



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

THE PIPA NETWORK REPORT FOR 2010

Summary

During 2010 PIPA has continued to grow, widen its sphere of interconnectivities, and an increasing number of individual members have contributed to the achievements of the PIPA Network over the year. In particular the PIPA Climate Change Champion supported the Networks' meeting on this important topic and a member was one of the speakers at the prestigious PIPA Annual Conference. The 2010 Conference was the most successful yet – held in Sheffield and attracting close to 150 delegates with the main speaker being Minister Bob Neill. Delegates gave excellent feedback and left the event better informed on current policy and practice issues for all engaged with local planning. The challenges for 2011 arise for the Coalition Government approach to planning that places local Councillors firmly centre-stage – 'with more clout than ever before' according to Minister Grant Shapps - but with a much higher expectation that community engagement will hold sway with planning decisions. This will present an opportunity for more Parish Councillors to be encouraged into PIPA membership.

The Year

Through efforts during the year to raise the profile and awareness of PIPA, particularly at local authorities that did not have a member, membership has continued to grow steadily, from 402 in 2009 to 490 at the end of 2010. Natural 'turnover' with elected local Councillors and changes in political control at Councils does restrict the net growth in membership but not diminished the interest in local planning as a vital area of local Councillor responsibility. The Coalition Government's determination to push planning responsibilities firmly to the local authority level and below will certainly present the opportunity to attract more Parish Councillors into membership. The plans for re-delegation of planning responsibilities to local Councils across Northern Ireland (that will see eleven new local Councils with planning powers) continue to be watched with interest, with the offer of assistance having been made to RTPI NI.

An early 2010 attraction was a presentation by Cristina Howick and her colleague Peter Keenan (from Roger Tym & Partners) who outlined, explained and took questions on the new PPS4: Planning for Prosperous Economies. Cristina had been very well received at the 2009 PIPA Conference, and in addition to this valued PPS4 event she very kindly contributed again to the Conference in 2010.

As has been the case in previous years, PIPA made a contribution to the RTPI Planning Convention 2010. In keeping with the 'Signposting' theme for the event, the PIPA session endeavoured to show the value of local leadership in the delivery of essential infrastructure in support of local plans. Two excellent speakers shared their experience and enthusiasms: Cllr Jim Harker (Leader of Northamptonshire County Council) and Cllr Edward Lord (City of London & Chair of Local Partnerships).

The year saw our fourth PIPA Conference in England. The theme for the 2010 event was 'Planning & Localism: Delivering Community Aspirations'. The venue (after Manchester in 2008 and London in 2009) was Sheffield Hallam University. We were very pleased that Minister Bob Neill accepted an invitation to speak – and he then stayed on to chat with

delegates over lunch. The 2010 Conference offered a wider range of sessions than ever before and the feedback from delegates (via the evaluation forms) was extremely positive with 100% of delegates completing the feedback sheet rating both the Conference content and the venue as 'good' or 'excellent'. We still aim for national events in Northern Ireland and Wales in due course (a Conference in Scotland having been held in 2008). The Conference was only possible thanks to continuing financial support from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).

The PIPA Conference provides an annual opportunity for PIPA Members to engage with a wide range of related organisations that are involved with planning policy & practice. The programme for the 2010 Conference included excellent contributions from the Local Government Association, CABE, the National Community Land Trust Network, the Prince's Regeneration Trust, as well as Sheffield Hallam University itself. Following a feedback suggestion in 2009, a PIPA Member made a particular contribution to the programme on his local experience of 'How Pre-applications help manage the Planning Process'. In addition, on the day before the Conference, Members were offered the opportunity to see progress with the refurbishment of Sheffield's iconic Park Hill flats, the largest listed building in Europe.

A further Member Survey was conducted in late 2010. The analysis of the PIPA Survey showed that 86% of respondents valued PIPA because it 'Kept me well-informed on planning', 51% said PIPA had 'Made me aware of relevant events offered by others' and 45% commended PIPA for 'Providing useful resources on the PIPA website'. Particular comments that provide an insight into the way that PIPA is valued included: 'It provides me with details of changes to policy that I would not be aware of', 'I am delighted PIPA is developing as a link between RTPI & us councillors', 'please help us to make sense of the emerging shambles in the absence of regional strategies', although in cautionary fashion one respondent did note: 'Something of a one way street - RTPI seem to put a lot in (thank you), the politicians appear to be happy just to accept it without really making much of a meaningful contribution'. From the survey it also emerged that 70% of respondents would 'Look to work more closely with Community/Parish/Town Councils or their equivalents' and 72% would 'Charge for pre-application meetings'.

