic priorities and to make other policy decisions for the Forum.

Membership of the Executive Committee has previously been drawn only from the Full Members of the Forum, with other expertise drawn from the wider membership via 'co-opting'. **In order to improve the inclusivity of the Executive Committee, its membership will be widened, with representation invited from all categories, up to an agreed maximum total number and with the following limits:**

- **Local Authority Members – 6 members** (Officers – ie: Chair, Vice-Chairs & Honorary Treasurer – will be elected annually from this category)
- **All other categories – 3 members**
- **Partner / Sponsors – 1 member**

The Executive Committee has the power to co-opt, as and when appropriate.

A voting mechanism will allow all members to nominate, second and vote for members of the Executive Committee at the Annual General Meeting.

Changes to the Constitution will be proposed to the 2006 AGM in line with these changes.

Project Groups

Much of the work of the Forum has been carried out by Working Groups in the past – small special interest groups covering retailing, tourism, transport and the built environment. These groups were the basis for much of the Forum's achievement in the past. Recognising the resource constraints experienced by Members, in future, groups are re-defined as Project Groups which are formed to undertake a specific task agreed by the Executive Committee. Once the task or project is complete, the group will disband.

Directorate

The Forum currently employs a full time Director who has the support of 3-4 paid staff. All members of the Directorate are based at the University of West of England in Bristol. The accommodation and other facilities of the Directorate are provided by the University in accordance with a Contract that is the subject of periodic review. The current contract runs until 31st July 2009.

The Director liaises directly with the Chair and other officers and with the Executive Committee, and manages the delivery of the strategic objectives and policy implementation, with support from the administrative team.

Tenure of the Chair

The demands currently made on the Chair are no longer realistic. In future the Chair will be elected from the Executive Committee for a period of one year (instead of two), supported by a Vice-chair and the out-going Chair, who will serve a further year as a second Vice-chair. There need not be an assumption that the in-coming Vice-chair becomes the Chair.

Operational issues

A number of issues have been identified for consideration over the period of this Business Plan (2007-09). These are as follows:

Expanding the membership and operation of the Forum

In response to a growing body of interest from practitioners outside of England, facing similar issues to English colleagues, expansion of the Membership to include Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be considered. A feasibility study will be carried out in 2007 to assess the potential support and full range of implications of UK-wide membership.

Legal Status

EHTF is currently an 'association'; however, the time has come to become a legal entity within the law of England and Wales. It is likely to become a 'company limited by guarantee', but all options will be explored and brought to a conclusion during the first year of the Business Plan.

Honorary President

Related to the issue of the (voluntary) time and commitment given to the Forum, the potential merits and financial implications of creating a post of Honorary President (appointed and directed by the Executive Committee) to support both the Chair and the Director, will be explored.

Resourcing of the Directorate

The resourcing of the paid members of the Directorate and the extent of the roles needs on-going attention, taking account of both the strategic and operational remit, and the succession of the current Director. This should be examined in the light of the financial resources over the coming years and the Chair / President roles.

Part 2 Strategy 2007-09

Before addressing the future strategy it is worth revisiting past achievements.

Achievements - 2003-2006

The Forum has an impressive track record of successful campaigns and initiatives which have resulted in Government policy changes and adoption of best practice. These include:

