

Structure and Process for Helston Place Shaping Board

1. Background

'Place Shaping' is promoted by Cornwall Council (CC) as the process by which funds will be allocated and projects prioritised for the recovery and re-development of town centres in Cornwall. Potential Government and Council funding will be targeted and managed via 'Place Shaping Boards' in each town, charged with defining and overseeing the implementation of a 'Place Shaping Plan'.

Place-shaping is a collaborative process which aims to create sustainable, well-designed communities where healthy behaviours are the norm and which provide a sense of belonging and safety, a sense of identity and a sense of community. It is also a means of shaping local services, infrastructure and the economy through the application of knowledge about what creates good health, improved productivity and benefit to the economy and community.

<https://www.localgov.co.uk/What-does-place-shaping-mean/6276>

<https://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/2011/aug/15/councils-as-place-shapers>

Following discussion with Cornwall Council (CC) in early 2019, the Helston Community Interest Company (HCIC) Place Shaping Sub-Group, incorporating Helston Town Council (HTC) members, local Cornwall Councillors and our local CC Community Link Officer, Maxine Hardy, was established and has now developed a well-defined Place Shaping Plan for Helston. This Plan has been discussed and developed with input from councillors, community groups and consultations. Via a number of presentations to senior CC representatives (Economic Growth and Development Directorate Leadership Team) the Place Shaping Plan is now gaining momentum and potential funding support.

In order to exploit the potential for funding it is essential that we have a credible Place Shaping Plan and use the Place Shaping process if we are to convince CC to both help and fund Helston. To have a strong argument for funding allocations it is also extremely important that the Plan is made up of projects which are developed to a level where they are 'shovel ready' (ie. capable of being rapidly implemented once funding is available) so that we are able to quickly develop funding bids in response to whatever funding opportunities as they become available.

Other towns in Cornwall are also developing Place Shaping Boards. These are more advanced in towns which have already been allocated Town Deal funding (eg. Penzance, St.Ives, Camborne) and we can therefore take advice and learning from their processes.

The funding streams which may become available are likely to have a range of different processes by which fund applications are made and monies drawn down and expended. It is therefore essential that we define our own processes within Helston so that we are in a position to create credible bids for this funding and subsequently manage Place Shaping projects to effective conclusions.

The Helston Place Shaping work done to date has established Helston as a strong contender for funding and we must now build upon this success. With strong processes in place we will give confidence that we are able to manage any potential funding and project implementations efficiently to achieve the outcomes we desire.

2. Potential Funds

There are many routes by which we can access funding, however the majority will be via CC:-

- Town Centre Revitalisation Fund – revenue money to support the design/development of projects.
- Test and Learn Fund (addendum to the Revitalisation Fund) – revenue or capital to trial potential Place Shaping projects.
- Future Towns Fund – capital from central govt to support town centres (CC waiting for central govt to define/allocate).
- Shared Prosperity Fund – capital from central govt to support town centres (CC waiting for central govt to define/allocate).
- CIL Fund and other such area specific funds – generally capital project focussed.

There may be other funds and mechanisms applicable to elements of our Place Shaping Plan, independent of CC (although CC support may be important to achieve funding via these routes). These might include:

- Heritage Lottery – especially Covid Emergency funding.
- Arts Council – again focussing on Covid recovery project.
- Other national and local funders.
- Crowd funding.
- Community shares.
- Charitable gifts.
- Charitable bank loans.

3. Funding Routes

The ways in which funds are made available will differ by funding stream:

- Revitalisation & Test and Learn funds will be remitted by CC to Town Councils.
- Capital funds such as Future Towns Fund will be expended directly by CC under the oversight of Place Shaping Boards.
- CIL and similar funds, plus most other funds (HLF, AC etc.) will be remitted to the applicant (Town Council, Community Group etc.).

Having a range of public and community groups able to apply for and accept grants is important so that we open up the widest range of funding opportunities for the Plan.

VAT registration and the ability to ensure VAT reclaims are delivered correctly will be important as it is rare for any funder to cover VAT for a non-registered applicant or ineligible expense. Clearly being non-VAT registered introduces a significant cost inefficiency in the application of both revenue and capital funds. Specialist VAT advice will need to be sought as part of the definition process for any Place Shaping project.

Also, ultimate ownership and maintenance of the asset created by the funding must be considered carefully for all projects.

