

Working with communities on design and placemaking

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Community involvement in placemaking

- Lots of opportunities to engage in design and placemaking
- Increasing scope now with community-led Design Codes
- But often only at the point a planning application lands do communities really engage in design issues



Start the process early



Communicate the parameters



Set the context and overcome fatigue



Be inclusive



Listen without prejudice



Be accessible



Be relevant



Continue the conversation



Be transparent

Our nine principles of public engagement

Making engagement on design meaningful



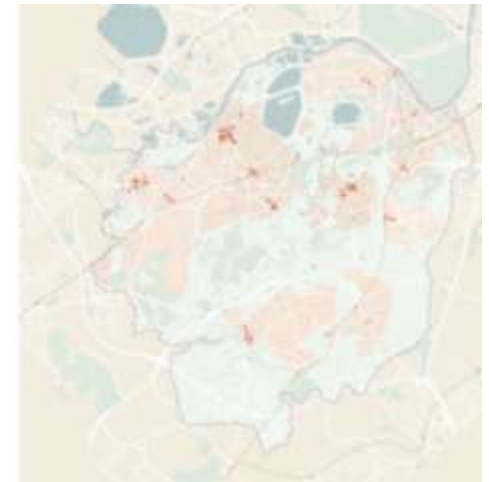
- Tall buildings
- Impact of more residents on local services
- Conversion of garages to dwellings
- Impact of more residents on local traffic
- Poor quality extensions
- Poor design quality of new buildings
- Infill development