Achieving high quality design	Regional and national seminar series in partnership with CABE, English Heritage * & North West Development Agency (NWDA). Production of supporting cd	Nov – Mar 2003 Feb – Apr 2004 Aug 2004
Park and ride	Partnership of annual conference in London to promote good practice and continued sales and promotion of guidance document published in 2000	June 2003, 04, 05 & 06
Historic Core Zones	Project review carried out and report published; campaign continues through sales of guidance documents, international presentations, and contact with DfT Quiet Lanes & Homes Zones.	May 2003 to date
Tourism destination management	Continuing lobbying of Government departments, working with national bodies to improve destination management, for sustainable tourism practices and improved statistics. Membership of the Tourism Alliance. Launch of “Focus on Tourism” – a policy statement on best practice	2003 2004 March 2006
Conservation area guidance	Launch of “Making Better Planning Applications”, a free, easy to understand guide for applicants and suitable for distribution by local authorities. Launch of “Making Better Applications for Listed Building Consent” a sister publication to the above. National training series, in partnership with UWE, to support authorities to comply with BVPI 219 b&c; lobbying for clearer guidance and resources to achieve this.	Oct 2003 Oct 2005 Feb- Apr 2006 ongoing
Local identity / value of historic environment	Conference in Ludlow and publication to raise awareness and promote good practice. Support for national campaigns to raise awareness of the value of heritage (English Heritage, Heritage Link and others) including HELM seminars (see above*). Established partnership with The Prince’s Foundation to raise profile of heritage and high quality architecture. Conference in Newcastle & Gateshead to promote the value of heritage and local distinctiveness in regeneration. Established partnership with CityScape to raise awareness in the private sector at annual international exhibition and conference.	May 2004 Nov 2004 Jun 2005 Sep 2005 – to date
Retail planning	Partner guidance document with English Heritage to promote appropriate retail development in historic towns. Conferences in Exeter & Birmingham to promote good practice in retail development.	Dec 2005 Apr & Dec 2005
Public realm	Launch of a document to promote good practice and to begin the campaign for improvements to the planning and management of the public realm. Conference (in Buxton) and document to highlight best practice in public realm regeneration. Annual conference to highlight aspects of delivery of high quality public realm (Lincoln).	Oct 2003 June 2004 Oct 2004
Urban Extension and Housing Density	Conferences (in Ely and Cirencester) to raise awareness of the issues and identify good practice, with members’ workshop and development of guidance document.	Dec 2004 to date

Strategic priorities 2007- 09

The Forum's priorities for the coming three years are formulated from a SWOT analysis of the organisation together with a consultation with the Membership via a survey undertaken in November 2005 and at the Strategy Meeting held on 1 March 2006. The Membership has indicated that the following issues are those they consider the Forum should address:

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

The way in which historic towns and cities have adapted to changing demands and contexts illustrates their remarkable resilience. They can, therefore, be held up as exemplars of sustainable communities and should be recognised as such by the key policy makers. In EHTF policy terms this presents an opportunity to realign the position of our historic towns and cities on the current political agenda. In a recent Culture Media and Sport Select Committee report², increased Government support for heritage issues was called for in very strong terms. This offers the Forum an opportunity to increase its pressure on behalf of members for improved resourcing for enhancement of the built heritage.

- ***The importance of local distinctiveness***

The significant value attributed to historic towns and cities is due to the long term evolution and²physical expression of local building and planning traditions, crafts and use of materials they represent, resulting in a unique entity. Respecting this distinctiveness is essential to the unique qualities of any locality and the retention of character. However, in an efficiency driven age of standardisation and cost effective solutions, it can be difficult to achieve this. The role of the Forum is to share best practice in developing tools to help practitioners to balance the two potentially conflicting drivers via events and published guidance.

- ***Major developments/urban extensions***

Many historic towns and cities face difficulties in accommodating the pace of change, as pressure mounts to meet the demand for growth in housing provision, retail development and other areas, and as the suppliers become more competitive. The threat from the construction of large single-use developments, which are increasingly standardised in appearance, is real. The lack of any sense of distinctive urban design in these developments threatens to damage the character of historic areas and the historic town as a whole.

The Forum will identify good practice and promote strategies which enhance, and make a positive contribution to, the existing historic settlement.

- ***Traffic in historic towns***

One of the most damaging aspects of accommodating 21st century lifestyles in historic towns and cities continues to be traffic. Although it is a common perception that the aspirations of the highways engineer and the planner are difficult to reconcile, there are, in fact, examples of good practice and exemplars where this has been achieved. The Forum will continue to identify and promote case studies which demonstrate good practice and to advocate an integrated approach to traffic management and transport planning in historic towns and cities.

In response to these priorities, the following action plan is currently envisaged. However, the Forum retains its flexibility to respond to issues arising.

² House of Commons Culture, Media & Sport Committee: Protecting & Preserving our Heritage: Third Report of Session 2005-6

