

## **EHTF Media Release: *Manual for Streets***

**2 April 2007**

The English Historic Towns Forum (EHTF) has warmly welcomed the new *Manual for Streets* published by the Department for Transport and Communities and Local Government.

Speaking at the Forum's conference 'Transport Innovation in Historic Towns' held in Shrewsbury, EHTF Chair, Brian Human, said, "This is extremely welcome guidance. Design and sense of place can now take their rightful place at the heart of how we plan our streets."

The EHTF is especially pleased to see:

- The principle of reducing the dominance of the motor car
- The recognition of the street as a 'place' and not just as a conduit for traffic
- A design led approach
- The development of a 'Quality Audit', which requires a full range of issues to be addressed in assessing road schemes and will not be dominated by the safety audit
- Pedestrians and cyclists heading the user hierarchy
- The reduction in signs and markings to the minimum
- Reductions in the use of guard rails
- Strong support for Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS)

The Forum believes that the *Manual* gives planners, urban designers, highway engineers and conservation officers a new mandate to work together on creative and imaginative street design that will improve the quality of life for everyone.

"This is a move from an approach based on standards to one that encourages innovation and judgement", said Brian Human. "It brings increased freedom and we must show that we are able to use that responsibly and develop the skills and cooperative working it will demand."

However, the Forum is concerned that the focus of the *Manual* is on new residential areas. The principles may be applied to other areas, but there is a need for clarity and direction on how we bring this more sensitive approach to high streets and other parts of our towns and cities.

Brian Human said, "It is vital that some of the innovations that have dealt with movement, as well as place, in the heart of historic towns like Shrewsbury and Oswestry are given more prominence by the DfT and CLG and the principles brought into mainstream work."

Ends

## Notes for Editors

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EHTF publications which deal with the issues addressed in the manual for streets are:

- Focus on the public realm (October 2003)
- Historic Core Zones Project Report Review (May 2003)
- Bus Based Park & Ride (May 2000)
- Historic Core Zones Project Report (Nov 1999)
- Traffic in Historic Town Centres (June 1994)

Details can be viewed at [www.ehtf.org.uk](http://www.ehtf.org.uk) or telephone 0117 9750459

The **English Historic Towns Forum** (EHTF) has been supporting professionals working in the historic built environment since 1987. The Forum's events and publications focus on perennial and topical issues, drawing together practitioners across the disciplines and sectors. This collective then offers a strong platform from which to lobby policy makers on behalf of historic towns and cities. The main areas include: The Public Realm, Regeneration, Retail, Tourism and Transportation Management.

EHTF, through its Membership and Partnership schemes, offers everyone with an interest in the historic towns and cities of England an opportunity to exchange and develop ideas, and facilitates exchange with European colleagues.