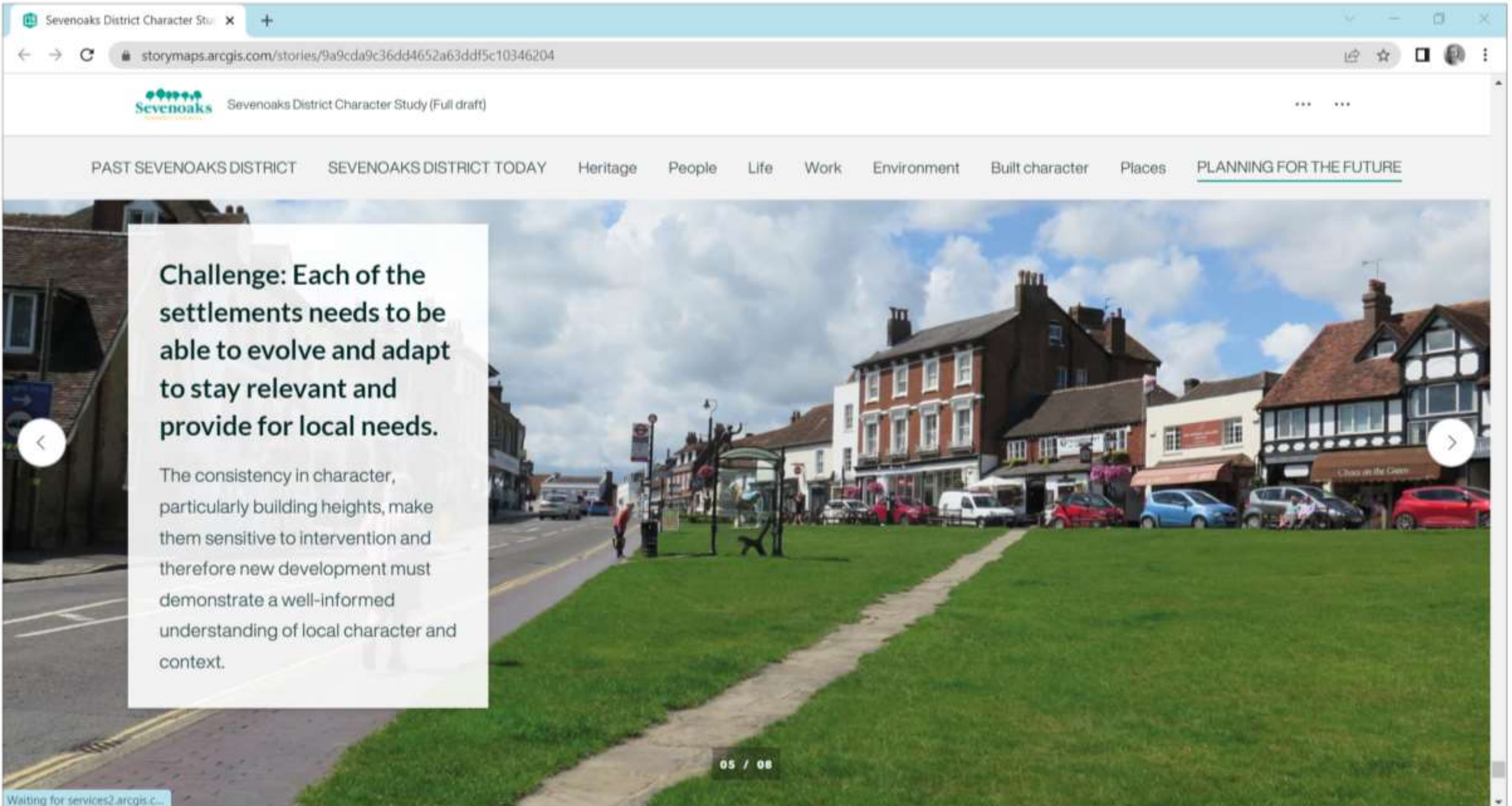
The Elmbridge Design Code

Exploring the Borough's character - its history, people, landscape, places, streets and buildings

Atkins and Morrison Urban Practitioners



Bockley's 1945 - 2020



Challenge: Each of the settlements needs to be able to evolve and adapt to stay relevant and provide for local needs.

The consistency in character, particularly building heights, make them sensitive to intervention and therefore new development must demonstrate a well-informed understanding of local character and context.

Areas

Step 1: Select an area from the list below

- Knockholt, Halstead and Chevening
- North Darent Valley
- North East
- North West
- Sevenoaks Town and surrounds
- South
- West



Select an Area from the list to view further information.

Places

Step 2: Select a place from the list below

Select an area to view the list.

Select a Place from the list to view further information.

Community-focused research

Launched Oct 2022

Towards a Better Balance between Heritage and Growth



Who produced the research?

Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns (ACT)

A group of civic societies in cathedral cities, who have increasing concerns about the tensions between conservation of heritage assets and growth / population factors.

Historic Towns and Villages Forum (HTVF)

A forum providing support, training and information to those involved in planning and management of historic environments to ensure that heritage continues to be a priority.

Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners (AMUP)

An urbanism team undertaking masterplanning and planning services including policy, guidance, masterplans, research studies and frameworks.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

BUDGET CUTS

*NATIONAL & LOCAL
POLICIES*

*CLIMATE
CHANGE*

POLITICS

HERITAGE, CHARACTER AND SETTING

COVID-19

*MOVEMENT &
TRANSPORT*

*ECONOMIC
PROSPERITY*

*ROLE OF CIVIC SOCIETIES &
COMMUNITY GROUPS*

*RETAIL TRENDS & WORK
PATTERNS*

THE KEY QUESTION

How can heritage and growth be better balanced in historic places?



Purpose

To *enable greater benefits to historic towns and cities from growth*

To *anticipate and mitigate* any potential damage to the historic characteristics of settlements from new development

To *contribute to planning policy*

To *enable civic societies and others to make more strategic contributions* to planning

To *help strengthen relationships* between communities, civic societies and local authorities