Action Plan 2006 >

Strategic priority	Action	Compliance with corporate objectives	Precursor	Actions		
				1 st ½ 2007	2 nd ½ 2007	2008
Historic towns and cities as sustainable communities	Examine aspects of 21 st century development in the historic environment	1, 2, 3	Annual conference in Bury St Edmunds (October 06)	Cityscape conference & exhibition (Feb/Mar 07)		
	Promote the value of heritage as a vehicle for regeneration	1, 2, 3, 4				Explore examples of good practice using industrial heritage - Conference opportunity
The importance of local distinctiveness	Establish good practice on retaining local distinctiveness	1, 2, 3, 4	Annual conference in Bury St Edmunds (October 06) Project group established on streetscape	Publish streetscape guidance		
	Research & develop on Conservation Area Appraisals & Management Plans	1, 2, 3, 4	Seminar training series (Feb-Apr 06)	Potential for good practice guidance – paper or web based Lobby Government and English Heritage for clarity and resources	Further training potential	
	Add to good practice guidance on planning and managing retail development in historic towns	1, 2, 3, 4	EH/EHTF Retail Guidance published December 05	Publish guidance: - how to do town centre development Research into added value of mixed use retail led development in town centres	Explore client perspective + European issues + value of long term investment in public realm etc - Conference opportunity	Launch work on economics and development process & requirements; commercial realities - Conference opportunity
Major developments/ urban extensions	Research & develop good practice on design aspects of housing that sustains historic towns	1, 2, 3, 4	Cirencester conference Designing for housing growth: sustaining historic towns (July 06) Establish project group (September 06)	Publish guidance on accommodating new housing in historic towns and cities	Conference opportunity	
	Research and develop good practice on Design & Access Statements	1, 2, 3	Annual conference in Bury St Edmunds (October 06)			Disseminate good practice guidance (also infill / conservation enabling development) - Conference opportunity

Strategic priority	Action	Compliance with corporate objectives	Precursor	Actions		
				1st ½ 2007	2nd ½ 2007	2008
Traffic in historic towns	Promotion of Transport Innovation Fund	1, 2, 3	DfT initiative	Work with practitioners and experts to promote via articles / web	Conference focussed on all aspects of traffic management: - car parking issues - access/delivery - P&R innovations - TIF	Update good practice guidance, also drawing on European examples
	Study Tour to Netherlands	1, 2, 3	Continued interest in managing traffic in historic towns and the Historic Core Zones project	Study Tour to Netherlands		
	Operational appraisals		2006 SWOT analysis	- Reappraisal of workforce - Review of communications (newsletter, web etc) - Feasibility of UK-wide membership	- Risk, equality & opportunity assessment - Clarify legal status	UWE contract renewal preparation

EHTF corporate objectives

1. Promote an integrated approach to the planning and management of historic towns and cities
2. Facilitate a network for practitioners
3. Develop, promote and disseminate best practice
4. Influence government and other policy making bodies

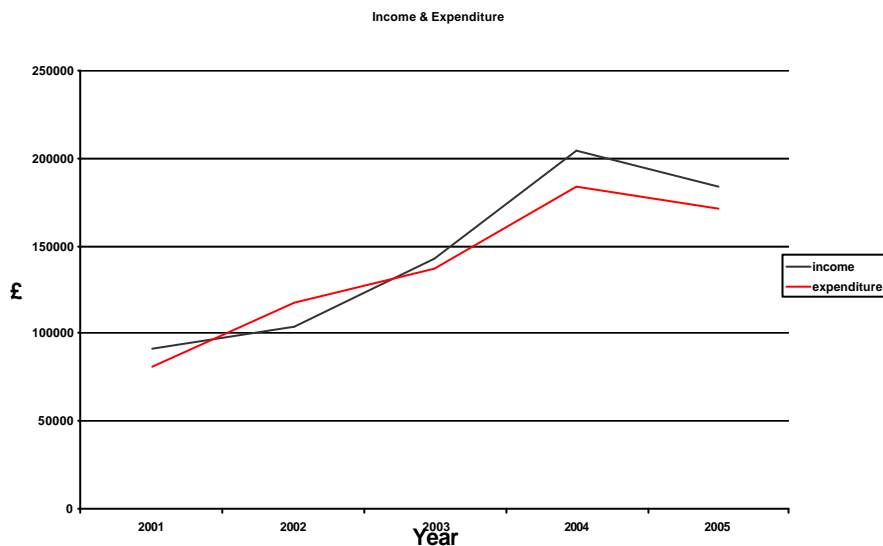
Part 3 Resources and Management

Income

EHTF has three main income streams (see below). Turnover has increased in recent years and the balance of income from the different sources has changed from approximately equal proportions to the following:

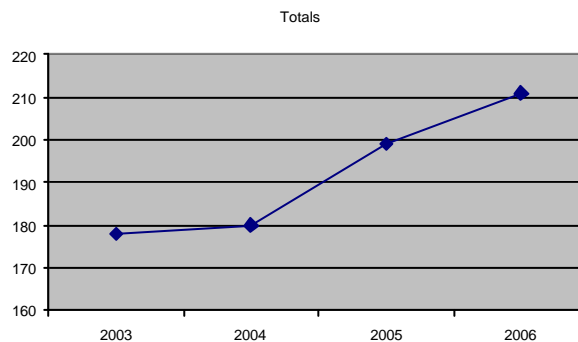
- Membership fees: * 2005 percentage of income 22%*
- Sponsorship: 18%*
 - Corporate Partnerships: The Forum has a special relationship with selected private sector companies, each representing a particular area of interest. These companies enjoy unique benefits and a high profile within the Forum.
 - Support for publications and events, as and when appropriate
- Commercial activities:
 - Events fees 57%*
 - Publication sales 3%*

Income and expenditure 2001- 05



Membership fees

Membership continues to grow as shown below but increases in fees have been minimal, which has not taken account of mounting costs.



Fees for the five membership categories in the calendar year 2006 were:

Full	£375
Corporate	£ 55 – 525 (dependent on number of employees)
Affiliated	£235
Civic & Amenity	£ 55
Individual	£ 45
Reciprocal & Honorary	no fee

A new scale of fees will be implemented from January 2007. This will reflect a small increase for unchanged categories (in line with current practice) and introduce a new, fairer scale of fees for Local Authority members, as outlined in Part 1, reflecting their size and therefore ability to pay.

Local Authority Members (dependent on population)

Under 100k	£375
100-300k	£400
300-1000k	£425
1000k +	£450

Corporate (dependent on number of employees)

1-10	£ 60
11-100	£250
101-250	£400
251+	£550

Associate	£250
Civic & Amenity	£ 60
Individual	£ 50
Reciprocal & Honorary	no fee

Partner / Sponsorship agreements

Current partner/sponsors make an agreed annual financial contribution of between £4000 and £6000. Whilst offering a platform on which to demonstrate their empathy with the values of the Forum and its members, there is also a range of tangible 'benefits'. These include free access to all EHTF events and publications, but this is augmented by our ability to respond to requests from the Company for other opportunities to promote themselves and/or to partner projects through which they will have a high profile and raise their standing as an organisation which is sympathetic to the special needs of historic towns. The partnerships offer members access to reliable and well established sources of expertise.

There are other sectors which might be explored for potential sponsorship, whilst respecting the special interests of current partners; for example: high street chains, banks, legal firms, manufacturers (of materials, street furniture etc).

Event / project / publication sponsorship

On several occasions, interested parties have made a one-off contribution in support of a particular project (eg: Mateu UK printing of Focus on Tourism; Land Securities plc support for the Exeter conference in 2005; Trevor Osborne; Oxford Bus Co; Pegasus Planning; Centros Miller, CABE; NWDA; English Heritage; UWE; Civic Societies and local authorities associated with particular conferences). When appropriate and within the time constraints that are frequently experienced, these avenues are usually explored.

In-kind support, in the form of free or reduced rate accommodation, is also helpful; eg: use of The Prince's Foundation premises in Shoreditch for the Strategy Meeting in 2006 and accommodation for meetings is provided by Sponsor / Partners on a regular basis.

There was no cost to EHTF for the trainer for the recent project to deliver six regional training sessions on Conservation area Appraisals; this was through the partnership with UWE.

Income from events and publications

Fees for conferences, seminars and training events have remained comparatively low for many years. It will be necessary to balance the need to maintain affordability and value for money with the need to meet the increasing costs, whilst continuing to deliver high quality events for practitioners and other professionals.

Publication sales contribute to the income stream but require support funding to cover costs. All methods of dissemination of guidance (cd, web-based etc) will be explored and the most cost effective and appropriate medium used.

Advertising revenue

Advertising in the Members' Directory and the bi-monthly "NEWS" makes a small contribution to costs, and offering promotional opportunities at events (materials in the delegate packs and exhibition space) helps to support these projects.

Partnership working

A variety of projects and events has been undertaken successfully in the past in partnership with other organisations; see items above for details.

This strategy can spread the costs (and risks) whilst widening the audience and strengthening the influence. When planning future projects and events the Forum will continue to consider whether other organisations with similar aims, might be appropriate partners.

European partnerships

There is a great deal of good practice to be learned from Europe, and many local authorities and town and city civic organisations have links in Europe. The Forum is also frequently asked to contribute to European events and to offer examples of good practice identified by members. Recent examples include presentation of papers at conferences in Sweden, Greece and Croatia

The Forum is the founding member of the European Association of Historic Towns & Regions (EAHTR) and represents the membership on the 'Bureau' which steers the Association.