In keeping with the RTPI Seven Commitments on Climate Change a PIPA website page was kept up-to-date with the types of contribution that local planning Councillors might make to address these issues. The PIPA Climate Change Champion supported the Networks' meeting on this important topic where Champions from across the Networks came together to share their experiences and action commitments.

With local Councillors being centre-stage for 2011 it should be possible to further consolidate on the interest that PIPA activities and events have generated, continuing to build a real sense that only Councillors and officers together with their communities can deliver the place-making policy and practice commitments that the democratic system requires of them. In these endeavours it is to be hoped that a differently financed Planning Aid will be available to give practical support to local planning ambitions.

Membership:

Figures current at 31.12.09: **490**

(For comparison: Members 2008 - 363; 2009 - 402)

RTPI members on register: roughly 10% (membership data has been accumulated in such a way that this figure is difficult to derive more accurately at present)

Advisory Group

The Group chaired by Councillor Mike Roberts of Rushmore DC has not met during the year. Within financial and time constraints, PIPA has relied on electronic means of engagement both with Advisory Group Members and the wider PIPA Membership.

The Advisory Group was:

Ashis Choudhury	Consultant
Cllr Bill Sharp	Councillor for Castle Point
Cllr Brian O'Hare	ex-Councillor for Knowsley
Cllr Mike Roberts	Councillor for Rushmoor

The Advisory Group with other Members made input to the content & speakers for PIPA events and members were also approached late in the year when the new Localism Bill was finally published.

Publicity & Promotion

PIPA Membership annually benefits from raised awareness of what it offers after the Planning Convention, Elected Member Summer School and the annual PIPA Conference. At the Planning Convention PIPA contributed a popular session as noted above, widely publicised through the Convention brochure. At the 2010 Summer School all the delegates received a PIPA leaflet via email shortly after the event. Every local planning authority in England is invited to take up free places for the PIPA Conference – thanks to financial and other support from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) - and this year we had the largest ever delegate list. The success of the 2010 Conference was celebrated with a feature article on the front page of 'Planning' as well as on the home page of the RTPi website.

The Network has contributed articles to editions of RTPi News in 'Planning' and its equivalents, such as Scottish Planning, across the UK. MSP and PIPA member Sarah Boyack kindly contributed a piece for the latter reviewing progress one year on from the introduction of major legislative changes for planning in Scotland. A 'Planning' article was also timed to precede the PIPA Conference 2010 and 'Localism focus is an opportunity for stronger leadership in communities' provided some promotion and forethought for the debates that were to be had there.

E-bulletins

Bulletins have been issued fortnightly, with special editions for any topics of urgency.

Unsolicited Feedback received in 2010

"As ever I find the PIPA emails interesting and useful"

"Thank you very much for the speedy response; greatly appreciated"

"As an executive member holding the regeneration portfolio I do appreciate regular updates from you"

"Thanks for the invitation [to take up membership] – yes please!!"

"Thank you for making applying for membership so easy"

“Thanks for the valuable circular as usual”

“Keep going with all your pearls of wisdom”

“Many thanks for taking just 12 minutes to reply!!”

“I *heart* PIPA! Keep up the good work”

‘Many congratulations on reaching the milestone of Bulletin 100’

“I am continually grateful to PIPA for the information they put out and the seminars/courses they provide”

“Well organized [Conference], thank you”

“Really enjoyed thought-provoking [Conference] sessions”

Policy consultations

Network members have been invited to contribute to consultations on the following during 2010:

Code for Sustainable Homes and the Energy Efficiency standard for Zero Carbon Homes - CLG

Development Management: Proactive Planning from Pre-Application to Delivery - CLG

Improving the use and discharge of planning conditions - CLG

Improving engagement by statutory and non-statutory consultees - CLG

High Hedges Bill – Northern Ireland Assembly

Governance and Scrutiny of Local Government in Wales – Welsh Assembly Government

Permitted Development Rights for Domestic Micro-Generation – Scottish Government

General consents for licensing schemes under Parts 2 and 3 of the Housing Act 2004 – CLG

Economic prosperity boards and combined authorities: draft statutory guidance - CLG

Proposed revisions to the Lifetime Homes Criteria - CLG

Natural England’s Draft Position on Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture – Natural England

The Economic Renewal Programme – Welsh Assembly Government

Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment - CLG

Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate - CLG

Regeneration & Housing Bill – Northern Ireland Assembly

RSE Inquiry into Facing up to Climate Change – Scottish Government

The Economic Renewal Programme - Welsh Assembly Government

Multi-Area Agreements with Duties - draft statutory guidance - CLG

Planning Obligations – proposed replacement for Circular 05/05 - CLG

Towards a Low Carbon Economy for Scotland: Discussion Paper - Scottish Government