Housing in Wells

Case studies

Canterbury

Chester

Chichester

Lancaster

Lichfield

Malvern

Oxford

Peterborough

Wakefield

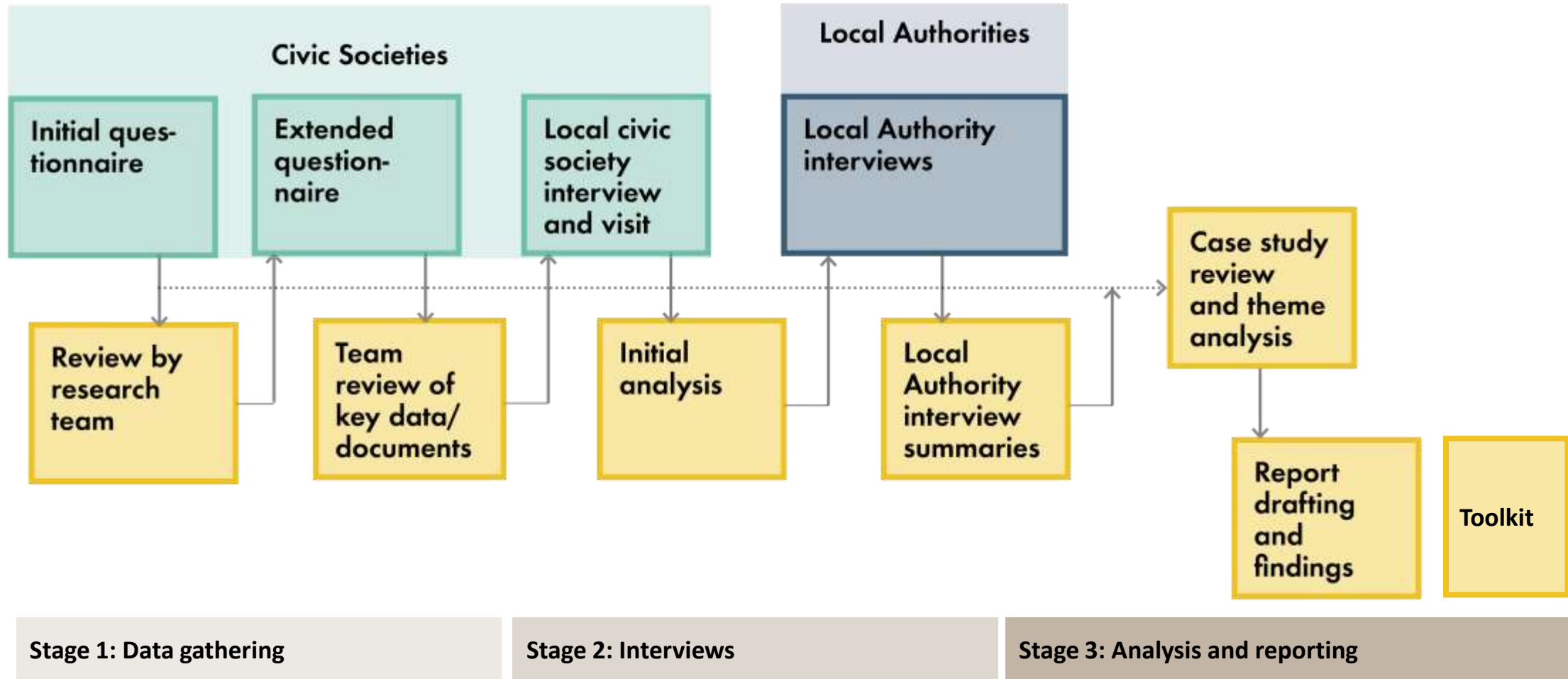
Wells

Winchester

Worcester



Stage 3



HEADLINE FINDINGS

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

Civic Society

"The importance of heritage is about what it means to the man or woman on the street" Local authority officer

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

"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

"There is a negative perception of modern or contemporary design among residents and politicians"

Local authority officer

"The importance of the historic skyline needs further emphasis to stop the incremental creep in height"

Civic Society

Limits by external parameters

Issue:

The funding crisis

Recommendation for National Government:

Deep and unsustainable cuts in local authority budgets have had many damaging effects on historic towns and cities. These cuts need to be reversed. Funding is crucial to the conservation and growth of historic towns and cities.