A clear strategy to maximise the benefits of two way information exchanges should be identified as an integral part of the Forum's activities, ensuring that a European dimension is included in projects and events as appropriate.

Partnership working issues

The Forum should be selective in its choice of partners recognising that partnerships need effort to establish and to maintain if they are to be productive. The appropriate resources should be allocated to achieve this.

Contract Management

As noted above, the current contract with UWE is due to expire on 31st July 2009. Whilst there is currently no reason to anticipate radical changes to this in the future, it has been accepted practice that negotiations for renewal should begin at least six months before expiry. The strategic plan therefore includes time to consider:

- proposals for renewal and
- the future relationship with UWE or alternatives if appropriate

To date, the Director has co-ordinated the relationship with UWE, with an annual meeting of the Chair and Vice Chairs of EHTF with the Dean and Associate Dean(s) of the Faculty of the Built Environment, UWE, taking place in January, to discuss any matters arising and partnership working. It is expected that these arrangements will continue.

Risk Management

A SWOT analysis was carried out in early 2006 and has been used as one of the points of reference for the development of the Business Plan. The threats which were identified will be mitigated via the Action Plan. A full risk assessment will be carried out in 2007.

Resource issues

In 2004 / 5 external funding support for a major project helped to build reserves, however such intense programmes of activity place strains on the organisation and may not be available on a regular basis and may not deliver the core programme. An over reliance on income from events could leave the Forum vulnerable.

However, efforts to attract sponsorship are very time consuming, in a sector in which budgets are tight and an increasingly business-orientated approach is adopted, with little room for altruism.

Many, small sums of money are not cost effective. Larger, regular funding should be sought.

Financial Planning

The turnover and staffing levels of the Forum have both risen significantly in recent years in line with increased activity, and although there are no immediate threats to its viability, the following points should be considered:

1. Projects carried out in partnership with CABE (2004) and English Heritage / HELM (2005) enabled EHTF to make significant investments in staff and technology.
2. Maintaining staffing and IT levels to deliver the high standards which have been established is increasingly expensive.
3. Rises in fees – for membership, events and publications – have been kept to a minimum in recent years.
4. Maintaining an appropriate profile and influential position in the crowded sector is resource intensive, but necessary in order to achieve the aims and objectives.

As a consequence, in 2006 financial reserves have been called upon. In order for the Forum to remain viable in the long term and for investment to be made into research and professional services it is necessary to consider the following:

1. Additional sponsor / partnership agreements.
2. Increased membership fees.
3. Increased conference fees.
4. All alternatives for dissemination of best practice guidance – paper publications, web-based, cds etc.
5. Staffing levels: (see “Workforce Planning” below.)
6. Production of the bi-monthly “NEWS”: in the current format, printing costs are around £3,600 a year and it is very resource intensive as far as staff hours are concerned – gathering copy, editing and design. Alternative methods of the dissemination of news and information via the website and /or email will be researched and considered, together with external service providers.

7. The engagement of 'consultants' to carry out projects or tasks: this has been necessary in recent years due to a reduction in voluntary contributions of member time, but is expensive and should be considered only when appropriate supporting funding has been identified.
8. Web facilities: the increased expectation for all services to be available 'on line' requires investment in software and staff expertise and time. A significant investment has been made in 2006, which will need to be maintained, in particular through staff resourcing – both time and training.

Workforce Planning

The Directorate is currently made up of:

- The Director – who carries out the majority of co-ordinating, operational, editorial, staff, events and financial management and partnership liaison duties
- the design and web administrator / conference administrator (37 hours)
- the financial and membership administrator / conference administrator (20 hours)
- the marketing administrator / conference administrator (27 hours)
- Director's assistant and general administrator (15 hours) (temporary contract until early Sept 06)

It is good working practice to appraise the staffing requirements regularly for both the short and longer term planning and to avoid overdependence on a small number of individuals.

Technology

In line with the contract with UWE, standard office equipment is provided from the fees paid quarterly by EHTF to UWE. More specialist equipment has been purchased in recent years. This includes:

- an apple mac computer, with scanner and design software, for in-house design of brochures and publications
- a lap top computer for the Director's use when working away from the office and for power point presentations at events
- a sound system and digital projector for use at events
- an exhibition and exhibiting equipment.

Investment has also been made recently in a new website. This required the purchase of server space, domain names, consultant's advice, and staff training.

Hardware and software, as well as staff competencies, have to be maintained and from time to time replaced. Budget planning needs to allow for this.

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