4. Role of the Place Shaping Board

The role of the Place Shaping Board is to manage the definition of the Place Shaping Plan and oversee its implementation. In doing so it will:-

- Ensure that the elements of the Place Shaping Plan are coordinated to achieve maximum benefit with a broad and positive impact for the town.
- Provide strategic direction and guidance as the Place Shaping Plan develops and is implemented.
- Supervise the overall Investment Plan.
- Co-ordinate consultations with the public, community groups and representative bodies within the town (note that an on-line consultation platform is under development to ensure broad public consultations can be managed in a Covid secure manner).
- Ensure that key town commitments (eg. the Helston Climate Action Plan) are supported by and embodied into all elements of the Place Shaping Plan.
- Define and manage processes for the documentation, evaluation and progress reporting for all projects.
- Periodically present updates on Place Shaping progress to CC, HTC and more widely to the community.
- Lead on grant funding bids which involve multiple projects.
- Help identify appropriate funding streams.

CC recommend that a Place Shaping Board comprise one-third representatives from the public sector, one-third from the private sector and one-third from the voluntary sector. It is proposed that the Helston Place Shaping Board has representation from residents as well; and that representation is one-quarter from each 'sector'.

HCIC Place Shaping Sub-Group has been operating within HCIC since early 2019 with representation as follows:-

- Maxine Hardy - CC Community Link Officer and Meeting Facilitator.
- John Martin – HTC and CC.
- Mike Thomas – HTC and CC.
- Martin Searle – HTC Projects Officer.
- Dave Potter – HCIC.
- Jenny Morris – HCIC.

- David Turnbull – HCIC & SKA.
- Brendan Thomas – HCIC, HTC and private business owner (not always able to attend).

The Helston Place Shaping Sub-Group will cease to exist with the formation of the Helston Place Shaping Board.

It is important to ensure that there is continuity within the Board which has been successful to date in promoting the Place Shaping Plan and ensuring Helston is prioritised within CC for funding. It is therefore proposed that the Helston Place Shaping Board be composed as follows:-

- CC Community Link Officer - Meeting Facilitator (non-voting)
- HTC Projects Officer (non-voting)
- Cornwall Councillors representing Helston – 2 members
- Helston Town Council representative – 1 member (to be elected by HTC)
- Volunteers – 2 or 3 members
- Business/Third Sector representatives – 2 or 3 members
- Residents – 2 or 3 members
- Meetings Secretary (non-voting) – volunteer to be recruited

Current membership is outlined in a separate document.

As the number of projects and associated workload increases, the number of Board members can increase but representation should follow the guidelines outlined above.

At its outset Maxine Hardy created a Terms of Reference document for the HCIC Place Shaping Sub-Group to ensure that the group was formally constituted and recognised by CC. Other towns in Cornwall have progressed along the same process and we have therefore taken advice to develop these Terms of Reference more fully to formally establish the Helston Place Shaping Board. The proposed Terms of Reference for the Helston Place Shaping Board and accompanying Code of Conduct are contained in separate documents.

CC advise that it is not necessary to establish the Place Shaping Board as a company/CIC/charity, nor does it have a need to VAT register as it is not envisaged that this group will manage significant capital or revenue funds in its own right.

5. Proposed Structure and Process

Given the prominent role of HCIC in developing place shaping projects to date, it is important to note that it is only the larger scale HCIC projects requiring wider input from other groups (and likely significant capital resources) which will fall under the remit of the Place Shaping Board. HCIC projects such as the 'Discover Helston' magazine, 'Discover Helston' website, events, markets, shop window competitions etc. will continue to be progressed within HCIC.

Other community groups such as Helston Climate Action Group are encouraged to propose projects to the Place Shaping Board for inclusion in the Place Shaping Plan.

The Place Shaping Board defines the Place Shaping Plan by accepting project proposals and forming them into a coherent Plan. The vision of HCIC and the Place Shaping Board is the same - *'to enable Helston to develop into a dynamic and sustainable town fit for the future'*.

The projects within the Place Shaping Plan each must clearly deliver progress towards the vision. Additionally, the objective of the Board is to ensure that the whole Plan will deliver greater benefits than the sum of its parts. It must produce a coherent presentation of the Plan to show the community and funders such as CC that Helston can achieve the vision.

The Place Shaping Board is the overall coordinator of active projects.

It is essential that CC, as well as others within and outside of the Helston community, see the Place Shaping Board as representing Helston and agree that the Place Shaping Plan is certain to make a positive impact.