Scottish Parliament seeks views on Land and Transport Planning - Scottish Government

Housing design and sustainability standards - HCA

Microgeneration and Low Carbon Energy Technologies - Welsh Assembly Government

Building Regulations - CLG

Tree Preservation Orders - Scottish Government

The Planning Obligations (Scotland) Regulations 2010 - Scottish Government

The Good Neighbour Agreements (Scotland) Regulations 2010 - Scottish Government

Houses in Multiple Occupation - CLG

Resourcing a High Quality Planning System - Scottish Government

New House Building Statistics - Welsh Assembly Government

Regional Growth Fund - BIS

Future of Building Regulations - CLG

Contributing to the ‘Big Society’ – call for evidence - CRC

Natural environment: an invitation to shape the nature of England - DEFRA

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Guidance – English Heritage
Local Development Orders - Welsh Assembly Government
Standard Information Requirements for Planning Applications - Welsh Assembly Government
Abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies - Commons CLG Select Committee
Localism - Commons CLG Select Committee
Revoking four sets of rules about Environmental Impact Assessments - CLG
Review of PPS 15 'Planning and Flood Risk'- Northern Ireland Assembly
Speak Up for Rural Scotland - Scottish Government
A living Wales – a new framework for our environment, our countryside and our seas - Welsh Assembly Government
Tree preservation orders: proposals for streamlining- CLG
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 Householder Permitted Development Rights - Scottish Government
Amendments to the Modernised Planning System - Scottish Government
Revising the Strategic National Transport Corridors - DfT
England National Coastal Path – Natural England
Procedures for changes to development consent orders for nationally significant infrastructure projects - CLG
Decent Homes - HCA
New homes bonus - CLG
Proposals for changes to planning application fees in England - CLG
Governance arrangements for the National Parks and the Broads - DEFRA
Revised draft National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure - DECC
National Policy Statement – Waste Water – DEFRA
Call for evidence on public service reform - HM Treasury
Securing the Benefits of Scotland's Next Energy Revolution - Scottish Government
Permitted Development Rights in Wales - Welsh Assembly Government
Inventory of Scottish Battlefields – Historic Scotland

Requests to/from Members

Roger Tym & Partners invited PIPA members participation in a survey to assess the training requirements of both planners *and* local councillors in the **economics of development**.

PIPA member participation was invited in **LGiU Workshops** aimed at strengthening the confidence of Councillors in dealing with the provision of sites in their Wards, as Cabinet Members in ensuring that provision is made in strategic plans, and as Members of Planning Committees in hearing contested applications.

RTPI Networks invited members to take part in a survey to find out what they think about the service that the RTPI Networks provide and how it is provided.

IDeA asked for member help in finding more local planning authorities willing to establish Local Development Orders (LDO).

Members were advised of the **Penfold Review** and invited to submit evidence.

The HCA Academy gave members the opportunity to participate in market intelligence research to uncover detailed information on **current skills gaps** by profession and by region.

The HCA Academy invited members to contribute to **an on-line debate** - Engaging Communities, Empowering People: How do we help citizens to become problem solvers?

RTPI Planning Aid sought **examples of good community engagement** in small – medium sized development projects for use in a Good Practice Guide.

The Glass-House, an organisation championing community-led design, looked to members for **Trustees to be part of its Board**.

Following the announcement of the new **PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment**, Members were invited to comment and exchange views.

PIPA Members were invited to explore membership of the new RTPI **Rural Housing Interest Group**.

Network members were invited to contribute to the meeting of the **Networks' Climate Change Champions** via the Planning for Housing Champion.

Members were advised of the value of **Wales Planning Conference 2010**

The **Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council**, told members that she was: "delighted that the new Government is fulfilling its promise to review the planning system so quickly" and indicated that her Council would now halt progress with their Core Strategy.

Members were asked for examples of completed residential schemes in which **Manual for Streets** principles have been embraced.

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Members were invited to share their views and experiences on **garden grabbing** as the Coalition Government made policy changes.

A PIPA Member asked if members could point him at anyone in or around the professional planning world who would have relevant insights or be particularly interested in inclusion of **high performance broadband** in all new developments.

Members were invited to submit comments to inform an RTPI response to the consultation on changes to the planning regime for **Houses in Multiple Occupation**.

