



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

PIPA - the RTPI Politicians in Planning Network Action Plan

What is PIPA - the Politicians in Planning Network?

PIPA is a network that aims to support the co-operative working between professionals and local politicians that is essential to achieve the most effective planning outcomes on the ground. Particularly in the light of the new Localism Bill, the collective voice of local Councillors through PIPA has enormous potential to have an influence on decision-making affecting the delivery of democratic planning. It also has a strong role to play in helping politicians adjust to changes required by introduction of the new planning duties. The Network presently has nearly 500 Members.

Why do we have a Politicians in Planning Network?

Politicians are at the core of a democratic planning system. Once the Localism Bill is in place, they make decisions on local planning policy and implementation within limited national guidance, informed and advised by professionals who are invariably RTPI Members. It is right that the RTPI should actively support the effective working of the mechanisms that support the local, democratic accountability of planning. PIPA can aid understanding and review.

In these endeavours PIPA has had the benefit of invaluable sponsorship support from the Planning Advisory Service for 4 annual Conferences in England and from the Scottish Government for a Conference in Scotland. Thus PIPA has been able to make substantial progress alongside those partners in raising the profile and esteem of the democratic elements of planning and, in conjunction with Members, helped to fill knowledge and skill gaps within local authorities. When they consider that the appropriate time has arrived, we will work with the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly to deliver similar but tailored events for those devolved administrations; local democratic planning is expected to make substantial progress in Northern Ireland in 2011. The Network will continue to support the Summer School for Elected Members since this shares a number of PIPA's aims in a compact format and helps to build lasting relationships with Summer School contributors and attendees.






The Network's objectives are to:

1. Raise the profile and understanding of professional planning amongst people who are engaged in planning from a local Councillor perspective
2. Provide a responsive 'one stop shop' information and signposting service on spatial planning for all those involved in democratic planning within the UK.
3. Provide a vehicle for all those involved in democratic planning to come together to build knowledge and exchange information and experiences
4. Provide a sounding board to further develop and improve democratic planning practice

Action Plan


Objective 1:

To raise the profile and understanding of professional planning amongst people who are engaged in planning from a local Councillor perspective

Action	When	Who	Q4 Progress
In conjunction with other RTPI Networks and the Regions, offer a number of UK-wide promotional initiatives and activities, including contributions to <i>Planning</i> magazine, that will continue to widen awareness and help to build membership	Throughout 2011	Network Manager co-ordination and contributions with support from Network Managers, RTPI Communications team, magazine editors and Members	Initiative with RTPI Comms team added to membership through the LGA. Articles for Planning around PIPA Conference 2011 Bristol. 
In keeping with the RTPI's Seven Climate Change commitments, support and develop initiatives to allow for active engagement by PIPA Members	Throughout 2011	Network Manager co-ordination with support from PIPA Climate Change Champion(s)	No new initiatives 2011. Topic included in PIPA Conference 2011 programme. 
Look to host a Workshop at the Planning Convention following the success of a similar offer 2010	June 2011	Network Manager and Workshop contributors	Workshop held and was well attended – presentation on Convention website. 
Host a reception or other appropriate contribution at the Elected Members' Summer School	September 2011	Network Manager with Summer School team support	PIPA hosted the Panel Q&A session which was very lively and well received. 
In conjunction with local Members and Planning Aid, have a presence at Party Local Government Conferences and other appropriate events	As opportunity presents	Network Manager with Planning Aid staff	Planning Aid is no longer funded for such activity but Comms team to promote PIPA via their attendance and Network Manager supported one Conference. 

Objective 2:



To provide a responsive 'one stop shop' information and signposting service on planning for all those involved in democratic planning within the UK

Action	When	Who	Q4 Progress
Populate the website with comprehensive resources, including the page specifically on	Monthly	Network Manager with Member contributions, and IT support as	Webpages regularly updated. 

Climate Change, adding new information content each month.		required	
In conjunction with Members and Planning Aid, to contribute Planning 'Surgeries' at Conferences and other appropriate events	As opportunity presents	Network Manager with Planning Aid staff	Panel session hosted at Summer School in September. 



Objective 3:

To provide a vehicle for all those involved in democratic planning to come together to build knowledge and exchange information and experiences

Action	When	Who	Q4 Progress
To offer in each UK nation across a 3 year cycle a Conference of the style which re-launched PIPA in 2007	2011: England + Northern Ireland + Wales (at Summer School?)	Network Manager with support from PAS, Northern Ireland Assembly and Summer School.	England Conference held in Bristol in November and was very well received according to feedback; Wales publicity for Summer School; NI event in line with devolution still in short-term plans but now for 2012. 
Enable relevant topics to be debated through the website.	New topics introduced monthly	Network Manager and Member contributions	Discussion pages have proved more useful than the Forum and two new topics added in Q3. 

Objective 4:

To provide a sounding board to develop and improve democratic planning practice

Action	When	Who	Q4 Progress
Provide intelligence to the RTPI Policy Staff by identifying forthcoming issues and arranging joint activities as appropriate	Throughout 2011	Member contributions; Network Manager co-ordination	Intelligence for Comms team supplied including feedback from Summer School. 
Build co-operation with other organisations with shared interests by inviting their contributions to/participation in Conferences and meetings whilst avoiding duplication	Throughout 2011	Member contributions; Network Manager co-ordination	In conjunction with Comms team building relations with LGA which also benefitted the PIPA Conference. 

Andrew Matheson
PIPA Network Manager

www.rtpi.org.uk

Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph Lane, London, EC3R 8DL
RTPI, a charity registered in England 262865 and Scotland SC 037841