



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

THE URBAN DESIGN NETWORK REPORT FOR 2011

Summary

For 2011 there was an extensive programme of member activities, all of which were well supported both by those offering and those receiving the benefits of the events. This RTPI Network continues to be amongst the largest because of the policy & practice linkages it fosters with a significant range of built environment professionals.

The year saw CABI become part of the Design Council and the Bishop Review, for which an ex-Chair of UDN was on the Advisory Group, looked at the future for built environment design support. The value of the Network in fostering shared innovation and understanding and standing up for design quality has been especially vital in the year when a new National Planning Policy Framework has been drafted and its alleged economic bias has been widely debated. 2012 will continue to see practical expression of the Network commitment to work with others and to ensure that design issues are not discarded or lost or threaten unintended consequences in the rush to adopt new, less centralised policy approaches to placemaking.

The Year

With Coalition Government policy initiatives coming thick & fast, members of the Network and the Policy Experts in particular had an important scrutiny role in 2011 to ensure that legislation and policy proposals respected the tenets of good quality urban design. There is abundant evidence that any temptation to abandon expectations of high quality in the face of austere times would be a false economy and potentially undermine ambitions for sustainable growth. Minister Greg Clark has said as much, but the experience of members was brought to bear on the detail of the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to ensure that expectations and words were properly aligned. The Network members are alert to the demonstrable value of good urban design and press and raise awareness of such policy & practice issues within and on behalf of the RTPI as and when required.

Stephen Gleave continued as the Chair of the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group has been a 'virtual' group for 2011 with email contact addressing issues as required. Ex UDN Chair Colin Haylock has been Junior Vice President of the RTPI and will be President of the Institute in 2012. Colin represented the RTPI on the group supporting Peter Bishop in his progressing of the Bishop Review for Design Council CABI looking at the future for built environment design support.

There was no member survey during 2011. Instead, the end of the year saw the commencement of formal Review of all the RTPI Networks with a view to rebalancing their resource demands within the new RTPI Policy, Practice & Networks Hub. At the turn of the year the Review had not been concluded but there has been full acknowledgement of importance of good urban design for positive planning outcomes.

The 2011 programme of events for members was substantial and started with one arranged by and for members in the North-West around 'how attitudes can influence our perceptions and experience of places'. Through the combination of member-offered events and RTPI Region/Nation event of direct relevance to members there has been a wide range of subject matter covered, from 'Places Matter' in Northern Ireland to 'Spaces in our Community' in

London and from visits to Harlow and Brighton, amongst other places, to room-based discussions on community engagement and new publications. Some effort has been put into ensuring that the programme is not over London-centric. Network events continue to be offered free with voluntary, local effort being behind the events and one – in Harlow – was repeated because of the level of interest it generated.

In keeping with the RTPI Seven Commitments on Climate Change the UDN website page was kept up-to-date with the types of content of particular value to urban. One of the UDN Climate Change Champions, Stephen Lorimer, represented the RTPI at an ESCR sponsored workshop at the University of Manchester as part of a research project on climate science in urban design with historical and comparative studies. Stephen subsequently wrote an article for RTPI News about the event and its findings.

Membership:

Figures current at 31.12.11: **717** (*after a 2011 positive audit of member email contacts*)
(For comparison: Members 2008 - 730; 2009 – 836; 2010: 854)

Advisory Group

The Group chaired by Stephen Gleave of Taylor Young did not meet during the year. Within financial and time constraints, the Group has relied on electronic means of engagement. The Advisory Group was:

Colin Haylock, Haylock Planning & Design
Charles Strang, RTPI Scotland
Dave Chetwyn, DJC1 Consultants
David Brown, Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Eileen Thomas, Mott MacDonald
Ian Biddulph, University of Cardiff
Kenny Brown, Townscape Solutions
Louise Thomas, Urban Renaissance Institute
Meredith Evans, Telford & Wrekin Council
Stephen Gleave (**Chair**), Taylor Young

Business Plan and Quarterly Monitoring Reports

The Network's business plan for 2011 was drawn up by the Network Manager, working with the Advisory Group, and then monitored via quarterly reports. The Urban Design Network identified just two key objectives for 2011:

- Provide expert opinion on urban design policy & practice to and on behalf of the RTPI and to support the RTPI in promoting urban design as making a fundamental contribution to delivering sustainable places
- Promote urban design skills in the planning profession so as to integrate place-making and planning skills and to disseminate policy, good practice and learning opportunities

Publicity & Promotion

The Network members were asked early in the year to reconfirm their membership of the Network; this both helped to identify 'dead' email addresses but also reminded members who

reconfirmed of the many ways that the Network can be of value to them. Membership initially dropped but has shown a steady rise again since.