Members exchanged views on the consequences of and likely replacements after the Minister summarily abolished the **Regional Spatial Strategies** (RSS).

As Wycombe District Council became the first local authority in the country to fully adopt a **Local Development Order** members were asked to consider their potential value.

As a new report called for planners and Councillors to receive **training in development economics** so they understand the motivation for developing property when processing applications, members were asked 'Do you agree?'

The programme for the **2010 PIPA Conference** in Sheffield was developed with input from Members via Bulletin invites.

A member of the National Planning Forum looked to PIPA members for examples of **Parish Plans** that might demonstrate best practice.

Urban Forum looked to members for feedback about its guide 'Local action: the handy guide for communities working with councillors'.

Members exchanged views on the consequences of the Coalition Government's general policy presumption in favour of **Localism**.

RTPI Planners in the Workplace service asked for Member help in finding examples of research or information that will help inform local reviews of housing need/land allocations in light of the recession, the depressed housing market and the removal of RSS allocated housing numbers.

Members were invited to submit comments to the **Commission for Rural Communities (CRC)** call for Evidence on the Impact of the Recession on Rural Housing.

Freedom for Councillors to Champion their Communities – in line with the indications given by Minister Bob Neill at the PIPA Conference, members were invited to contribute their views of what change would be needed.

Member attention was drawn to the publication by a cross-sector coalition of organisations of a guide - **Planning for Climate Change** - to assist those who want to tackle climate change at a local level.

Training opportunities specifically for Councillors promoted

Lifetime Neighbourhoods - Vision into reality – LGA

Place-making - HCA Knowledge & Skills

Information for new Councillors - LGiU

Councillor in the Community - London Empowerment Partnership

Planning Councillors Conference – RTPI East of England

Planning Summer School for Elected Members 2010 in York

The Use of Social Media - The Leadership Centre for Local Government

Building in Context – English Heritage & CABE

Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs – Shropshire Council

Planning Law – Peyto Law

Awareness-raising on Gypsies & Travellers - HCA

Leadership in spatial planning for climate change and a low carbon future - North West Improvement and Efficiency Commission

Neighbourhood Agendas - PAS

Widening your horizons: planning at the larger than local level - PAS

Events

Date: 10th February 2010

Event: Joint Meeting with the RTPI Development Planning Network

Venue: London

Subject: Development Management Consultations (England)

Participants: 24

The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 12th February 2010

Event: Joint Meeting with the RTPI Development Planning Network

Venue: London

Subject: PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development

Participants: 24

The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 10th March 2010
Event: A joint event with RTPI-CIH Planning for Housing Network
Venue: London
Subject: How would a Conservative Government shape planning and housing?
Participants: 25
The Presentation from this event is available in the members' area of the website.

Date: 22nd April 2010
Event: Joint event with the Building & Social Housing Foundation (BSHF)
Venue: Leicester
Subject: The Future of Housing: Rethinking the UK housing system for the twenty-first century
Participants: 27
Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 11th May 2010
Event: Joint event with the Centre for Cities & RTPI-CIH Planning for Housing Network
Venue: London
Subject: Arrested Development: Are we building houses in the right places?
Participants: 24
The Presentation from this event is available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 30th June 2010
Event: Workshop at The Planning Convention
Venue: QEII Conference Centre
Subject: Does recession mean sell-out? - maintaining quality in a cold climate
Participants: 55
Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 29th September 2010
Event: Joint event with RTPI Historic Environment Group
Venue: London
Subject: The Setting of Heritage Assets
Participants: 24
The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 11th October 2010
Event: A joint event with the Planning for Housing Network & Bournville Village Trust
Venue: Telford
Subject: Study Tour of Lightmoor Urban Village
Participants: 18
A photographic record of this visit is available via the Network website.

Date: 5th November 2010
Event: A joint event with Urban Splash
Venue: Sheffield
Subject: Study Tour of Park Hill Refurbishment
Participants: 22
A photographic record of this visit is available via the Network website.

Date: 6th November 2010
Event: PIPA UK Conference
Venue: Sheffield

Subject: Planning & Localism: Delivering Community Aspirations

Participants: 142

The Presentations made at the Conference are available to members on the PIPA webpages

Date: 6th December 2010

Event: Joint event with Warwickshire Rural Housing Association

Venue: Harbury, Warwickshire

Subject: Rural Housing: Local Choice

Participants: 18

An article reporting on this event is available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 8th December 2010

Event: Consultation event around Government proposals

Venue: London

Subject: New Homes Bonus

Participants: 24

The Presentation from this event is available via the members' area of the website as is the subsequent submission made to CLG.

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