

The 'Big' Planning Debate- 30 June 2011

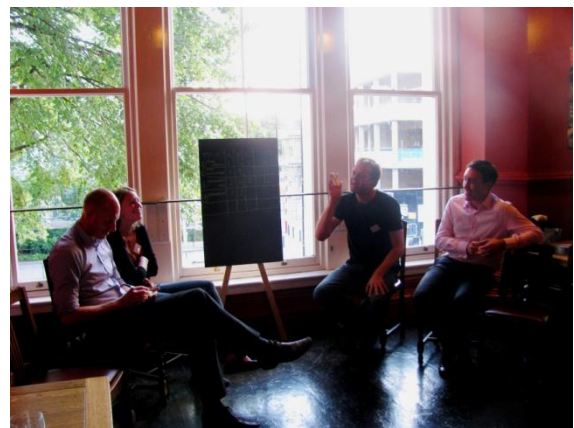
The 'Big' Planning Debate 2011 was a roaring success, with 18 students and young professionals turning up to showcase their planning and public speaking skills.

The evening was divided into two sections; the first half of which allowed participants to express their opinions on some of planning's hot topics, including Localism and building within the Greenbelt. The latter topic engendered some heated debate, focused around the exact parameters for releasing Greenbelt land. Overall it was determined that strategic release for housing and community assets should not be allowed in an indiscriminate manner.



On the matter of Localism, concerns were expressed over the implementation of the ideals, but there were participants who perceived the changes in forthcoming legislation as a real chance for communities to engage with the planning system. There was however an overwhelming concern that both the financial implications and inadequate training of officers, consultants and the community still stood in the way of true community emancipation.

The latter part of the evening was reserved for a 'quick fire' group debates discussing more light hearted planning topics. Participants were grouped into random teams and allowed only minutes to prepare and present the arguments 'for' or 'against' statements drawn at random from a hat. All teams were given the opportunity to challenge every other team in six hotly fought 'mini' debates. Well done to team "Appealing" who beat off strong competition from the "The Knowledge" in a final round to take the grand prize.



Overall it was a lively, fun and thought provoking evening. Over the evening we determined that "Supermarkets were the saviours of post-recession regeneration" and, you'll all be pleased to know, "That planners make better lovers!"

Disagree...? Well then you'll have to come and share your views next year! For those that attended, see you all next year for the rematch.

Amy Longmore & Bob Phillips (North West Young Planners Steering Group)