

IN PERSPECTIVE

mediation of space • making of place

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE SOUTH EAST • SPRING 2011

www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_south_east/



From the chair

Steve Avery, Chair, RTPI South East

It's hard to believe that it's spring already, and some three months have passed since the last newsletter.

At the last time of writing, we had just received the Localism Bill and were trying to make sense of what it all meant for planning. Its passage through the various parliamentary committee stages has been fast paced and three months on, a clearer picture is beginning to emerge.

There has been some excellent coverage in the new look Planning magazine and a host of conferences and seminars have been hastily convened to dissect the finer details. Here in the South East has been no exception, with the Region holding two Localism events in February at Gravesend and Winchester. I was fortunate enough to chair the Winchester event which was standing room only!

The Localism Bill is likely to dominate the planning agenda over the coming months. The RTPI has worked hard to make its voice heard and early successes include persuading the government to strengthen the proposed "duty to cooperate", to ensure that there are effective mechanisms for 'larger than local' cross border planning, especially where the issues involved are controversial.

But it's clear that we still have a long way to go, with the government recently laying all the country's economic woes at the feet of planners, those "enemies of enterprise" who administer their "bizarre planning rules" and "take forever with those planning decisions". And there was me thinking it was all the fault of the bankers!

It's been a tough time too for all those involved with Planning Aid with grant funding coming to an end on 31 March 2011 and an uncertain future.

On a lighter note, this year's CPD programme is well under way and we are now planning for RTPI President Richard Summers' visit to the Region on 8 and 9 June.

One of Richard's themes for his presidential visit is 'making localism work through spatial planning'. The two day visit is likely to be centred around Reading and Maidenhead so if you have any suggestions for visits or meetings with the President, then please let us know.

We also welcome England's newest local planning authority to the Region, the South Downs National Park, which takes on its planning responsibilities from 1 April. Good luck to Jim Redwood and his team at the South Downs, and all the partner authorities involved in delivering the planning service.

And finally, in response to our own budgetary pressures, we have sought to make savings by limiting distribution of the newsletter to electronic format only. I hope this does not cause too much inconvenience for members but it does make it all the more important that you let us know of any changes to your email address. A useful prompt might be to ask your colleagues if they have received this issue of In Perspective. Tell them to email us at southeast@rtpi.org.uk. if not!

Steve Avery
Chair, RTPI South East

CPD QUESTIONNAIRE

The Regional Activities Committee would like your views on the CPD programme, and the easiest and quickest way to get them is by using a simple questionnaire which can be completed in less than 10 minutes.

Lots of people have already completed it and thanks to those who have. But the more views we have, the better the programme will be, so if you haven't done so yet, please go to <http://tinyurl.com/63zbnql> and let us have your views.

We can only improve our performance if you tell us what you'd like to see in the programme in the future.

CPD SEASON 2011

With the prospect of ever tightening budgets across all the sectors that Planners are employed in, you can rest assured that your RTPI Region will continue to offer good quality, low cost events on a range of popular topics.

The season is well underway and, by the time you read this, successful events on Localism, Planning Inquiries and Enforcement will already have been run. All were well attended and participants agreed that they were excellent value for money and a good use of their valuable time. As the rest of the spring and summer season unfolds there are events coming up on a wide range of popular topics.

On 11 April there will be 'Starting Out...' for anyone thinking of working for a consultancy.

This year, and with so much happening in Planning at the moment, we have a spring Legal Update, which will be held in Southampton on 20 April. Another Update will still run in the autumn, in a different location.

This year sees the inaugural Brighton Rock Lecture, hosted by Brighton University Planning School. This free lecture will be delivered at the University's Huxley Lecture Theatre on the Moulsecoomb Campus at 5:30 pm on 12 May 2011 by Professor Mark Tewdwr-Jones, Professor of Spatial Planning and

Governance at University College London. His topic will be a broad and overarching look at the future of UK land use over the next 50 years. This will be followed by a drinks reception.

Also on 12 May, during the afternoon, Brighton University hosts this year's Rural Planning Seminar. Full details of speakers will be confirmed in our E-bulletins in coming weeks. These have all proven to be popular events in past years, so don't delay and book your place now. Just email carol.dawson@rtpi.org.uk

As the Localism Bill moves through Parliament we will hold further events on it later in the year. In the meantime, attend any of our other events and play 'Localism' bingo, by

seeing how many times it and other emerging catch phrases get mentioned, whatever the main subject of the event!

Look out for news of more events coming up later in the year on coastal and marine planning, minerals and waste, the London Olympics, planning for our ageing population, and High Speed 2, plus the President's Visit and the Regional Awards Evening.

We hope to see you at one of these events. And if you think there is a topic we should be running an event on but it's not listed here, then please tell us about your idea!

Miles Thompson

■ 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.

Written by RTPI South East Region and designed by Savills



LONG LIVE PLANNING AID

Offices of South East Planning Aid, in Chatham, and Planning Aid South, in Oxford, have closed. Staff have been made redundant. Volunteers and the RTPI South East region committee expresses its sadness, and wishes the former staff all good fortune in finding new jobs.

A news item on the RTPI webpage announces a new (national) contact number for queries: 0330 123 9244 <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/4450/23/5/3>

Over the past five years we have helped over 100,000 individuals and some 4,500 community and residents groups. On 31 March 2011 this grant funding will come to an end but a telephone advice service will continue to provide help and advice.

Trudi Elliott, Chief Executive of the Royal Town Planning Institute, which runs Planning Aid England, said: *"Planning Aid England is changing but continuing, albeit in a different form, as we await the outcome of our bid for new funding"*.

In addition to this bid, PAE is actively investigating new sources of funding and ways of working with our volunteers, the 1300 Royal Town Planning Institute members who provide their time freely to support the service.

Volunteers in the south east region may like to know that Shereen Shafi continues in Birmingham as Volunteer and Skills Manager: 0121 214 2909 Shereen.shafi@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk She tells me that

"There will be a communication coming out shortly to all volunteers clarifying some house-keeping issues for volunteers for the transitional period (post 31/03). For an interim period I am a central contact for volunteers and Sue Manns, National Planner is too".

Phil Turner

"SMALL TEAM OF PLANNERS PREPARED TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR THE 8TH LARGEST NEW PLANNING AUTHORITY."



A recent briefing on the operation of development management, from April 2011, in the new South Downs National Park (SDNP), revealed that funding moved from CLG to DEFRA has allowed agreement, now largely negotiated, for the fifteen local planning authorities to process all planning applications.

Facing an estimated 4,000 planning applications a year (compared with the next largest National Park, the New Forest, with 1,000 a year) the claim is that SDNP could be the 8th largest LPA in England.

SDNP is the sole planning authority for the area of the National Park and is responsible for all planning decisions. Also responsible for planning policy, LDFs, enforcement, minerals and waste planning, SDNP will have a small team of 18 planning people (of a total 80 staff). The NP will pay the LPAs, who can call on 600 planning staff between them, to handle planning applications on behalf of SDNP. LPA planning committees will make decisions for the National Park Authority in accordance with the statutory purposes and duty of the NP*.

Only 150 'more significant' applications a year (4%) are expected to be handled for decision by the SDNP authority itself.

There will be four SDNP link officers covering Hampshire, Chichester, rest of West Sussex and East Sussex (including Brighton and Hove).

For more information see:

<http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/rte.asp?id=1055>

Phil Turner and Ron Tate

* National Park role:

Purposes: to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the park's special qualities by the public.

Duty: to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the communities within the National Park.

RTPI SOUTH EAST AWARDS, 2011

Last year's awards attracted a record entry and proved to be a great opportunity to showcase some exemplar projects and schemes.

The wide range of skills that planners can bring really shone through in the submissions and the judges were able to reflect upon:

- creativity and innovation when a solution seemed impossible;
- dogged determination over a period of years to reach the right result;
- leadership and risk-taking sometimes in the face of adversity;
- great project management and communication;
- and, the ability to use our own skills and recognise the skills of others to deliver real success.

The awards show us that these qualities can be found across the wide spectrum of people

involved in planning. They are also a great opportunity to highlight the work of those who diligently deliver solid policies and proposals 'day in day out' but whose contribution may not always be recognised. Perhaps more than ever just now, we do need to get the message out there that planning has a vital role to play in delivering imaginative solutions to the challenges we face everyday, and that yes we can deliver, even in these tough economic conditions.

The awards can demonstrate that far from being a barrier to sustainable development, planning and planners are a vital part of the answer, so please do consider submitting an award entry this year. The deadline for the National Awards is 31st May, and all entries in the region will go into the South East Awards.

Martin Randall
Chair of Judging Panel,
RTPI South East