Supported by HTC and community groups, the Board will lobby for funding to deliver the Plan. All funding will be project specific – ie. funding will be sought for specific elements of the Plan.

Project Teams will be formed for each project within the Place Shaping Plan made up of individuals who have a specific interest in, and capability to support, the project. Ideally each member of the Board should actively contribute to at least one project. Details of project team members are shown in a separate document.

Project Teams are responsible for the detailed delivery of individual projects. Project Teams therefore act as sub-groups of the Place Shaping Board and are responsible for driving forward the projects within the Place Shaping Plan. This will include:-

- Developing detailed proposals for the project – project definition to employ the standardised Place Shaping Board pro-forma.
- Project specific consultations and discussions with all stakeholders.
- Generation of all documentation defining the project.
- Identification of funds and applications for funding.
- Clear definition of any claims process and responsibility in managing any grant funding.
- All aspects of project management through all stages of the project from concept to implementation and post completion evaluation.
- Reporting of progress to the Place Shaping Board and implementing relevant management, publicity and coordination activity required by the Board.

Where possible project teams will use the RIBA Plan of Work 2020 to define project stages. Should this not be applicable (eg. the 'Promotion of Helston' project) the project team must define and communicate its proposed project management process.

6. Funding and Grant Management

Any Project Team member can take the lead in applying for funding to progress a Place Shaping project, as long as this is clearly defined and agreed by the Place Shaping Board and is aligned with the specific project's goals. The accountable body (ie. the organisation proposed to receive the funds, place orders and pay suppliers) for a funding application must be clearly defined, confirm their agreement to act as such and be agreed by the Place Shaping Board prior to any application for funding being submitted.

Where the accountable body is CC (ie. all expenditures for the project will be made directly by CC to suppliers and contractors – as per Towns Fund projects), the Project Team will manage the project in accordance with the rules of the funding provision. Project management decisions, sourcing of contractors, allocation of funds etc. will be the responsibility of the Project Team (which will likely include CC representation for this type of project) which must observe all of the rules associated with such funding.

Where the accountable body is HTC the project must be progressed in line with the following stages:-

- a) The proposed funding application must be presented for approval to Councillors (likely as part of a scheduled HTC meeting) prior to submission. This will include confirmation of the project team (which will include HTC representation as noted above).
- b) All proposals must include a plan for managing the project cash flow during and after implementation.
- c) Subject to successful funding, HTC will support any requirement for drawing down the funds. Referral back to Councillors will only be required if the funding offer incorporates specific conditions which were not envisaged at application stage and for which the Town Clerk identifies a need for further full HTC agreement.
- d) HTC will hold the project funds for the Project Team in line with any funding conditions.
- e) Project management decisions, sourcing of contractors, allocation of funds etc. will be the responsibility of the Project Team as long as the project processes (eg. sourcing) comply with HTC procedures and funding conditions.
- f) The HTC Project Team representative will be responsible for ensuring that Councillors are fully informed of project progress and that HTC views are represented.
- g) For control purposes any proposed contractor/supplier orders will be documented by the Project Team (inc. copies of tenders/quotes etc.) and forwarded to the Town Clerk prior to any instruction to a contractor/supplier. The Town Clerk will confirm that HTC processes have been followed and then place the proposed order.
- h) Payment of contractors/suppliers will be made by the Town Clerk only when the Project Team confirm that work has been completed to a satisfactory standard - confirmation in writing by the Project Team Leader and countersigned by the HTC project representative.

Where the accountable body is another organisation (eg. HCIC, SKA etc.) the process will be as per that defined above, replacing 'HTC' and 'Councillors' with the organisation's board,

'Town Clerk' with a director of the organisation (who must not be a Project Team member) and 'Project Team Representative' with a second organisation director.

7. Internal & External Communication

Notice of Board meeting dates will be provided in a timely manner to ensure where possible all can attend. Documents will be circulated well in advance of meetings so that members can prepare for meetings. Minutes will be taken and once approved will be posted on the Board's website so that they are available to all interested parties.

Place Shaping Board members are responsible for keeping their respective organisations informed of the status of the Place Shaping Plan and progress of projects.

The Place Shaping Board will coordinate community engagement via a digital portal and face to face presentations on a regular basis.

Structure and Process agreed at the meeting on:

Signed:

Position: Chair of Helston Place Shaping Board

Date: