



Big changes afoot in the West Midlands

The West Midlands Region is entering a phase of major change and planners are likely to be in the forefront of the action. Faced by challenging new targets set by Gordon Brown in the Housing Green Paper, the West Midlands Regional Assembly has issued a report heralding the first stage of the Preferred Options phase which signals higher housing numbers (albeit now measured in net terms) and identified three further growth points outside the Major Urban Areas at Burton on Trent, Stafford and Nuneaton. More work needs to be done before the Preferred Option is published in September and the final Submission document is produced in October.

Meanwhile in Birmingham, the Government has announced that the Dept for Transport has given the green light to Network Rail's £128million contribution to the New Street Station scheme, which is necessary for the £550 million project to go ahead. The redevelopment of New Street is part of £10bn plan for the transformation of Birmingham City Centre over the next 10 years.

Last months floods which devastated large parts of Worcestershire and Herefordshire has created major challenges for planners looking at future options for growth in the sub-region. The RTPI Region recently held a seminar on PPS25 (Planning for Flood Risk) in Worcester and this will be reported in full in the next edition of Tripwire. 🏠

RTPI West Midlands Summer Reception



Picture shows officers and members of Oswestry DC and Shropshire CC receiving the RTPI Regional Award for Planning Achievement from RTPI National President, Jim Claydon'.

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Chair's remarks

Celebrating Excellence has undoubtedly been the theme of my tenure as Chairman over the last few weeks. The RTPI Summer Reception in Burton on Trent - the heart of the brewing industry - was a cracking venue for the presentation of our RTPI Regional Awards for Planning Achievement, even if the beer did dry up for a while, despite the wettest summer on record.


The awards were presented by the RTPI National President, Jim Claydon, who was generous in his praise for the overall joint winners, Oswestry Borough Council and Shropshire County Council with their suite of projects in and around Oswestry and the two other Commendations – an affordable housing scheme by Harden Housing Association in Digbeth and a land assembly and CPO project by Sandwell MBC in West Bromwich. (More about these projects elsewhere in Tripwire)

On the following day, the President was taken on a delightful tour of the region in which he met the full planning team at Oswestry (all 7 of them) and visited the award winning projects and was later escorted on a tour of Telford (to mark Thomas Telford's 250th birthday). In the afternoon we visited the Black Country Consortium to talk to officers and members about the challenges in preparing the Black Country RSS review and the emerging Black Country Joint Core Strategy and see the dramatic transformation which has occurred at Merry Hill/Brierley Hill.



Earlier that week I had the pleasant task of guiding the RTPI National Judging Panel around three separate Redrow 'Debut' schemes, our new range of starter homes which have been short-listed for a National Award for Planning Achievement. The Judging Panel also visited the Black Country Consortium and Telford & Wrekin during the same week.

Later in July I found the 'boot was on the other foot' when I served on the judging panels for both the Southern Staffordshire Design Awards and also the Stratford upon Avon Design Awards. Both sets of schemes were of an extremely high standard and we hope to feature the winners in our next edition to celebrate Urban Design Week in September.

But planning is also about policies, plans and processes as well as product. Indeed, just recently I chaired an extremely well-attended RTPI seminar entitled 'What Makes a Core Strategy Sound' hosted by GOWM, including presentations by David Marr (GOWM) and Wendy Burden (PINS). It was encouraging to see planners so keen to tackle the very difficult problems in grappling with the new planning system. Planning is about harnessing change within society, but planners are certainly facing some very difficult challenges in dealing with change in our own profession. 

John Acres Regional Chairman
RTPI West Midlands

Your Regional Activities Committee

It was great to have Clive Harridge, our immediate past President, to attend our last Regional Activities Committee to review his Presidential year. He noted that the planning profession faces major challenges ahead, with too few planners both in the public and private sectors, and difficulties in implementing the new Local Development Framework system.

The RTPI as a whole now has over 20,000 members. There are more student/licentiate members than ever and the new Associate Class is bringing non-planners who have an important role to play in the planning process into the fold. The many and various RTPI Networks are expanding and new ones are being launched, most recently on Rural Planning. Do sign up to these – they are an important resource for planners to share and learn. There is currently a move to possibly create a more devolved Institute, with additional resources available to its Regions and possibly even with Regional Directors being appointed.

Clive remarked on the achievements of the RTPI West Midlands Region in providing a wide range of successful services to its members and communities. We are clearly one of the more proactive RTPI regions and highly regarded by HQ.


The RTPI is looking to engage more fully in the regional agenda. This includes having an input to the production of Regional Spatial Strategies to make sure they reflect strategic issues – such as climate change and infrastructure provision - in an effective and consistent

way. The RTPI Region was in fact instrumental in persuading the Black Country Examination Panel to include a Climate change policy in the Phase 1 RSS review.

The Committee is reviewing the region's Business Plan to establish our aims and priorities for next year. While continuing to work on a number of successful fronts – including the CPD programme, Tripwire magazine, Urban Design, Young Planners and our increasingly popular social events – there are two specific areas we wish to focus on:

1. Promoting the importance of planning in sustaining and enhancing the quality of life in the many and varied communities across the region, and
2. Encouraging young people to seriously consider planning as a career, encouraged by the opportunity it gives to make a difference to their environment.

As Clive Harridge and many others are saying, "There's never been a better time to be a planner."

Members are very welcome to attend the Regional Activities Committee. It is held in the early evening every 2 months at the Old Joint Stock Pub in Birmingham. The next meeting is on Tuesday 11th September. For more details please contact Paul Harris 01789 260314. 

Paul Harris Honorary Secretary

Energy White Paper – the need for planning reform

The Energy White paper was somewhat overlooked in planning circles as everyone focused on its sister, the Planning White Paper, published at the same time. You may therefore be forgiven for not having read it – all 342 pages that is!

It was launched by Alistair Darling at National Grid's Electricity Control Centre in Wokingham, which suggests not only that it is fairly technical, but also that it has the backing generally of the energy industry. Unlike the Planning White Paper, it doesn't seek formal responses by a closing date: rather it signals a whole series of other supplementary consultations which will invite responses.

'The Future of Nuclear Power' forms a further consultation document, (a mere 205 pages) and points out that while nuclear power accounts for some 18% of our electricity generation and 7.5% of total UK energy supplies, most of the existing nuclear stations are due to close in the next 15 years.

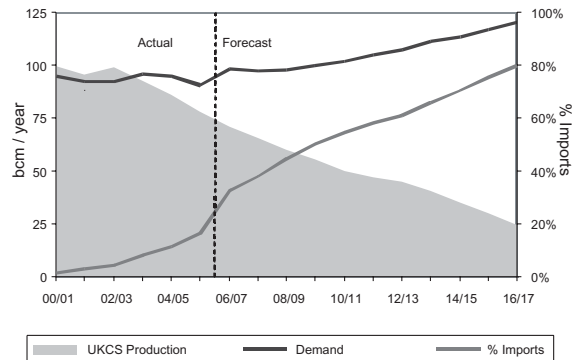
Putting all three consultation papers in perspective, we have 220 pages on planning (the first 97 of which focus entirely on 'Major Infrastructure Projects') and a total of 547 pages on energy: So if we forget about quality and just feel the width, it is clear that energy and major infrastructure are the dominant features of this latest proposed revamp of the planning system.

And little wonder. We are now reaching a major decision-point on energy issues. Considering one fuel alone – gas – the following graph illustrates the point. North Sea or Continental Shelf gas reserves decline rapidly from 2003 to 2017, yet demand for gas is expected to rise gradually over the same period. This shows that without dramatically changing all our lifestyles, we will need to import huge quantities of gas over the coming years to meet this yawning gap between existing reserves and our gas-hungry demands.

This shortfall can either be met by importing gas by pipeline from Norway fields, from continental Europe and Russia, or by importing liquified natural gas (LNG) by huge tanker ships from Malaysia and other countries. In practice, both will probably happen, with the emphasis now being on


LNG importation to terminals at deep-water harbours, such as Milford Haven. National Grid is currently building a pipeline from Milford Haven to Gloucestershire to link with the country's existing national transmission system. This major project will ultimately bring in 20% of the country's gas.

UK Continental Shelf Annual Gas Production



Graph courtesy of National Grid.

Gas currently provides 39% of the country's electricity generation. So with the decline of existing nuclear stations, coupled with the drive to harvest 'renewables' both on and off-shore, there is real pressure to build new connections to the country's energy infrastructure networks. This need to redraw Britain's energy infrastructure map will place huge pressures on the planning and consent regimes to deliver these big projects without damaging the environment or adversely affecting communities. This challenge is a key driver for planning reform.

It is right that all new energy projects should be scrutinised by the public, who need opportunity to comment and to influence the outcome. Achieving this balance has to be an objective for the new planning regime heralded in the Planning White Paper. 


Hector Pearson

Hector Pearson is Land and Development Stakeholder & Policy Manager at National Grid and Immediate past Chair of RTPI West Midlands.

The Planning White Paper and the Housing Green Paper

The RTPI West Midlands Region has been coordinating responses on the Planning White Paper and also invites members to comment on the recent Housing White Paper to assist RTPI HQ in their response to Government.

We plan to debate this at our next Regional Activities Committee in Birmingham but would

welcome any comments from members on both topics. The deadline for comments to the Planning White Paper was 17th August (albeit any feedback is always welcome). The deadline for comments on the Housing Green Paper is 15th October 2007. 

John Acres Editor

Coventry Airport Proposals Grounded

The prospect of permanent passenger terminal facilities at Coventry Airport to handle cheap flights have been brought down to earth with a bump. Last month, the Secretary of State endorsed the decision of her Appeal Inspector and dismissed the appeal for upgrading the airport terminal to handle 2 million passengers.

The CPRE, which fought the case, described it as a David and Goliath story. According to Peter Langley, 'The Airport was able to employ a QC supported by a legal team and a grand total of 16 professional experts for as long as it took. Moreover we were up against a local planning authority, Warwick District Council which had changed sides during the previous Inquiry and now supported the Airport's proposal, subject to a satisfactory package of planning conditions and agreement. In contrast the CPRE case was run by volunteers on a shoestring'.


The Inquiry followed on from an earlier enforcement appeal against the current Interim Passenger Facility, which took place from February to July 2005. Despite a decision on the first appeal being made to continue to allow the existing Interim Passenger Facility half way through the second Inquiry, the Inspector concluded that the second appeal should be dismissed for policy and environmental reasons.

The Secretary of State considered that the proposals did not accord with the Government's Airports White Paper, which saw Birmingham International Airport as the main terminal for the West Midlands, ie. Coventry Airport's role should be complementary to

Birmingham International Airport. The Inspector therefore concluded that best use should be made of existing infrastructure at Birmingham, which has much better transport infrastructure connections, before expanding Coventry. The Inspector was clearly unhappy about the prospect of handling 2 million passengers per year at Coventry without a proper transport interchange.

The impact of noise was also an issue due to the proximity of the flight paths to residential areas and the type of aircraft employed, although a noise mitigation package had been offered. Air quality, ecology and potential bird strike were debated but were not considered to be significant issues.

The Inspector acknowledged that the new airport would have a positive socio-economic impact, with the potential for the creation of temporary and permanent jobs locally and Coventry City Council, the freehold owners of the Airport, were firmly supportive of the proposal in boosting their economy. But the Inspector felt that the services offered would duplicate rather than complement Birmingham and could possibly constrain the existing freight operations at Coventry.

The operators of Coventry Airport have now challenged the appeal decision. Their Managing Director, Chris Orphanou, claims that 'his legal team advise that the decision is seriously flawed in law', so it's not all over yet. But as Peter Langley exclaims 'It's nice to know that David can still beat Goliath occasionally'. Watch this air space – as they say! 

What Price West Midlands Green Belts?

At a time when the Green Belt could be under increasing pressure from development, through the review of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, the CPRE has issued a new report entitled 'What Price West Midlands Green Belts?', which looks at the successes and failures of the West Midlands Green Belt and makes some positive suggestions for the future.


The report concludes that green belts in the West Midlands have generally been successful in preventing urban sprawl around the conurbation. Although it is difficult to prove conclusively, the CPRE predicts that without green belts, there would have been an outward spread of development, which would have fuelled the exodus of people and jobs from the Major Urban Areas. Development would probably have extended outwards along transport corridors and at motorway junctions and that some settlements outside the conurbations might well have been engulfed.

However, the CPRE has two key concerns: firstly, that there has been a profusion of development at specific 'hot spots' for example around the NEC and Birmingham Airport and secondly, that there have been too many examples of development being

allowed on grounds of 'special circumstances' which they believe has undermined the integrity of the green belt.

The report suggests that there should be an explicit green belt policy in the emerging review of the RSS - something which is currently missing - a clearer definition of what constitutes 'very special circumstances' and clarification of some 'grey areas' in defining 'appropriate development'. Interestingly, the CPRE suggests that current boundaries should be reviewed to make sure they remain fit for purpose and that if necessary the green belt should be extended in some places. This may prove helpful in the emerging RSS review where difficult decisions will need to be made about the location of future growth.

Above all, the report suggests that there should be a more pro-active policy of environmental upgrading in green belts – something which many commentators, including Barker have strongly argued.

If you wish to obtain a copy of the report please contact Gerald Kells 01922 636601 or contact cpre.wm@btinternet.com 

Change of culture needed for core strategies

An account of the RTPI seminar on 'Making Core Strategies Sound'


If they were unsure beforehand, participants at the recent West Midlands RTPI seminar on core strategies were left in no doubt about the need for a fundamental change in mindset about the nature of local planning. Speakers David Marr, Head of Planning at the Government Office West Midlands, and Wendy Burden, Inspector Manager at the Planning Inspectorate made plain the need for culture change and warned against the 're-branding of old-style local plans'. Evidence that local planning authorities and other stakeholders are struggling to get to grips with the depth of change needed is apparent in the report on progress given by Burden. Only 110 development plan documents (DPD's) have been submitted for examination – a slippage of 85% on original targets given in the local development schemes. The Inspectorate has issued 16 binding reports on core strategies and 11 other documents. Of these 11 core strategies and 9 other documents were found to be sound; a further 11 DPD's had been withdrawn.

A straw pole of the audience revealed that the advice and good practice guidance on lessons so far¹ are getting through to those who need to know, but the questions to the speakers suggested that confidence in taking on and making effective use of the new system is not strong. In reviewing how emerging core strategies are matching up to the test of soundness, the speakers emphasised three key lessons for making core strategies: the need for strategic thinking which in many cases means working across boundaries; collaboration and dialogue across government and with other players; and the importance of the evidence base.

The strategy is the key to managing uncertainty, argued Marr. The test for a strategy is that when conditions or RSS policies change the strategy ought to be able to cope without revision – though detailed changes would be brought forward in other development plan documents. This does not mean it should be vague. A (core) *strategy* is

about principles and locations; it explains delivery – “where what, when and how development will take place”. It does not need detailed policies if the issues are already covered at the national and regional policies. Specifics come elsewhere – and it does not need to be more than 30 pages long (a principle that some of us thought that was also true for local plans).

One aspect of the new system that has been widely welcomed and does seem to be working well is the inquisitorial style examination. But we were reminded that the examination process starts as soon as the document is submitted. There is no opportunity to substantially amend the document after submission and the inspector may not be able to make good unsound policies and statements. Concerns that an inspector may alter a plan to make it 'more sound' as alternative proposals come forward to the examination were also put to bed. Burden emphasised that “an inspector will not change a sound plan”. So the need for culture change is equally needed on the industry side. Alternative proposals need to be in the system early on.

Not everyone was convinced that challenges to local policy could be resisted in the new approach, or that strategy flowed so easily from the evidence base. But the message was clear and firm – holding back, either for the RSS or for a change in attitude to delivery at the top – should not be an option. 

Vincent Nadin University of West of England

¹ See in particular: The Planning Inspectorate (2007) *Local Development Frameworks: Lessons Learnt Examining Development Plan Documents*, Bristol, Planning Inspectorate; Planning Advisory Service (2006) *Core Strategy Guidance*, London, IDEA; Baker Associates, *et al* (2006) *Preparing Core Strategies*, London CLG; and RTPI (2007) *Shaping and Delivering Tomorrow's Places: Effective Practice in Spatial Planning*. A more detailed report of this meeting will be circulated via the RTPI Development Planning Network.


Joint Core Strategies Underway

The Government has been keen to encourage local authorities to undertake joint Core Strategies where appropriate and particularly where there are overlapping housing markets. In the West Midlands region, Joint Core Strategies are now underway in both the Black Country, where the framework has been set by the Black Country Study, submitted as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy Part 1 review and also around Worcester where Worcester City, Malvern Hills District and Wychavon District are working together to produce a joint plan.

In the Black Country, the four local authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton have just issued (June 2007) a joint Issues and Options document as part of their Joint Core Strategy. The authorities aim to reduce the trend of people leaving the Black Country, raise local incomes, create an inclusive and cohesive society and transform the Black Country Environment. The Core Strategy picks up the theme of Centres and Corridors which is a feature of the Black Country Study. The Consortium will be producing Preferred Option in

November 2007 and submitting the Core Strategy in September 2008 with the aim of adopting in October 2009. Further information may be obtained from Tina Corfield at BCC.

Around Worcester, the first public consultation on 'Issues and Options' will go out in December on this year with the Preferred Options and associated Sustainability Appraisal being published in June/July 2008. All the West Midlands authorities find themselves constrained by the uncertain situation surrounding the West Midlands RSS review and hence the South Worcestershire Core Strategy is being understandably cautious in its timescale. It is expected that the Core Strategy will be submitted in February/ March 2009 with the Plan being adopted in January 2010.

Site allocations DPD's together with the Development Control Policy DPD will follow on in April 2011. Further information may be obtained from any of the constituent local Authorities and specifically Fred Davies, Policy Manager at Wychavon District Council. 

RTPI Regional Awards for Planning Achievement

Oswestry win the Overall Award for Planning Achievement

Too often, the public perception of planning can be rather negative – about exercising control over what other people do. But the RTPI Regional Award winners, Oswestry Borough Council and Shropshire County Council, have showed a real spirit of partnership.

Over a 10 year period, a variety of projects in and around the town have breathed new life into an area suffering from both urban and rural deprivation and resulted in the investment of nearly £16 million. These regeneration schemes have made an enormous positive contribution to the quality of Oswestry as a place to live and visit. The Judging Panel was unanimous in praising the submission for its impressive and sustained efforts at promoting regeneration through partnership over a long period of time.

The Award Presentation by the National President, Jim Claydon, at the RTPI Summer Reception was followed by a tour of the award winning projects the following day.

The President's visit started with a meeting with the full Planning Team in a coffee shop, part of a charming and popular alleyway with an attractive array of shops linking the main car park to the high street (previously a derelict backland which led nowhere). The tour moved on to a pub & entertainment venue - and it was still only 11am! - formerly the disused Ironworks now tastefully restored by the developer/owner. We now have another bright light in Oswestry's bustling night-time economy.

This was followed by a visit to the town centre shops, many of which have been tastefully upgraded to breathe new life into the town and a community art gallery. 10 years ago, this tour would have been very different. In the late 1990's, if we could have safely ignored the several thousand vehicles per day that passed through the main shopping street, and taken our eyes off the narrow and uneven pavements, we might have glanced upwards to see a number of historic buildings with vacant or under-used space above them, ugly 1960's shop-fronts, and vegetation growing from masonry and gutters. Now, thanks to a substantial amount of private investment, alongside HLF, ERDF and Local Authority funding via the Townscape Heritage Initiative, we could see 11 of these

buildings newly restored. The pavements have been widened and re-surfaced in York Stone, and features such as the original 19th Century stone cross have been restored to their rightful place.

We then went on to the grand old station building, (the former headquarters of the Cambrian Railway), sitting alongside a closed passenger line (credit to Mr. Beeching), purchased by the Borough Council with substantial support from AWM & European funding. The building is now in the hands of a local Community Trust, and has now been restored as an information centre, permanent railway exhibition and a stunning restaurant/cafe with authentic railway carriage seating. Upstairs, the former boardroom and other space has been converted into office uses, bringing in vital income for the Trust.

Finally, we went out to Willington Castle, 5 miles north-east of the town, a community-owned and restored mediaeval castle – and a real example of rural regeneration. The Trust is made up from the local community - just ordinary people who care about their village who formed the Whittington Castle Preservation Trust which raised £31.5million to transform the castle to how it looks today. With a long-term lease in place and the Trust manning it, the building is now one of the area's most important tourism assets.

Sadly, there was no time for Jim to see one of the other key projects – an evolving “open air museum” of Lime production at Llanymynech, which straddles Oswestry's border with Wales. Here, he would have seen the quarry, walked down incline planes to a Hoffmann Kiln of national importance, ending at the canal wharves and the soon-to-be-restored Montgomery Canal.

So how has all this happened? The first answer is - Partnership - and specifically the Oswestry Town Centre Partnership set up in the mid 1990's, comprising local Parishes, Town, Borough and County Councils, the Police, Education, and local groups such as the Civic Society, Tourism Association and Chamber of Commerce. The OTCP said goodbye to previous bickering and petty jealousies and started working together, bidding for ERDF Objective 2, Objective 5b and Rural Regeneration Zone funding that was so pivotal in bringing these projects forward.

The second answer is in the approach to projects taken by the Council's Regeneration team, and particularly their leader - Helen Minnice. Where others doubted, Helen remained positive, and risks suddenly turned into opportunities. The architects, surveyors, planners, urban designers, engineers etc have all helped initiate and shape the projects, whilst developers and contractors made them happen on the ground.

So a big thank you to Jim Claydon for coming to see us and to the West Midlands RTPI for the award. 

Dave Parker, Head of Planning, Oswestry BC.



RTPI Regional Awards for Planning Achievement

Aisling Heights commended in the RTPI Regional Awards


We are delighted that Harden Housing Association's Aisling Heights development at Rea Place, Bradford Street, Birmingham (pictured), has been commended by judges in the RTPI West Midlands Awards 2007. In accepting the award from the Institute's National President, Jim Claydon, Jason McGilp was accompanied by his father, Alastair MacGilp - a retired member of the RTPI, currently involved in educational charity work in Eastern Europe through the MacGilp Foundation.

This innovative £310 million Aisling Heights development is an example of city living which features special apartments with adjoining workshops for young entrepreneurs. The 96-apartment scheme has helped regenerate an area in the city's Irish Quarter, which was traditionally home to industrial workshops and is an important part of the urban renaissance of the City.



It includes three live/work units so artists and other young entrepreneurs can have convenient and cost-effective premises to conduct their business, as well as two business-only units. The majority of the 1 and 2-bed homes are offered for shared ownership (Homebuy), which gives people the chance to get on the property ladder through a part buy/part rent arrangement.

This innovative approach has helped breathe life into the neighbourhood and, in turn, attract other new businesses, resulting in significant new investment in adjacent sites. Aisling Heights is not just an important development for us but also helped to spark a rejuvenation of this area of Birmingham, satisfying a specific need for sustainable employment as well as bringing much needed affordable homes to the city centre.

The delivery of such schemes is, of course, not without its challenges, from site acquisition, the planning process, to construction of the finished homes. It was achieved - as ever - through a mix of skills and a positive partnership of professions and agencies and, of course, sheer hard work by all those involved. Thank you again for the Award. 

Jason MacGilp FCIH
Director, Harden Housing Association
(A member of the Mercia Housing Group)

Sandwell MBC – commended in the RTPI Regional Awards


We are also delighted that Sandwell MBC has been awarded a commendation for the Greets Green Project in West Bromwich. The award was received at the RTPI Summer Reception by Councillor Bob Badham, Cabinet Member for Urban Regeneration at Sandwell MBC.

Although the project principally involves the delivery of sites for new development, significant work has been undertaken to develop a strategy and vision that will contribute to the radical transformation of the neighbourhoods involved.

With the assistance of CABE, consideration of design coding and the form that new development should take was carried out with developer input. An illustrative 3D visual display was prepared to show everyone, including local people, what was intended.

The project has been very successful due to a high degree of partnership working. But the planning input has been instrumental in setting a vision for the area, translating this into a graphical development brief and driving through land assembly so that implementation can take place.

RTPI President, Jim Claydon, was able to visit the two sites during his tour around the West Midlands, speak

to the officers involved in the scheme and appreciate some of the problems involved in moving towards the next stage. 

*For more information please contact: Sushil Birdi
Principal Planner, Sandwell MBC*



West Midlands Sustainability Checklist

On 6th July the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) and Advantage West Midlands (AWM) jointly launched the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist.


This is a new initiative for both local authorities and the private and voluntary sector which tries to set a standard for 'sustainable development' in the region by helping partners to measure their schemes against key criteria.

The checklist, (which is already operating within Wolverhampton City Council, is a practical on-line tool for planners, developers, urban designers, architects and sustainability consultants.

Lynne Carey from the Building Research Establishment, emphasised that the aim of the checklist is:

- to improve the application of existing national and regional guidance,
- to provide a higher degree of consistency for developers on the standards expected by planning authorities, and

- encourage the application of good practice in sustainable construction with a view to raising the quality of the built environment.

The checklist is now available at www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk 



Herefordshire Council launches Carbon Footprint Calculator

An online calculator to help Herefordshire citizens work out their carbon footprint has been unveiled by Herefordshire Council. It largely draws on the same underlying data as a new Government web-tool – the Act on CO₂ calculator – launched on the same day. Publicised under the slogan “How Big Are Your Feet?” the Herefordshire Community Carbon Calculator is a feature of the new www.myherefordshire.com community website which will soon be available to every Herefordshire citizen online.

Councillor John Jarvis, Herefordshire Council's cabinet member for the environment and strategic housing, said: “Each small step in the form of one individual's carbon footprint will build up into a valuable picture of climate change activity throughout Herefordshire, at county level and for each parish and will help us to formulate plans on how we can tackle the problem at a local and national level”.


Carbon foot-printing is a way of assessing the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) that an organisation or individual is responsible for producing in the course of using energy for things such as heating, cooking or driving.

Herefordshire Council has been working in partnership with DEFRA as the first local authority in the country to develop its own version of their 'Act on CO₂' calculator for local communities. Launching the new Government scheme, the environment secretary, David Miliband said: “We want to cut through the confusion. This carbon calculator will

help people decide what they can do – and be sure it will make a difference.” The aim is to help spread the message about tackling climate change to the widest audiences.

To use the carbon calculator people must register some basic details about themselves so they can log in. They are then asked to provide some simple facts about their energy usage, transport and purchase of food. The footprint “size” is calculated and people will then be given advice about actions they can take to reduce it, either individually or by joining a local carbon-reduction group. This will help the environment by reducing the amount of CO₂ they produce and save them money by reducing their energy bills.

The data collected will enable the council to track climate change activity locally and feed aggregated data to DEFRA for national and possibly international use. It is anticipated that other local authorities will want to learn from Herefordshire's approach. The council is looking for interested parties to test the first version of the calculator and provide feedback before it goes 'live'. Anyone resident or working in Herefordshire who wishes to join the pilot group is asked to email their contact details to enquiries@myherefordshire.com.

For more information about the Act on CO₂ calculator and development of the calculating “engine” please call Alison Grange 01432 260658 or see the Defra press release at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2007/070620a.htm>. 

A response to George Evans' 'Plea from the heart'

Dear Sir,

There's no song like an old song and its good to hear that George Evans remains in strong voice. While the refrain is familiar, unfortunately the lyrics are out of tune with the reality of the Telford experience.

Telford was designated as a New Town with the aims of providing a major growth area for the West Midlands. It was located to reclaim the ravages of the derelict land and communities of the East Shropshire coalfield. It was generally accepted at the time this task was beyond the means of the local administrative structure of the area. It is interesting to note that in approving the Master Plan in 1971 the Secretary of State was able to observe how few objections there had been to the proposals and those made were, without exception, matters of relative detail.


The subsequent development of the town was implemented by the Development Corporation in the context of these original proposals. A subsequent amended strategy was formulated in 1977, in close consultation with the local authorities, in response to lower population targets. This enabled the amount of farmland required for development to be significantly reduced - something not acknowledged by Mr Evans.

I am genuinely puzzled by his fulminations with regard to the idea that most of Telford was built on good quality farmland. It is true that some of new areas have involved use of farmland of average

quality. But over 5000 acres of slag heaps, colliery tips, quarries and other derelict areas and over 2,000 mineshafts have been developed and required treatment in order to create a safe and cohesive town?

Most of Mr Evans criticisms are vague and non-specific. The many successes of Telford include :-

- A variety of private and social housing areas supported by a wide range of community facilities.
- The establishment of a modern industrial base benefiting the local community and surrounding areas.
- The regeneration of the Ironbridge Gorge as a major heritage and tourist area.
- The creation of a mature urban landscape and conservation of wildlife habitats
- Community health and educational projects that could never have been justified in the former disparate community pattern.

Perhaps he thinks these could have been achieved without a strong planning framework. I can assure him he is mistaken. 

Martin White, Former Chief Planning Officer; Telford Development Corporation.

Thomas Telford 250th Anniversary


Telford is celebrating the 250th Birthday of Thomas Telford – the pioneering engineer which gave the New Town its name. Telford is well known as an engineer, bridge builder and architect of many great churches. He was the first President of the Institute of Civil Engineers and the first County Surveyor for Shropshire.

Born in 1757 in Scotland, Telford trained as a stonemason from the age of 14 and found fame building the Holyhead Road (now the A5) as well as constructing the famous, but currently derelict



Longdon upon Tern aqueduct on the disused Shrewsbury and Newport Canal – the first cast iron aqueduct in the world. He was praised by the poet, Robert Southey, as the 'Colossus of Roads'.

But he was more than just a road builder. His first association with Shropshire was when he was commissioned to direct the restoration of Shrewsbury Castle. Which then led to his appointment in 1787 to the post of County Surveyor. He was also involved in the building of Somerset House in London and was consultant in the rebuilding of London Bridge in 1800. He built the famous Menai Suspension Bridge between Anglesea and the Welsh mainland between 1819 and 1826. Telford is buried in Westminster Abbey in London.

Telford & Wrekin are co-ordinating a wide range of events to commemorate his birth which extend throughout the summer season. An exhibition in Coalbrookdale entitled the 'Colossus of Roads' exhibition is open until September. 

For more information, please contact Richard Byfield at Telford & Wrekin on 01952 384191 or email richard.byfield@telford.gov.uk

50 years of Planning Education at UCE Birmingham

Many of you will know by now that 2007-2008 marks the 50th anniversary of teaching town and country planning (in its various manifestations) at the University of Central England in Birmingham (and its antecedents). According to Alan Green, (the lecturer associated with the School for probably the longest period of time), the first courses in planning had humble origins above a car showroom in Broad Street in Birmingham. The building has long since been demolished as part of the Brindley Place redevelopment. This was a time when planning education was mainly concerned with design and when most planners were architects, surveyors, or engineers. Leslie Ginsburg was the Head of School in those days, and the Ginsburg Collection of books and artefacts remains an important archive resource at UCE

In the mid 1960s, the school became part of the Birmingham Institute of Art & Design (BIAD), and moved to the Gosta Green site just to the north of the city centre. Alan remembers that the accommodation "consisted of two major rooms and some smaller ones which were actually above the stage in what would have been the scenery fly tower had the stage been in use." Peter Dovell was the Head at that time, before he moved to Manchester University.

In the 1970s, the school transferred to its current site at Perry Barr. Former lecturer, Maurice Ingram, recalls how, at one stage, the school was under threat of closure along with a number of other planning centres, but was saved largely as a result of the lobbying campaign mounted by then Head of School, David Leyland. Other heads have included; the late Walter Stranz (for an appreciation, see the 'Planning is 50' website below), Mick Bruton, Edgar Rose, Peter Fidler, Janice Morphet, and David Chapman. The late 1980s/early 1990s was a particularly dynamic period, with staff and student recruitment hitting new heights and the school establishing an international reputation for planning excellence.

Once part of the City of Birmingham Polytechnic, UCE is well known for the quality of its teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, the level of care and support provided to students and its specialised focus on planning at the local and neighbourhood level. Many local authorities and private consultancies in the Midlands rely on staff educated at the University or the former Polytechnic, and many ex-students have been promoted to very senior positions.

To mark the 50th anniversary, the School is organising a series of events throughout the coming year. There will be a keynote planning debate on the **27th September** under the theme of 'Planning for the 21st century', and involving such planning luminaries as Jim Claydon (president of the RTPI), Peter Fidler (now Vice-Chancellor at Sunderland University), Sue Percy (RTPI), David Lock (David Lock Associates), and Julie Morgan (Midland Architecture Design Environment, and a former student).

On the **23rd November**, there will be an opportunity for former staff and students to meet up at an Alumni Reunion at the University. Those interested can register online using the web link below, or contact Rachel Whitehouse at the Alumni Association - Rachel.Whitehouse@uce.ac.uk.

In addition, there will be a series of keynote addresses by visiting professors Alan Wenban-Smith (8th October), and Jeremy Whitehand (15th October). Details of all these events, and more, can be found at the University's 'Planning is 50' website - <http://planningis50.com/>

Colin Wood, School of Property, Construction & Planning. colin.wood@uce.ac.uk

RTPI Planning Consultancy of the Year Award 2007

Nominations are now invited for the Planning Consultancy of the Year Award.

Planning consultants play a crucial role in the success of efforts to improve the environmental, social and economic quality of life. Consultancy involvement is often a key element in getting development or regeneration projects off the ground, formulating policy or uncovering new and better ways of setting about the task of planning. Every year, planning consultancies feature prominently among the teams behind the winning entries in the annual RTPI Planning Awards.

The Planning Consultancy of the Year Awards seek to identify exemplary practice that meets the requirements of clients and the wider community and carries weight within the profession at large. The awards recognise the diversity of the planning consultancy sector and its clients and the variety of work involved. All types of planning consultancy

activity and businesses are equally eligible. Entries may be based on a broad range of different types of work or on a narrower specialist area. Generalist and specialist entries will be given equal consideration. The emphasis in the assessment process will be on the quality of work, not on the breadth, scale, value or geographical spread of projects undertaken or commercial performance.

It is anticipated that at least three awards will be made in 2007.

- Planning Consultancy of the Year
- Small Planning Consultancy of the Year
- Sole Planning Practitioner of the Year


The closing date is FRIDAY 28 September. Further details of this award together with an entry form can be found at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/433/23/5/3> or phone the RTPI Awards Office on 020 7929 9473.

The Search is on to find the Young Planner of the Year 2007

What better way to show your appreciation of a young planner's loyalty, hard work and dedication than by nominating him/her for the Young Planner of the Year Award?

If you have a young planner in your organisation who has achieved a great deal in their career and promises even more for the future, then go online on <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/426/23/5/3> and complete the nomination process. Or contact the Awards Office at the RTPi for more information on 020 7929 9473 or email awards@rtpi.org.uk

The prize package this year includes attendance at the National Conference of the American Planning Association in Las Vegas in Spring 2008 (with flights, accommodation and spending money included) and a place at the Planning Summer School at the University of St. Andrews in September 2008 (travel and accommodation included). The winner will be asked to give a short presentation at the School about his/her experiences at the APA Conference.


Closing date, **Friday 28 September**. The young planner must be under the age of 35 and be a member of the RTPi to qualify. 

Planning Aid and Environmental Education

Planning Aid North has undertaken several successful environmental education projects with school children in Newcastle and North Tyneside. West Midlands Planning Aid Service is looking at starting a similar tranche of work. RTPi West Midlands is also charged with undertaking environmental education and the Regional Activities Committee has decided that WMPAS and the RTPi Region should work closer together on this.

The Region and WMPAS are therefore looking for volunteers who would be willing to assist with the delivery of this educational work. We envisage the

delivery of a series of lessons (probably 4) with a teacher on a particular topic. For example if the school is in a regeneration area it would look at the changes occurring in the area, or if the school is in a Conservation Area, then conservation planning. The lessons would normally include a presentation by the class to the rest of the school at the end.

Anyone who is interested should contact: Sheena Terrace, Planning Aid Co-ordinator 0121 693 5568 wmco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk or Sue Griffith-Jones 0121 709 1599 westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk. 

Plan your next move with Judd Farris

Head of Planning


---> **BIRMINGHAM**
Up to £65k + Bonus + Car + Benefits

One of Europe's largest and well renowned property advisors based in prestigious offices in Birmingham are currently looking for a Director of Planning to join and lead their planning team. With a small team currently in place handling an eclectic mix of work, ambitious plans are in place to build the department over the course of the next two years.

This is a fantastic opportunity for someone ideally at Director or Associate level who wants to take the next step in their career. You will be highly professional, ambitious with ideally at least 5 years PQE. This role offers a highly competitive remuneration package, so please do not hesitate to contact me for a confidential discussion regarding this opportunity.

Ref: SS/15998

---> For more information on these any other Planning opportunities across the Midlands please contact Steve Simmonds on 0121 200 0800 or email steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk

 **NEW website coming soon to juddfarris.com**

Residential Planner

---> **WEST MIDS**
Up to £45k + Benefits

Leading residential developer within the West Midlands are currently seeking to add an experienced Town Planner to their development team. You play an important part in the growth of the business by advising the land team on potential purchases whilst handling any subsequent applications.

You will be an ambitious, town planner with ideally at least 2 years PQE from either the public or private sector and interested in building a career within a residential developer. A strong background of residential planning would prove advantageous to your application. In return an impressive basic and benefits package is on offer for the right individual. Real career development opportunities are on offer!! Contact me to find out more!!

Ref: SS/44587

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Edinburgh: 0131 718 0783
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Events • Events • Events • Events • Events

Regional Programme

Non-members of RTPI welcome to attend.

TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

Excellence in Social Housing: a regional perspective

Urban Design Week event

Venue: **Birmingham**

Time: 10am - 4pm

Cost: **£50**

Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones

Tel: 0121 709 1599

Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

THURSDAY 8 NOVEMBER

Development Control Conference

Joint event with Landmark Planning

Venue: Central Baptist Church, **Leicester**

(close to railway station)

Time: 10am – 4pm (Registration from 9.45am)

Cost: **£105.75 incl VAT** (full-time students & unwaged £20)

Speakers:

Morning - the Law

Hugh Richards (Nos Chambers) "Judicial

Review - the Process"

Martin Kingston QC (Nos Chambers) "Judicial

Review – the merits of the arguments"

Peter Taylor (DLA) "A year in planning law"

Afternoon - Sustainability: What does it mean for Development Controllers?

Alex Bennett (TA Millard) "Minimising

Unsustainable Transport"

Mike Rainbow (Arup) "Minimising Energy Loss,

Maximising Energy Gain"

Iqbal Rassool (BWB Consulting) "Minimising

Water Loss, Maximising Water Gain"

Details & Booking: Sue Griffith-Jones Tel & Fax:

0121 709 1599

Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

Other Events

FRI 31 AUGUST – WED 12 SEPTEMBER

Planning Summer School

Venue: University of Swansea

Organiser: TCPSS (under the auspices of RTPI)

Details: www.planningsummerschool.org

Enquiries & booking: Tel 01722 339811

Email info@planningsummerschool.org

MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Forward Planning Conference

Time: 9.30am - 4pm

Programme:

Local Development Frameworks: Core

strategies and site allocation

Local Development Frameworks: Area action

plans and supplementary planning guidance

Planning obligations and planning gain

Climate change and renewable energy

Planning reform: the Barker vision and the

White Paper

Venue: East Midlands Conference Centre,

University of **Nottingham**

Organiser: RTPI East Midlands in association

with Ropewalk Chambers

Cost: **£90 + VAT** for RTPI members

Details & booking: Tony Hill, Ropewalk

Chambers Tel 0115 947 2581

TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER

Rural Planning Seminar

Time: 3.30 - 5pm

Topics include: Agricultural/rural planning

update, green infrastructure, renewable energy

Venue: Cirrus Suite, The Aviator Hotel, Sywell,

Northampton NN6 0BN

Organiser: RTPI East Midlands

Cost: **Free**

Details & booking: email

eastmidlands@rtpi.org.uk

Other Events

TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER

Low Cost Home Ownership Conference

Venue: **London**

Cost: **£195 - £545 + VAT**

Organiser: Capita

Details & booking:

conference.events@capita.co.uk

THURSDAY 25 OCTOBER

Climate Change: Meeting the Challenge Locally, Preparing for the Expected as Well as Unanticipated

Venue: **London**

Cost: **£295- £395 + VAT**

Organiser: Westminster Briefing

Details: Guy Evans-Tipping Tel 020-7096 2946

Email [guy.evans-tipping@westminster-](mailto:guy.evans-tipping@westminster-briefing.com)

briefing.com

WEDNESDAY 31 OCTOBER

Spatial Plans & Transport Planning

Venue: Carrs Lane Church Centre, **Birmingham**

Organiser: RTPI Development Planning &

Transport Networks

Details: Tel Rhian Brimble 01443 229852

Email Rhian.Brimble@rtpi.org.uk

THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER

Development Control

Organised by Landmark Planning on behalf of

East Midlands RTPI

Venue: Central Baptist Church, Leicester.

Time: 10.00 – 16.00

Cost: **£90 + VAT**

Contact: Jonathan Weekes 0116 285 6110

Email: jw@landmarkplanning.co.uk

Brochures also available from

www.landmarkplanning.co.uk

Registered charity number 262865, Registered Office Address: Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph Lane, London, EC3R 8DL.

Triptease

Unlike many other media outlets, Tripwire has not yet abandoned its free competition, *Triptease*. What's more, everyone has a chance of winning!

Yes, the draw for the winner of the prize – a copy of the award winning book, 'Region & Renaissance' is scrupulously fair. So why not enter this time.

All you need to do is answer the following 6 questions and then decide what the link is between all six.

1. Which fielding position did Alan Knott and Jack Russell usually play in for England?
2. What did Barnes Wallis design to destroy the major dams in the Ruhr Valley?
3. Who is the Chairman of the London Olympics Organising Committee?
4. What style of country and western dancing became very popular in the 1990s?
5. What insect is a member of the Hemiptera family, is a parasite with a hard shell and lives on many plants including citrus trees?
6. What allows boats to travel from one level to another in canals?

The winner of the Triptease competition last time was Karine Swanson from Bridgnorth District. Congratulations Karine. For those of you who are interested the answers were:

1. What was the first little pigs house built of in the nursery rhyme Three Little Pigs? **Answer: Straw (Jack)**
2. Which film starred Clint Eastwood, Donald Sutherland and Telly Savalas as part of a group of WWII soldiers who try to steal a cache of gold bars from behind enemy lines? **Answer: Kelly's Heroes (Ruth)**
3. Which snooker ball would you have to pot to gain 4 points? **Answer: Brown (Gordon)**
4. Who was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral on the 29th December 1170? **Answer: Thomas Becket (Margaret)**
5. Where is the ancient seat of the Dukes and Earls of Atholl? **Answer: Blair Castle (Tony)**
6. What part did Tim McInnery play in Black Adder Goes Forth? **Answer: Captain Darling (Alistair)**

The theme which linked all 6 was of course that they are all Cabinet Ministers, or at least were!

Editor - John Acres, Ripon Cottage, 5 Manor Road, Kilsby, Near Rugby, Warks, CV23 8XS

tripwire

CPD

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