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From the chair

Steve Avery, Chair, RTPI South East

THE WORLD CUP, CAMPING AND THE GREAT BRITISH SUMMER

Hello and welcome to this summer edition. It seems that some things never change like England and World Cups or camping and the great British summer. But there is one thing you can always rely on and that is that with every change of government, there comes yet another major change to the UK planning system.

And in this regard the new Coalition Government has been no exception to the rule, pursuing as it has a wide range of planning reforms. So far, these seem to have been largely focused on getting rid of things, such as the Infrastructure Planning Commission, regional planning, garden grabbing and the Housing Planning Delivery Grant to name just a few. What is slightly less certain is what might take their place in pursuit of the "localism" agenda and all that that entails.

But with so much change in the offering, it is important that as professional planners, we continue to be heard at the highest level and kept abreast of new planning initiatives, policies and guidance as they emerge. I guess this is where the RTPI comes in and as a region we've been trying to do our bit.

Prior to the election, we fed into the RTPI response to the Conservative Green Paper 'Open Source Planning' and have been engaged with subsequent RTPI policy statements and briefings. And you will see from this edition that we are keeping a close eye on the formation and fast emerging role of Local Enterprise Partnerships.

In June we welcomed Ann Skippers, the RTPI President, to the region to see first hand some of the excellent planning work taking place around Brighton, Chichester and the South Downs National Park. It was also a great opportunity to meet with the various planning officers involved. What I found striking was the high level of professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm amongst those working in the area (and I was particularly impressed that a student at the University of Brighton had chosen to do a dissertation on stakeholder engagement in the New Forest National Park!).

We can expect much to happen in the next few months, with the forthcoming Decentralisation and Localism Bill and confirmation of the extent of public spending cuts on the immediate horizon. Our Autumn programme of events is therefore a great way to keep in touch with what is happening, and hopefully, where we can, support our planning colleagues in these uncertain times.

Steve Avery
Chair, RTPI South East

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REGIONAL AWARDS 2010

This year sees another record entry for the South East Region's Planning Awards. 16 entries will be judged in 8 categories by a panel led by Martin Randall and including Sam Howes, Sue Percy, Phil Turner, Toyubur Rahman and Ron Tate.

8 of the entries relate to policy documents, planning briefs and masterplans for which interviews have already been held with the authors. The other half will require a series of site visits by the panel stretching from east Kent to Oxfordshire, including improving the public realm, mixed use and leisure projects, waste management and heritage protection.

Winners will be announced at the AGM to be held on the 24th November at Dorney Lake, one of last year's winners. Martin Randall said "I am delighted with the standard of entries and do not underestimate the difficult task ahead for the judges. I hope many members will make a point of coming to the awards ceremony to hear about the great planning work that is going on here in the southeast."

Anyone interested in the opportunities for sponsorship for this year's awards should contact ...

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CPD PROGRAMME 2010

The programme got going rather more slowly this year (probably something to do with everyone's pre-occupation with an election!) but excellent events have been held on Rural Matters, National Parks, and Coastal Change.

Autumn events include Enforcement (16 Sept), Legal Update (21 Oct), the Annual David Fryer Memorial Lecture (3 Nov) and the Awards/AGM celebration evening at Dorney Lake (24 Nov).

All of these events are either free or low-cost, and you can book simply by sending an email to

carol.dawson@rtpi.org.uk

Other events will be fitted into the programme, and you can receive an email bulletin with advance notification – just let Carol have your up-to-date email address. If there is any area which you would like to see an event concentrate on, do let us know and we will try to help. Alternatively if you have an area of special expertise and can offer your services as a speaker, please get in touch!

■ Send us your articles and ideas at southeast@rtpi.org.uk or use it to tell us you would rather receive a paper copy. If you work outside the public sector and want to update your email details, contact southeast@rtpi.org.uk.

RTPI PRESIDENT'S VISIT - JUNE 2010

In June the region was pleased to welcome 2010 RTPI President Ann Skippers.

On the first day Ann arrived at Brighton's recently restored Grade 2 listed Victorian Railway Station and was whizzed away to see the award winning regeneration of central Brighton hosted by Martin Randall and his team.

The first point of interest was the "One Brighton" development of sustainable apartments using bio-mass and solar energy, car pooling and intriguing roof allotments.

Next a walk through Brighton's now thriving North Laine and Lanes popular shopping areas brought the President to Brighton seafront. Over a period of almost 20 years, Brighton Council has transformed this area from a run down virtual "no go" area into a thriving, cosmopolitan, all year destination with children's play areas, beach sports, thriving bars, restaurants, and night clubs, a fishing heritage centre, and artist's workshops. It is hoped that the 1360 rising viewing platform development to restore the area around the derelict West Pier will be the final piece in the jigsaw.

The party returned through the North Laine to the new Jubilee Library, which now stands as an exciting new sustainable flagship building at the heart of Brighton's cultural quarter.

The regeneration of Brighton during the 1990's and 2000's was very much based upon its development as a cultural destination with the restoration of the Royal Pavilion, The Dome arts complex, a myriad of supporting pubs, bars and restaurants, and finally the new Jubilee Library.

Lunch was hosted by Samer Bagaeen and his team at the University of Brighton, which has recently established a course to train new Planners for the South East.



After lunch with students and lecturers, the students gave a presentation on their recent field trips to consider European planning problems and solutions.

The second day of the President's visit was hosted by Steve Carvell and his team at Chichester Council. The morning was spent discussing town planning issues and how they are being addressed firstly, with the Council's Planning Management team, and then, directly with individual Planning Officers.

The President was then taken on a walk around Chichester city centre to look at the issues faced by the Council in integrating new high density retail and residential development into a historic city centre. The President was able to see how the standard and quality of new development had improved over the decades in terms of its integration with the historic fabric of the city.

Lunch was held with the Council Planning Committee to discuss the issues facing the new Council, in particular the integration of large parts of the northern half of the district into the newly formed South

Downs National Park. The afternoon was spent touring the southern parts of the district to see and understand how the district is planning for future climate change and coastal management in the Selsey area.

Finally, the President returned to Chichester to attend a seminar on National Parks with talks from the Region's Chair, Steve Avery, on the lessons to be learnt from setting up a new National Park in the New Forest, and, a talk from Jim Redwood, Interim Head of Planning, on the issues he is facing on the formation of a planning service for the new South Downs National Park.

Overall the President had an interesting, if busy time, in the region and left with a much greater understanding of the issues facing many of our districts in terms of planning and regenerating historic towns and cities, managing climate and coastal change, and dealing with the introduction of large new National Park Planning Authority.

Martin Taylor

OUR REGION - WHAT FUTURE FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE SOUTH EAST?

New Government. Open source planning. Big society. What does it all mean?

All change, again. Once more a reform of the planning system. More and different partnerships.

At the end of July the excellent regional planning team that worked for the former Regional Assembly (SEERA), and latterly the South East Partnership Board, under the capable Catriona Riddell, cleared their desks. I miss them, and wish them well in whatever career path they take.

Also due to be disbanded are the Regional Development Agencies (SEEDA) and the Government office for the South East (GOSE).

As I write, much remains unclear. We await a white paper on sub-national growth

and the passage of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3741&ap=1

When SEEDA vanishes, the regional economic canvas will be painted over. The economic responsibilities devolved by the previous government to local authorities, principally counties and unitaries, will be affected by a new collage of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) that are being hurriedly assembled from bids at sub-regional level. They will be based on labour market areas and may not coincide with the sub-regional areas of the former RSS.

Already the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) is bidding strongly to be an LEP (and talking to Isle of Wight, Dorset and Sussex business interests). A North Hampshire LEP is forming, as is one for the

Thames Valley or M4 corridor. Oxfordshire is considering one for the whole of its area, so is Hampshire. Brighton is in the frame for an LEP and is in talks with Hastings. In Kent a Kent + Medway LEP is being talked about as well as suggestions of 3 smaller ones.

If you learn of any others, please email me at p.turner@semantise.com

Charles Collins is already keeping a close eye on PUSH and Martin Taylor has offered to cover Brighton. I hope that Miles Thompson can engage with the Thames Valley LEP.

On 13 September the RTPI South East Regional Activities Committee will consider the picture. It is becoming apparent that a single person cannot cover all corners of the collage. We will need your voluntary help.

PUSH has a draft economic strategy consultation with a deadline of 21 September. www.push.gov.uk/news?id=8831&stdate=&pagetitle=The%20Future%20of%20the%20South%20Hampshire%20Economy

My first impression is that it is strongly centred upon the two cities of Southampton and Portsmouth with less to say about small towns and rural areas. An accepted focus on the economic means that it lacks the cultural, social and environmental aspects of an adequate strategic steer for local development frameworks.

If you have any comments, please let me know.

Phil Turner
Regional Matters, RTPI South East



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