Issue:

Limits on growth

Recommendation for National Government:

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.

Support and priorities

Issue:

Growth vs Heritage

Recommendation for Local Authorities:

All councillors and less-experienced officers should receive regular training on heritage and design. If Historic England training can continue, councils should be informed about this source of training and encouraged to make use of it.

Political control of decision making

Recommendation for Local Authorities:

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

Support and priorities

Issue:

Design and heritage skills

Recommendation for Local Authorities:

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.

Issue:

Stakeholder concerns

Recommendation for National Government:

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.

A photograph of a modern residential development. The buildings feature a mix of stone and cream-colored facades with dark grey roofs and dormer windows. A paved walkway curves through the foreground, bordered by a low stone wall. A sign for 'CATHEDRAL WALK' is visible, along with a 'SARBATT' logo. The sky is overcast.

Design quality

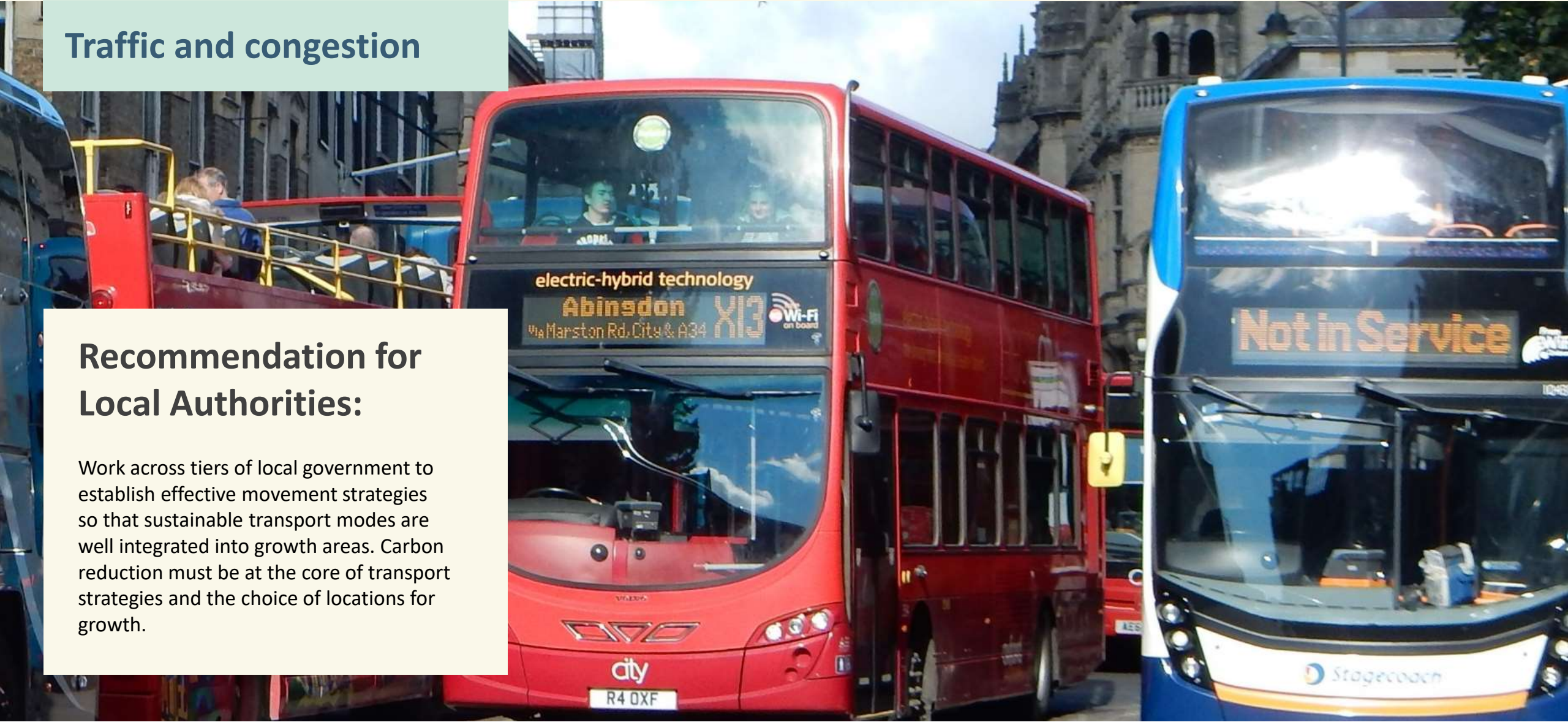
Recommendation for Local Authorities:

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 inform everything that follows.

Traffic and congestion

Recommendation for Local Authorities:

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



Adapting to change

Recommendation for Historic England:

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



**SOME GOOD
EXAMPLES**

Colour assessment toolkit

Malvern

Impact assessment

Lancaster



Happydays

Members training

Lichfield



Climate change advice

Oxford



Oxford City Council Carbon Management Plan


www.oxford.gov.uk

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Zero Carbon Council by 2030

4th Carbon Management Plan

2021/22 – 2029/30



THE FUNDAMENTALS

The fundamentals

- **Resourcing and funding** must be increased to enable local authorities to conserve the historic environment in these cathedral cities
- **Historic cities and their environments** must be recognised to be a **priority** by the district and unitary councils
- **Growth strategies must be context led** to provide sensible and appropriate solutions for accommodating growth in the proximity of a historic environment



The fundamentals

- **Design quality of new buildings and settlements must be a priority**, and the use of **design forums** and **councillor training** will positively contribute to this
- **Public engagement** and access to public engagement must be improved to allow stakeholders to influence decisions regarding heritage in the built environment
- **More education and information** are needed **linking climate change to heritage** and conservation
- The **conservation of historic assets** in town and city centres plays a **role in cultural tourism** and the vitality of these places in years to come



TOOLKIT

when to engage with which key issues?

Figure 1 From Local Plan to new development: How to balance Heritage and Growth in the Planning Process

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

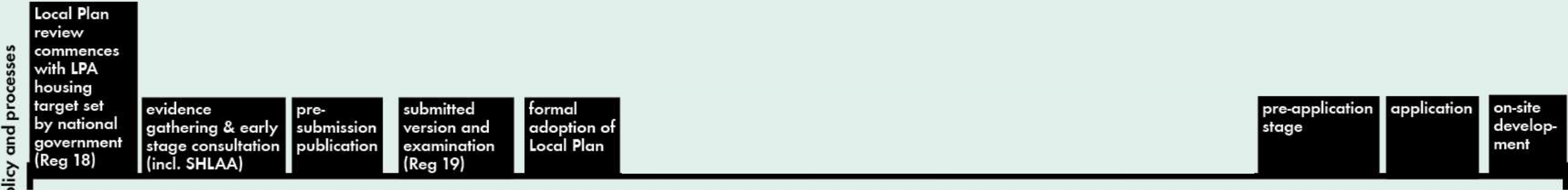
on-site development

when and what inputs are needed?

planning timeline: policy and processes

when to engage with which key issues?

Figure 1 From Local Plan to new development: How to balance Heritage and Growth in the Planning Process



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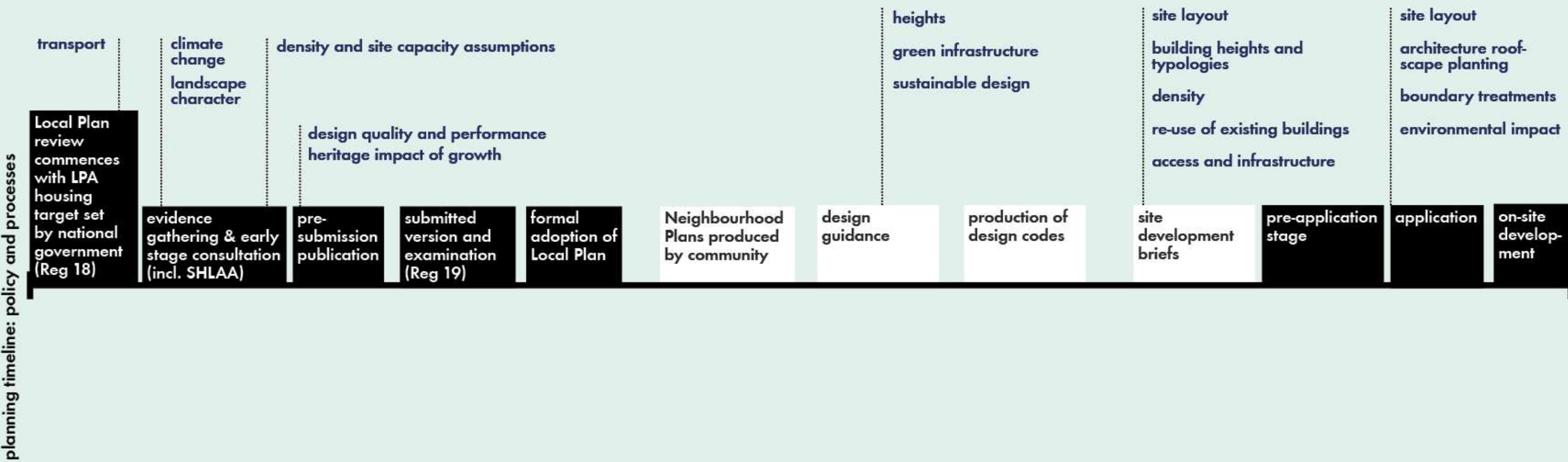
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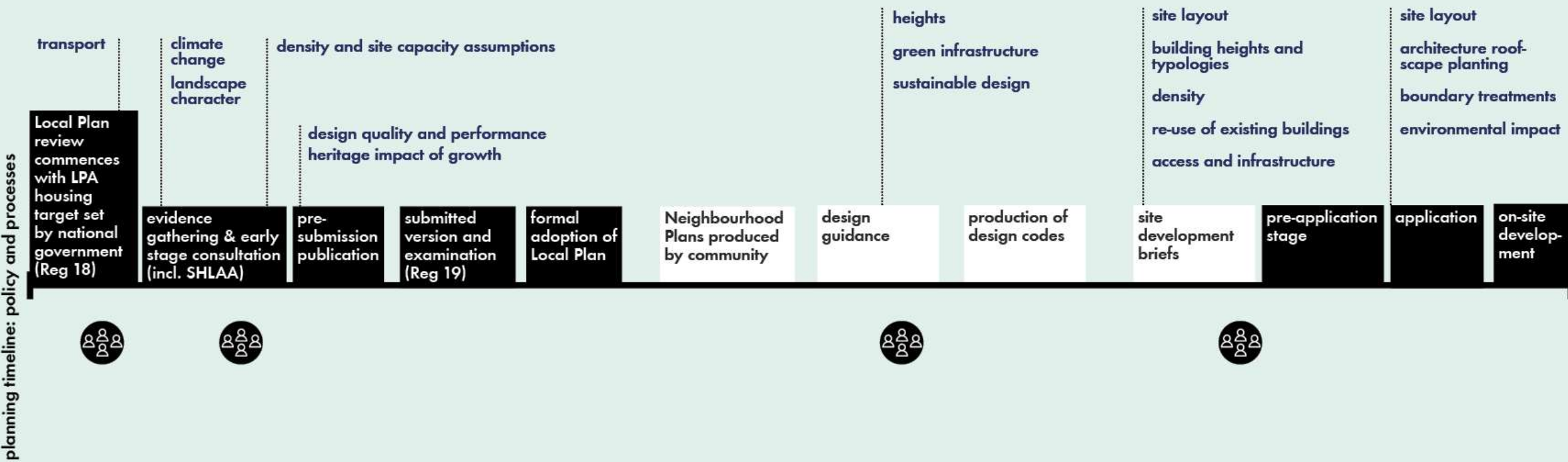
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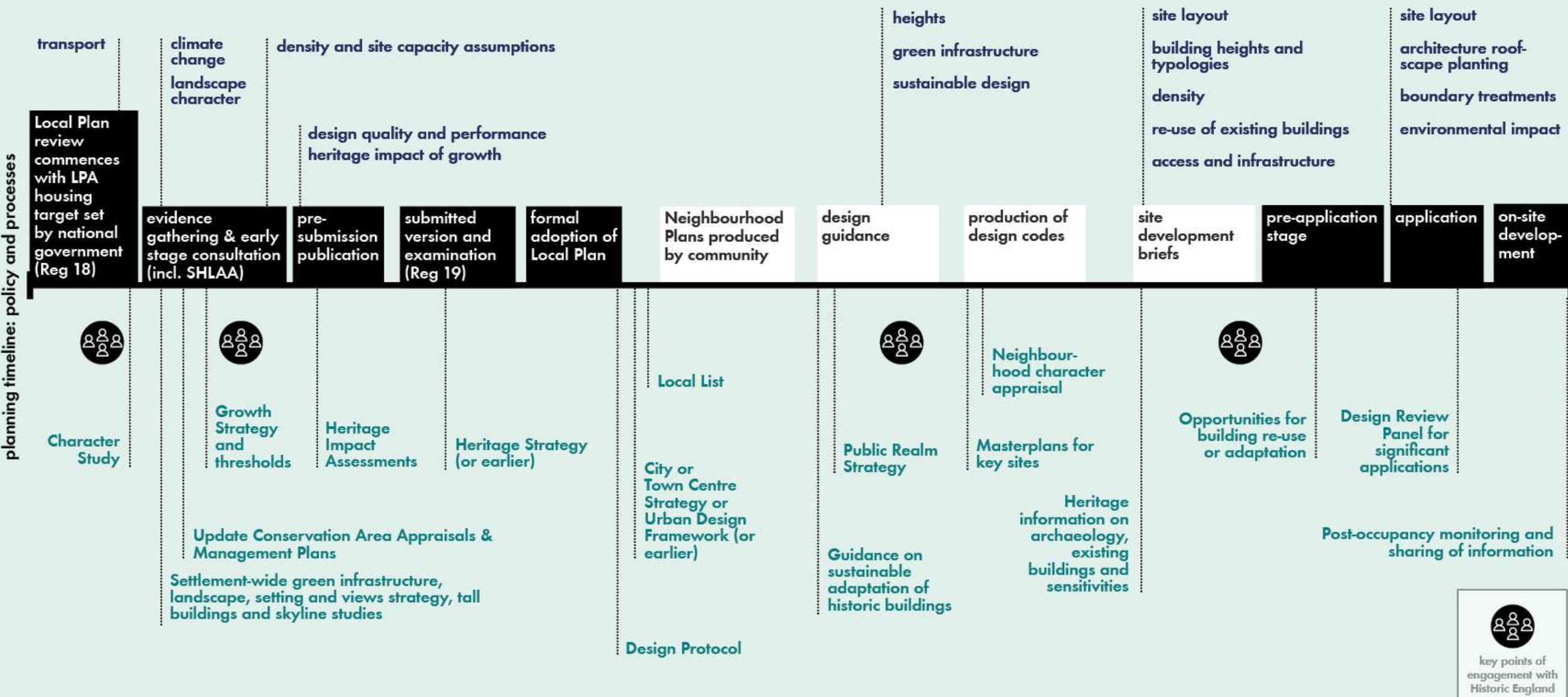


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THANK YOU!