In April the RTPI News section of Planning carried an article about two of the UDN 2011 events – the meeting with Kelvin Cambell around his book Massive Small and the visit to Newhall in Harlow, Essex. This served to make the activities of the Network more widely known and the events themselves across the year have attracted new interest. As noted above, the UDN Climate Change Champion also provided an article for RTPI News which both addressed the issues of climate science and design and also publicised the RTPI Climate Change work to Planning readers.

Because the Network provides the Chair for the RTPI Conferences annual Urban Design Conference, the Network and its activities are always drawn to the attention of attendees so that the benefit of the Conference can be extended over 12 months. Similarly in conjunction with RTPI regions and nations UDN leaflets are handed to attendees at relevant local events. And in London our co-operation with Urban Design London ensures a sharing of information about each other's activities.

E-bulletins

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

Policy consultations

Network members have been invited to contribute to consultations on the following during 2011:

National Planning Policy Framework in England – DCLG

Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy - Draft Charging Schedule – London Assembly

Proposals to introduce a Community Right to Buy - assets of community value - DCLG

Regeneration - Inquiry and Call for evidence - Communities and Local Government Committee

NI PPS 23 (Draft): Enabling Development and accompanying Guidance 'Assessing Enabling Development' – Northern Ireland Assembly

Implementing the Environmental Noise Directive in Wales – Welsh Assembly Government

Proposed amendments to the Architects Act 1997 - DCLG

Good Practice Guide for Local Listing – English Heritage

Building on Tradition - A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside – Northern Ireland Assembly

Proposals to amend the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to grant permitted development rights to changes of use from commercial to residential – DCLG

Design Council

The future of National Design Review, Local Design Review, and related design support - The Design Council

Draft BS 5837: Trees and Construction - BSi

Community Infrastructure Levy – Greater London Assembly

Realising the potential of pre-application discussions - Welsh Assembly Government

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – DCLG

The registration on new town or village greens - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Community involvement in planning - Greater London Assembly

Improving the Planning Appeal Process - Welsh Assembly Government

Community Infrastructure Levy - DCLG

Neighbourhood Planning Regulations – DCLG

Red Tape Challenge – Cabinet Office

Requests to/from Members

An invitation was extended for relevant members to sign up to become an **Advocate in Practice in Wales** with the Design Commission for Wales.

A planner who has been working in a French planning authority looked for a modestly paid or unpaid **internship with a UK planning practice** as part of her planning studies.

Members were invited to complete a short survey on the **Manual for Streets 1 & 2**.

Member attention was drawn to a vacancy on the **Board of the Design Commission for Wales**.

Applications were invited for the **2012 Urbanism Awards**.

A member looked for an enthusiastic **urban design intern** for March 2011.

A member, who is an architect involved with retrofit projects (for both the Energy Savings Trust and the Technology Strategy Board) asked for copies of any local guidance on the **upgrading of existing housing stock to reduce energy requirements/CO2 emissions**.

A PhD research student looking at enabling mechanisms for **Sustainable Tall Buildings** asked for member assistance through the completion of an online questionnaire.

Members were invited to make early-bird bookings for the **2011 Urban Design Summer School** in Birmingham.

Member attention was drawn to the **European Copper in Architecture Awards**.

A member offered **hot-desking facilities** in central London on monthly terms.

A member drew attention to **Living Streets'** new campaign to address walking-friendly neighbourhoods.

Submissions were invited from projects wishing to participate in a **programme of charrettes** throughout Scotland June 2011 - March 2012.

Members were advised of the **RTPI Planning Awards 2011**.

Members were asked if they thought any of the **existing Statutory Instruments** should be removed in order to make it easier to deliver planning outcomes.

Members were invited to take up a discount on the fee for the **World Class Cities Conference** in Istanbul.

Member attention was drawn to the **Neighbourhood Planning Q&A** put on-line by Colin Buchanan in association with Urban Forum and The Young Foundation.

A Network Advisory Group member drew attention to a **lecturing/professional tutoring opportunity**.

Members were advised of the **opportunity to submit papers** for the 4th International Urban Design Conference in Australia and the Future Cities 2011: International Symposium in London

Member participation was invited in a **10-minute survey from the University of Lancaster** that aimed to obtain the views of informed practitioners, policymakers and academics on aspects of density and decision-making in the urban environment.

Members were amongst the first to know about the Design Council CABE funding for the **design review network across England**.

Members were informed that at the **Planning Convention 2011** Design Council CABE would be running a workshop to explore the effects of the changing planning system on the creation of sustainable, well-designed buildings and places.

Peter Bishop in conducting his Review for Design Council CABE urged members to complete the on-line survey on the Design Council CABE website to enable him to have the richest possible understanding of the issues and perspectives from working practitioners from the widest possible range of backgrounds.

Members were provided with an introduction to the **Practitioner Advisory Group** 'first draft' of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The letter sent to Chief Planning Officers from the DCLG bringing them up to date on changes that have occurred to the Government's approach on design and planning was drawn to members' attention.

Members were advised of the **speech to the Planning Convention** by Minister Greg Clark that included the comment: 'Our design can be much better than it is'.

Member attention was drawn to **the National Conference on Urban Design 2011: Cities 2030 - Live, Work, Play**.

A member publicised his 'after work walks' looking at **Cityscape in London**.

The article '**Great Places: How Livable Streets Make us Happier Humans**' was drawn to members' attention.

RTPI Conferences looked to members for suggestions on useful topics for low-cost training for RTPI members through a series of webinars.

As part of member research aimed at **furthering knowledge and understanding** of the East London Tech City hi-tech digital cluster, members were invited to contribute via a questionnaire survey.

Two vacancies on the **Civic Voice Board of Trustees** was drawn to member attention.

The design content of the **draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** was introduced to members and interest in a consultation event invited.

The UDN **Climate Change** Champion reported on his attendance at a Workshop entitled 'City Weathers' hosted by the University of Manchester and the Workshop presentations were made available to members.

A PhD Research Student at the University of Ulster working on the development of a **sustainability framework for tall buildings** requested volunteers for an Expert Panel for his study.

Interest in contributing to the RTPI response to the RICS guidance note on **Financial Viability in Planning** was canvassed amongst members.

Attention was drawn to the Design Council package of support for projects that support the **use of design for economic growth**.

Members made details available for the Brighton & Hove Eco Open Houses and 'Children, Young People & Sustainability, a free Centre for Children and Youth workshop.

An Open Framework for Sustainable Neighbourhoods - this UEL funded research project asked whether members might be interested in working with them to extend the project.

Members were told about the launch of the **RTPI Planning Myths Campaign**.

Members were given details of **Urbanism Week 2011** in Delft.

A Research Associate working with Professor Michael Hebbert at the University of Manchester provided further details of their research project entitled '**Climate Science in Urban Design**'.

Details were provided for members of two RTPI events on **Neighbourhood Planning: what it is and how to do it** in Birmingham & London.

The Bishop Review Report, an independent report to the Design Council, was made available to members for information.

Members were invited to draw to the attention of **local authority Design Champions** details of the RTPI Politicians in Planning Conference 2011.

All relevant **responses to the draft National Planning Policy Framework** – including that from the RTPI - were made available to members.

The significant design content of the **Government's Housing Strategy** was brought to the attention of members.

Members were provided with details for the **Scottish Government guide** to sensitive design and successful rural place-making.

Members were advised that **MADE in Birmingham** was seeking new members to join its board of directors.

The availability of **METREX German Marshall Fund** Fellowships was detailed to members.

Urban Design Group Study Tours 2012 were detailed for members.

Events

Date: 26th January 2011
Event: UDN North-West Group
Venue: Liverpool
Subject: How attitudes can influence our perceptions and experience of places
Participants: 10
The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

THE

RTPI discussion meeting 2-4pm on Thursday 3rd February at the RTPI office in London

Date: 3rd February 2011
Event: National Planning Policy Framework for England
Venue: London
Subject: All Networks discussion on the draft document.
The Presentations from this event were available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 24th February 2011
Event: Places Matter
Venue: Belfast
Subject: How attitudes can influence our perceptions and experience of places An RTPI Northern Ireland event publicised through the Network.
The Presentations from this event were available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 17th March 2011
Event: Massive Small: the operating system for Smart Urbanism
Venue: London
Subject: Kelvin Campbell, author of 'Massive Small' and Managing Director of Urban Initiatives, introduced his topic and invited discussion of Smart Urbanism
Participants: 24
The link to Massive Small online was available in the members' area of the website.

Date: 30th March 2011
Event: Study Tour to Newhall, Harlow (joint event with P4H Network)
Venue: Harlow
Subject: The publicity describes Newhall as a neighbourhood 'where design, community and ecology work as one'. It has already won several Awards.
Participants: 30
A photographic record of this visit is available via the member website.

Date: 5th April 2011
Event: Encouraging Sustainable Lifestyles through Urban Design
Venue: Cardiff
Subject: 'A Golden Opportunity or Just Wishful Thinking?'
A public lecture in the series hosted by the Innovation and Engagement Unit and publicized through the Network.

Date: 11th April 2011
Event: Harlesden Town Charter
Venue: London
Subject: Harlesden Town Charter
Participants: 22

The link to the Harlesden Charter online was available in the members' area of the website.

Date: 8th May 2011
Event: Design & Masterplanning
Venue: Swindon
Subject: A specific look at how individual case studies within the region have been planned.

An RTPI SW event publicised through the Network.

Date: 10th May 2011
Event: Shared Space: International Perspectives & Challenges for British Practice
Venue: Cardiff
Subject: A presentation by Ben Hamilton-Baillie, Director of Hamilton-Baillie Associates Ltd. which provides consultancy advice on traffic and urban renewal

A public lecture by Cardiff University and publicised through the Network.

Date: 11th May 2011
Event: Place Making & Design in Leeds
Venue: Leeds
Subject: An introduction to, and update of, policy and the tools available to support those working to deliver urban design quality in a range of differing environments.

An RTPI NW event publicised through the Network.

Date: 12th May 2011
Event: Engaging communities and its potential within neighbourhood planning
Venue: Cambridge
Subject: Explored 2-3 examples of recent and productive community engagement.
Participants: 16

The link to the Cambridge Design online was available in the members' area of the website.

Date: 20th May 2011
Event: Visit to Burslem, Stoke on Trent
Venue: London
Subject: Heritage as the lever for economic development and sustainability
Participants: 18

The link to the Burslem Trust online was available in the members' area of the website.

Date: 26th May 2011
Event: RTPI Conferences event chaired by UDN Advisory Group Member
Venue: London
Subject: Urban Design Conference

Date: 13th June 2011
Event: Walking Tour of Historic Clerkenwell
Venue: London
Subject: Townscape in Clerkenwell
Participants: 35

A photographic record of this visit is available via the member website.

Date: 30th June 2011
Event: Gateway Project, Brighton
Venue: Brighton

Subject: Brighton Station Gateway Project

Participants: 20

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

Date: 14th September 2011

Event: What is local distinctiveness?

Venue: Leeds

Subject: Local distinctiveness

An RTPI Yorkshire event publicised through the Network.

Date: 21st September 2011

Event: Repeat of Visit to Newhall, Harlow

Venue: Harlow

Subject: The publicity describes Newhall as a neighbourhood 'where design, community and ecology work as one'. It has already won several Awards.

Participants: 26

A photographic record of this visit is available via the member website.

Date: 26th October 2011

Event: Best Practice in Local Design

Venue: Durham

Subject: Examples of good local design practice.

An RTPI NE event publicised through the Network.

Date: 8th November 2011

Event: An event for World Town Planning Day

Venue: Bath

Subject: Spaces in our communities

An RTPI London event publicised through the Network.

Date: 9th December 2011

Event: Raising Design Standards

Venue: Bath

Subject: The challenge of good design in a challenging economy.

An RTPI SW event publicised through the Network.

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