

New Government: New priorities

The new Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change, Stewart Stevenson MSP, outlines some of the issues to be tackled.

A new administration has new priorities, and we have set our strategic objectives: a Scotland that is wealthier and fairer; healthier; safer and stronger; smarter; and greener. Planning is a cross-cutting activity that I want to see playing its part in helping to achieve these objectives.

The planning system needs to deliver. It needs to become an efficient force for enabling growth and protecting the environment. Planners need to think big, and as I settle into my responsibilities I want to hear more about exciting visions for the future of our towns and countryside, and less about hot food takeaways and dormer extensions. Expectations have been raised; planning has moved up the political agenda and now sits squarely on the radar screen of government and business leaders. This is the opportunity for your profession to take its seat at the top table and truly influence the development of our communities and economy.

But with this opportunity comes responsibility. The promise of last year's Planning Act was of a more inclusive, efficient, sustainable and fit-for-purpose profession. The Scottish government will play its part in this, but the responsibility also lies with every planner to do their utmost to ensure that the potential that lies in the planning system is fulfilled. So far, I'm impressed with the calibre and professionalism of the planners I have met. I am confident we will succeed, and avoid pressures resurfacing to revisit the legislative framework, or to question the value of the contribution the planning system makes to Scotland's development.

The new Planning Act will change the face of planning, making it more efficient and providing more and better opportunities for communities to get involved. The Act was supported overwhelmingly by the last Parliament, and we will press ahead with its implementation. We aim to have the planning reforms fully in place within two years; a major task, requiring close co-operation between all stakeholders.

The new Scottish government is serious about delivering sustainable economic growth as a means of achieving a more successful Scotland. The decision to put Planning in the Finance and Sustainable Growth portfolio was a conscious one. Planning in Scotland needs to be about making things happen. It should be a process that stimulates and supports development. Not development regardless of type, location and quality, but development that is appropriate for the area, sensitive to local social, economic and environmental needs and well designed.

I am encouraged by the cross-party commitment that exists in Parliament to tackle climate change. In our Climate Change Bill we will target an 80% cut in emissions by 2050. The recent consultation on Statutory Guidance on Planning and Sustainable Development demonstrated the contribution that the planning system can make to achieving this target. I will study the consultation responses with interest, but be in no doubt that I am already convinced that we can do much more in this area. My responsibilities embrace Planning and Transport and this offers significant opportunities to integrate these functions



Stewart Stevenson, MSP.

more effectively. This is vital to meet the challenges of sustainable development in general and climate change in particular.

I am excited by the prospects for the new National Planning Framework. NPF2 offers an opportunity to set out, at a national strategic level, our vision for Scotland's development to 2030. I am determined it will address the key challenges: building a strong and competitive knowledge economy; delivering on sustainable development and climate change commitments; promoting urban and rural regeneration; and managing demographic change. It will focus strongly on priorities for the improvement of infrastructure to support Scotland's long-term development.

Planning involves hard choices, including choosing locations for development that we all need but may not necessarily want close to where we live. The Scottish government supports early and broad based engagement on planning policies and decisions but is equally committed to ensuring that planning plays its full role in delivering the development we need to support sustainable economic growth.

Convenor's Comments



Devolution and the UK Perspective

The RTPI is an international organisation, with a clear UK focus. But like many other organisations, it can at times be rather Anglocentric. Naturally, this annoys the Celtic nations. More surprisingly, it's beginning to annoy quite a few English planners, too.

This was brought home to me in London on 21st May, at the RTPI Planning Policy and Practice Committee. During the course of the meeting, the Planning White Paper was published (it covers mostly English matters, with some UK implications thrown in). The contrast with how we do things in Scotland could not have been clearer.

As Kelvin MacDonald took us through the White Paper headlines, I was able to tick off quite a few initiatives which bore a startling resemblance to our own 2006 Act. For example, revised appeal arrangements are similar; and the national policy framework for infrastructure is a watered-down Scottish National Planning Framework. I found myself in pole position in reacting to the proposals, having had several years in which to think rather than the five minutes allowed to others.

These resemblances hide an enormous difference. In Scotland, modernisation has been a slow, deliberate process involving lots of considered discussion. There was real debate, a surprising degree of consensus about

the outcome and mercifully few bones of contention. In England, what seems to happen is that the Government gets an idea, rushes it into legislation, finds that things don't work as expected, and looks around for the next quick fix. As Jed Griffiths (Past President) says, "Planning in England is in chaos!"

So devolution to Scotland, Wales and (now) Northern Ireland is beginning to show an unexpected bonus. Within basically similar planning systems, we are beginning to see the effect of different solutions to issues.

To my surprise and delight, I no longer find myself accusing the RTPI of Anglocentricity – the English beat me to it. They often look to us or the Welsh for an opinion, recognising that we may have already thought through an issue. In return, we can learn a lot from English practice, too. A true UK overview is beginning to emerge through the murk. Who knows, it might even be noticed in *Planning* one week.

Broader perspectives are banishing the broadsword. There's a real sense in which the whole of UK planning is in it together, and we can compare and contrast to everyone's benefit. Who would have thought of devolution as a unifying influence?

Alistair Stark
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Editorial

On the first page Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change, sets out a challenging agenda for the planning profession. Efficiency, effectiveness, inclusiveness, and vision are all key objectives in achieving a higher profile and more positive future for planning in Scotland. Our other contributors in this issue illustrate how planners are rising to meet this agenda in a number of different ways.

The Minister looks to NPF2 to set out the vision for Scotland's development to 2030 and on page 3, Jane Macrory brings us up-to date on the preparation of Scotland's second National Planning Framework. The development of exciting visions for the future of our towns and countryside is also at the heart of the Issues and Options reports to be prepared as part of the new local plan process. On page 8, Craig Walker explains the inclusive approach being taken by planners in Fife to the identification of issues and options for the Kirkcaldy and Mid Fife Local Plan.

Objectives of efficiency and a fit for purpose planning system will be addressed in particular through changes to the GPDO and on page 6, Alan Prior presents the first in a series of three articles on the review of the GPDO; here he examines the relaxation of existing limitations on householder permitted developments.

The Minister emphasises the need for development that is appropriate for an area, sensitive to local social, economic and environmental needs and well designed. On page 5, Cliff Hague reports on the experience of Vancouver, illustrating how good urban design can be a key component of regeneration

and urban competitiveness. On page 4, Neil Deasley reports on progress on the application of strategic environmental assessment in Scotland, and on page 7, Jack Gillon reports on Edinburgh's longstanding work on conservation area character appraisals with their emphasis on local distinctiveness, quality of design, awareness raising and community involvement.

But how do we respond to the Minister's call for a more inclusive, efficient, sustainable and fit-for-purpose profession and how do we individually pick up on this challenge? On page 9, we start a new series of planner's profiles and David Suttie, from Dumfries and Galloway, describes his work and his hopes for the profession in the future. On page 10, Chris Sheriden addresses the ways in which the Institute's Planners in the Workplace programme aims to support its members in fulfilling their potential and Emma Richardson reports on work undertaken by the Improvement service to underpin training and development. Lastly, on page 11 Robert Pickles draws attention to the many benefits of volunteering with Planning Aid and encourages you to 'have a go'.

Veronica Burbridge

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Small Country Big Plans - Scotland's second National Planning Framework (NPF2)



The second National Planning Framework is being prepared with extensive stakeholder involvement and its contents subjected to strategic environmental assessment and an equality impact assessment. A regularly updated Participation Statement has been produced outlining the ways in which stakeholders across the public, private, voluntary, academic and community sectors and equality groups can get involved. A period of information gathering on scope and content has been underway since February this year and a newsletter reporting on the feedback from the initial participation phase is now available on the Scottish Government's website at www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/planning/national-planning.

The second National Planning Framework (NPF2) will provide a strategy to guide Scotland's spatial development to 2030. It will set out the Scottish Government's strategic development priorities and its scope will extend beyond land use planning. It will play a key role in ensuring the sustained co-ordination of policies with a spatial dimension and integrating and aligning strategic investment priorities. It will complement the Government's Economic Strategy, highlighting the importance of place and identifying key priorities for investment to enable each part of the country to play to its strengths in building a Scotland that is wealthier and fairer, smarter and greener, healthier, safer and stronger. It will be a material consideration in framing planning policy and making decisions on planning applications and appeals. It will provide the strategic spatial policy context for decisions by the Government and its agencies.

It will build on the first National Planning Framework (April 2004), drawing on the commentary and analysis contained in the 2006 Monitoring Report and the views expressed by stakeholders.

It will describe Scotland as it is in 2008, will identify key issues and drivers of change, will set out a vision to 2030, and will identify priorities and opportunities for different parts of the country in spatial perspectives for the Central Belt, East Coast, Ayrshire and the South-West and Rural Scotland.

A major consultation will be taking place following publication of the draft NPF2, likely to be at the end of the year, which will include a road show of regional seminars. Consultation on the draft NPF will provide the opportunity for a national debate about Scotland's long term spatial development. The framework will be revised in the light of representations on the consultative draft and submitted to the Scottish Parliament for consideration. The final version of NPF2 will be published before the end of 2008.

Further information can be found on the Scottish Government's website at www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/planning/national-planning.

Jane Macrory, Scottish Executive

Conference Diary and training events 2007

Information on all events is listed on our website at www.scotland.rtpi.org.uk/diary/

■ 14 September

The Ball

RTPi in Scotland's grand night out
Contact RTPi Conferences 0845 082 1171
Email services@rtpiconferences.co.uk

■ 17 September

Coming of Age: the Scottish Parliament in 2007

Conference organised by Holyrood magazine in Edinburgh.
Contact 0131 272 2130
www.conferences.holyrood.com

■ 26 September

2006 Planning Act – change and emerging practice

Event organised by IDOX in Glasgow
Contact Cathie Pringle 0141 574 1906
Email cathie.pringle@idoxplc.com

■ 28 September

Damp in buildings – damp cold and miserable

Building Conservation Masterclass organised by Charlestown Workshops at Scottish Lime Centre Trust, Charlestown, Fife.
Contact Charlestown Workshops
01383 872722

■ 30 September

The Vital Spark

Four day conference on heritage and tourism in Aviemore.
www.thevitalspark2007.org.uk

■ September (to be confirmed)

Flooding and Bo'ness Harbour Development

Event organised by Central Chapter
Email central.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

■ September (to be confirmed)

Braes of Doune Windfarm

Event organised by Central Chapter
Email central.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

■ 4 October

Paths for Health National Networking Event

Event organised by Paths for All at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.
www.pathsforall.org.uk

■ 5 October

Planning Gain Supplement

Lunchtime seminar organised by Heriot Watt University at Riccarton
Contact Anne Ormston, School of the Built Environment 0131 451 4644
Email a.j.ormston@sbe.hw.ac.uk

■ 9 October

Emergency Planning in Scotland: preparing for and learning from disasters

Conference organised by Mackay Hannah in Edinburgh. Contact 0131 556 1500

■ 11 October

20/20 Vision for Sustainable Resource Management

Scottish Waste Management annual conference at Hilton Hotel, Glasgow
www.eventful-scotland.org.uk

■ 12 October

National Planning Framework

Lunchtime seminar organised by Heriot Watt University at Riccarton
Contact Anne Ormston, School of the Built Environment 0131 451 4644
Email a.j.ormston@sbe.hw.ac.uk

■ 17 October

Demand Responsive Transport

European conference organised by Angus Transport Forum at Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston with follow up workshops 26 and 27 November. Contact 01241 878727
Email atforum@btconnect.com

■ 19 October

Planning and Affordable Housing

Lunchtime seminar organised by Heriot Watt University at Riccarton
Contact Anne Ormston, School of the Built Environment 0131 451 4644
Email a.j.ormston@sbe.hw.ac.uk

■ 26 October

City-Region Planning

Lunchtime seminar organised by Heriot Watt University at Riccarton
Contact Anne Ormston, School of the Built Environment 0131 451 4644
Email a.j.ormston@sbe.hw.ac.uk

■ 31 October

Planning Law Update

Event organised by IDOX in Edinburgh
Contact Cathie Pringle 0141 574 1906
Email cathie.pringle@idoxplc.com

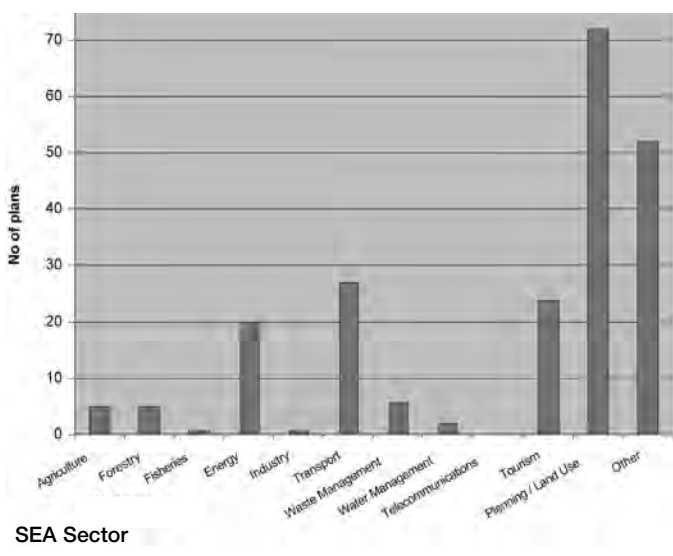
SEA: Three Years On

It is hard to believe, but on 20th July 2007, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) celebrated its third year in Scots law. SEA brought in a new process of formally assessing the environmental effects of implementing a range of plans and programmes – a range that was considerably expanded with the coming into force of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 in February 2006. This brief article takes a look at the casework received so far and some of the issues for planning.

By the end of July 2007, over 220 different plans, programmes and strategies prepared by 56 Scottish public bodies or partnerships had commenced an SEA. This has generated over 350 formal consultations with the statutory Consultation Authorities, which now average around eight per week. While the Scottish Executive has the highest rate of SEA activity for an individual organisation, overall, it is local authorities and particularly planning authorities, that are most engaged in SEA activities. As figure 1 shows, statutory and non statutory spatial plans account for over a third of all plans commencing an SEA. A further 15 development plans have been granted an exemption to undertake SEA by Scottish Ministers on the basis that these plans were already at an advanced stage of preparation when the 2004 Regulations came into effect.

Figure 1

No of plans by Sector – 21/7/04 - 21/7/07



But the story for planning authorities does not quite end there. Many other plans which may be subject to SEA - core path plans, LBAPs and renewable energy strategies to name but three - are also often prepared by Local Authority planning departments. Therefore, the picture that is emerging is that planning authorities are the most engaged in SEA activity and the most experienced. This will hopefully put them in good stead for future SEA work.

It is interesting to note the effect the 2005 Act has had upon the types of spatial planning documents coming into the SEA gateway. Prior to the coming into force of the Act, spatial plans subject to SEA were almost all statutory Development Plans, however since February 2006, an increasing number of masterplans, SPGs and Scottish Planning Policies have been subjected to the SEA process. This is a reflection of the wider scope of the Act and the increasing awareness of the Responsible Authorities. Figure 2 shows the numbers of spatial plans that have commenced SEA.

Figure 2

Spatial plan types submitted to SEA Gateway for consultation.

Plan Type	Total	SEA Applied	Screened Out	Undetermined*
Planning Framework	2	2	0	0
SPP	3	3	0	0
Structure Plan	7	7	0	0
Local Plan	29	29	0	0
SPG**	12	8	4	0
Masterplans**	21	10	8	3

* Undetermined at time of writing – 31/07/07

** Definition of SPGs and masterplans based on interpretation by author

One issue that has arisen as a result, is the increasing number of screening consultations being submitted to the Consultation Authorities for masterplans and SPGs (over 30 since introduction of the Act), which in turn presents real challenges in being able to identify those that may result in significant environmental effects and those that may not – and therefore which should be subject to SEA. About half of all masterplans have been screened out on the basis that significant effects are unlikely, while only a quarter of SPGs have been screened out.

The Consultation Authorities expect the volume of SEA casework to continue to steadily increase through 2007 and 2008 as the extended scope of the 2005 Act continues to take effect. For spatial plans, this will likely mean a continued increase in the volume of non statutory documents like masterplans and supplementary guidance being screened for their potential to result in significant environmental effects.

The first three years of SEA have been a steep learning curve, but one that Consultation Authorities and Responsible Authorities alike have sought positively to embrace. Planning authorities in particular have been challenged by how to fit SEA into an established, well defined and structured process of plan preparation, but experience would suggest that these challenges have largely been addressed through joint working with the Consultation Authorities, innovation and through a lot of hard work.

Looking ahead, as the process of change in Scotland's planning system continues and as secondary legislation to implement the 2006 Planning etc. (Scotland) Act is rolled out, the need for synergy with SEA will be absolutely vital for both planning authorities and the Consultation Authorities if environmental assessment is to be an efficient and effective part of the new development plan preparation process.

The Consultation Authorities remain committed, as far as resources will allow, to working proactively with Responsible Authorities to assist with their SEA work and planning authorities are strongly encouraged to liaise with them early in the process. Contact details are provided in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Executive SEA Toolkit at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/5

Neil Deasley leads on implementation of SEA for Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Contact 01786 452431 or neil.deasley@sepa.org.uk

Making Places:

The 7th Biennial of European Towns and Town Planners

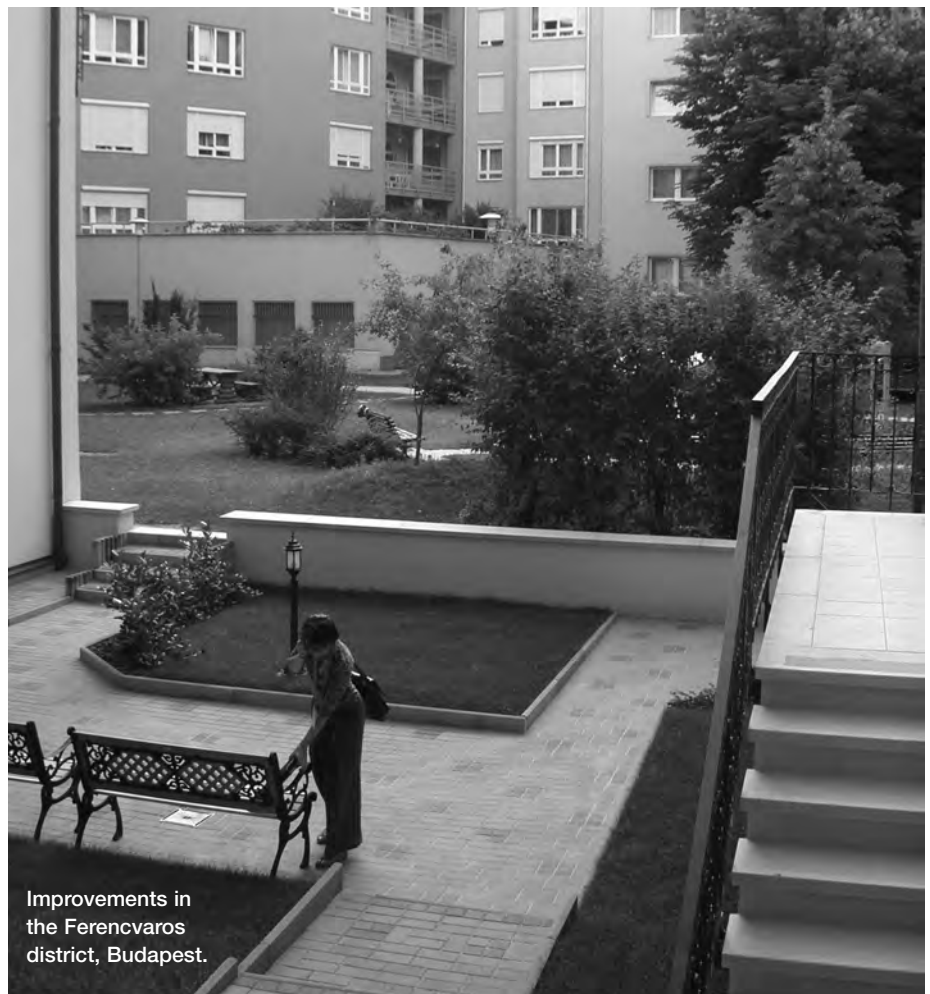
The 2007 Biennial provided a fascinating insight into the practical ways in which good urban design can be a key component of regeneration and urban competitiveness. However, it also posed some challenging questions for planners about their skills and ethics. Held in Budapest, this was the first time that a Biennial had been hosted by one of the states that joined the EU in 2004. It gave participants a chance to see for themselves the way the booming Hungarian capital is re-establishing its historic position within Europe.

While this was very much a European event, it was a presentation from Canada that really inspired the audience. Until recently Dr. Larry Beasley was Head of Planning and Urban Design in Vancouver, though he now runs his own consultancy. He gave a spellbinding slide show that was matched by his story of how positive planning had made the city one of the most dynamic and environmentally sustainable in the world. He stressed that any town needs to have a vision and a strategy, to know what it is trying to achieve.

Range of housing

Larry Beasley demonstrated that quality is essential. Vancouver has ridden a wave of investment from the Pacific Rim over the past decade, but the key thing is how the money has been translated into long term urban and environmental assets. There has been a conscious stress on high density developments in the downtown, where the resident population has increased dramatically. However, unlike similar apartment booms in many other cities, Vancouver has ensured that housing comes in a range of types and with a comprehensive range of facilities, such as schools and play areas, so that downtown living is family-friendly. How was this done? A combination of clear plans, good design skills and tough negotiation with developers is the answer.

The abiding idea in Vancouver has been to design with children in mind. Dr Beasley argues that a city that works for children will be a good place to walk and live and enjoy for everyone. Car-based trips into the downtown have been cut, and the design creates a quality environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Consultation and extensive community involvement, e.g. through design charettes, were key aspects of the planning process.



Improvements in the Ferencvaros district, Budapest.

Open spaces

Another strong international speaker was Professor Jon Lang from the University of New South Wales. He argued that the character of any place is a function of its open spaces and streets. "All good design requires a good three-dimensional, not two-dimensional, plan, that is based on a consensus amongst stakeholders", he remarked. "There also have to be clear legal mechanisms, and you need a well-educated professional group who are not box-tickers. Urban design should be a form of on-going debate."

Professor Allen Scott a prominent geographer from Los Angeles was more critical of the urban forms of what he called "the cognitive cultural economy". He stressed the widening divisions within urban areas and urged planners to look beyond notions such as "The Creative City" in which places become brands and the monopoly power of a place becomes attached to its products. He pointed to the "dark side" of these places, the sweatshops and the retreat of the public sphere, and ended by calling for designers to help create new "convivial cities".

Skills

Cliff Hague took up this theme in his presentation, which was a reprise of his book *Making Planning Work: A guide to approaches and skills*. He argued that traditional design pedagogy in Europe has been weak in teaching skills like negotiation, management and evaluation and has failed to prepare urban designers to expect, understand and manage conflict. "Such skills are fundamental to any attempt to reach out to the excluded and to build 'convivial cities'." He noted how Vancouver's approach actively applied these skills.

Site visits are an integral part of any Biennial. They give visitors a sense of place and also a chance to see some cutting edge practice. Two scorching afternoons were spent in guided professional tours. Amongst the highlights were a brownfield redevelopment to create a high-tech' office park, and the regeneration of the inner city Ferencvaros district. The Hungarians took justifiable pride in showing these and other achievements to their visitors.

Cliff Hague

Planning modernisation and householder permitted development

Planning applications for house extensions account for nearly half of all the annual planning decisions by Scottish planning authorities, more than half of all enforcement cases, and one third of all planning appeals. At the same time, planning authorities as a whole consistently struggle to determine more than two thirds of all planning applications within the statutory two-month period, and keep up to date their statutory development plans. So, we are now in the roll-out phase of a modernised system, following the 2006 Planning etc (Scotland) Act. It is clear that reform includes ensuring that the capacity and expertise of planning authorities are more effectively deployed in maintaining up to date development plans and making speedier decisions on major developments. To achieve this requires a degree of disengagement from some low-risk regulation.

Review

In this context the Scottish Executive commissioned Heriot-Watt University School of the Built Environment, together with Brodies LLP and Scott Wilson (Scotland) Ltd, to undertake a comprehensive review of the current scope and detail of the 1992 Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order (the GPDO), with the first stage focusing on a review of householder permitted development. The limits of householder permitted development are described in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the GPDO (development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse) and some aspects of Part 2 (sundry minor operations). There are threshold limits for each class of permitted development, beyond which planning permission is required, and general restrictions within Conservation Areas, in proximity to a Building of Special Architectural or Historic Importance or a classified road, and where development would result in a material change in the external appearance of the original dwelling.

This part of the GPDO review was undertaken from October 2005 to May 2006 and included analysing: trends in householder development decisions from local authority statistical returns to the Scottish Executive; parallel research on the householder development consent regime in England; responses to a householder development options questionnaire circulated to planning authorities, community councils and other stakeholders; and a sample of 50 recent householder development decisions in case study authorities to estimate the likely impact of reform on

the volume of householder development applications.

Findings

Reviewing householder development decisions for the last 5 years, we found that most are for alterations and extensions to existing dwellings, the annual rate of approval has remained constant at around 97%, and only a very small proportion raise irresolvable issues. Planning conditions are overwhelmingly concerned with mitigating amenity impacts arising from proximity to boundaries, overshadowing or overlooking of neighbouring properties, and overdevelopment, specifically the ratio of building footprint to total residential curtilage. The vast majority of applications are approved subject only to the standard condition relating to commencement of development. In general, the planning application process for most householder development operates as a precautionary process, largely confirming that a development is uncontentious.

Responses to a questionnaire survey of planning officers, community councillors, and professional bodies, showed strongest support for a relaxation of existing limitations on householder permitted development, and providing clearer guidance, but very little support for more radical solutions based on delegation to other bodies or rationalisation with other compliance regimes, particularly Building Regulations. Recommendations for reform therefore included: changing the expression of permitted development limits from a proportion of the original

dwelling to a proportion of the residential plot; specifying the scale of development in relation to proximity to boundaries; extending permitted development to flats; expressing permitted development limits in straightforward language, limiting the need for discretionary judgement and associated uncertainties; and making householder permitted development conditional on conformity with local design guidance.

Reducing applications

We estimated that these changes would reduce the annual number of householder planning applications by around 38%, with an associated reduction in planning appeals and enforcement cases. They are consistent with a view that the GPDO, and planning regulation generally, does not seek an absolute level of prohibition of adverse environmental impacts, but rather a level of environmental protection consistent with minimal state interference with development rights, and the maintenance of workable, pragmatic relationships between regulator and regulated. Such a shift in the focus of local authority planning is essential to help deliver planning modernisation and make the Scottish planning system truly fit for purpose.

Introducing permitted development rights for householder microgeneration equipment was considered as part of the review of the GPDO as a whole, and will be covered in a future article.

Professor Alan Prior, *School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University.*

Conservation Area Character Appraisal



The City of Edinburgh Council has just published its latest Conservation Area Character Appraisal, this one covering Inverleith. There are currently 39 very diverse conservation areas in Edinburgh; including the medieval Old Town, the Georgian New Town, Victorian suburbs and former villages. The City of Edinburgh Council commenced its programme of Character Appraisal preparation in 1997 and these now offer comprehensive coverage of conservation areas across the city. The full set of reports is now available via the council's website and in a published form readily accessible to a wide readership.

The principal purposes of the Council's Character Appraisals are to define the key elements, essential features and special qualities that contribute to each area's architectural and historic interest, and to reinforce the Council's policy objectives of promoting, protecting and enhancing the environment. The appearance of the conservation area, its role and function within the wider urban context, the activity and vitality of its land uses and buildings, its historic associations and its natural heritage are all taken as contributing to the essential character.

Emphasis is placed on the role of Character Appraisals in assisting on-going management, if used in conjunction with existing statutory planning policies, detailed guidance and site-specific development briefs. They establish a framework against which development proposals can be assessed for their impact on character and appearance and provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for local plan policies and development management decisions. They are a material consideration when considering applications for development and it is a requirement that applications for significant new developments should be accompanied by a contextual analysis that demonstrates how the proposals take account of the essential character of the area as identified in the document.



Botanic Gardens, Inverleith

The format which has been adopted includes:

- An Introduction which details the purpose of Character Appraisals, date of designation, location of the conservation area and extent of its boundary, including a boundary map and population statistics.
- Historical Origins and Development which concentrates on the factors which have shaped the area.
- Analysis and Essential Character which is considered under headings of Spatial Structure and Townscape, Architectural Character, Activities and Uses and Natural Heritage. Each section ends with a summary of the essential character.
- Opportunities for Enhancement which identifies strengths and weakness, and development pressures and includes broad principles for the implementation of an enhancement programme. Detailed enhancement schemes are not included, as it would make the appraisal unmanageable.
- General Information which details the key aims of the local plan, and makes reference to relevant local plan policies, other statutory designations, supplementary guidance, the removal of permitted development rights, existing and proposed Article 4 Directions, listed building regulations and the protection of trees. This section concludes with information on the availability of grants giving a broad outline of what may be eligible for funding.

The preparation of the Character Appraisals emphasises the opportunity to involve the local community at every stage from initial survey work to detailed consultation through public meetings, exhibitions and coverage in local newsletters. This ensures that conservation policies respond to local needs and aspirations, and receive broad local support in order to assist successful policy implementation.

The forthcoming SPP 23 on the Historic Environment will provide us with a new policy framework. Within this changing context, existing conservation character appraisals provide the information base for safeguarding and enhancing character and appearance, raising awareness explaining local context, and outlining the implications for new developments. As increasing emphasis is given to quality of design, local distinctiveness, and community engagement, such documents have an widening role both in underpinning policy and in generating understanding and appreciation.

Jack Gillon

Encouraging participation in the planning process

The last three years have seen much discussion on how to improve the development plan system through the publication of Making Development Plans Deliver (April 2004), Modernising the Planning System (April 2005), PAN 81 – Community Engagement – Planning with People (March 2007) and the passing of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. In this process of change, how are local authorities meeting the challenge of creating a more participatory development plan system and involving people at the earliest possible opportunity?

Fife Council is currently preparing the Kirkcaldy and Mid Fife Local Plan which will replace the six existing local plans covering the area. Since the Notice of Intention to Prepare the Local Plan was published, approximately 250 potential development sites have been submitted to the Council. To help assess where development should be located, and what issues the community feel need to be addressed, Fife Council launched an Issues and Options paper in June.

New style

This is a new style of planning document for Fife Council. It reflects the shift in the style of the Council's Local Plans since 2005, aimed at meeting the requirements of recent guidance and legislation. Rather than preparing a Consultative Draft Local Plan, Fife Council has produced the Issues and Options paper. Communities are being encouraged to participate and give their views on the issues and development options associated with the Plan area much earlier in the process than ever before. The document is designed to be easy to read and as accessible to as many people as possible. It is in a brightly coloured magazine format written in plain language with a good balance of graphics, photos and text. This is encouraging more effective community participation from the outset of the development plan process and anticipates the changes likely to emerge from the new Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 when the secondary legislation for development plans comes into force next year.

The Issues and Options document sets out the background to the Kirkcaldy and Mid Fife Local Plan, its objectives and the overall development strategy. Pre-plan consultation undertaken in 2006, and a follow-up telephone survey undertaken in March 2007, identified many of the key issues and themes within the document. Options for strategic scale development are identified in the paper and details and maps of potential medium and smaller scale development sites are included on an accompanying CD. None of these sites have any status at this stage. The number of sites submitted far exceeds the number required to be identified by the Local Plan. Local communities, by participating in the Issues and Options consultation, are playing a central part in the decisions on which sites will progress.

Early participation

This change in Fife Council's approach to Local Plan preparation places a greater emphasis on early community participation. Sector based stakeholder groups were formed prior to the publication of the Issues and Options document. Membership of these covered the community in its widest form. They included local community groups, community planning partners, environmental, business, commerce and further education sectors. The stakeholder groups focussed on specific issues relevant to their expertise and were important sounding boards for the emerging development plan strategy. Furthermore they were instrumental in identifying issues that the Local Plan needs to address.

A 12-week public consultation exercise for the Issues and Options paper started on 12th June. The length of the consultation was chosen to ensure as many people as possible could get involved in the process through a number of methods. Unstaffed exhibitions are touring the Local Plan area promoting the Issues and Options document. They are calling at libraries, the Council's Local Services Centres and 'non-traditional' venues such as supermarkets. Staffed drop-in events are also taking place throughout the Local Plan area. These give residents the opportunity to discuss with Council officers the development options and also to identify any issues they wish the Local Plan to address. In addition to the exhibitions and drop-in events the document is available on the Council's website and comments can be submitted online. The comments and suggestions received will help shape the content of the Local Plan which will be published in Spring 2008.

Constructive approach

At the time of writing, the Council is over half way through the consultation period. The drop-in sessions are proving a more successful and constructive approach for all participants than the more traditional formal public meetings (the latter often resulting in an unproductive confrontational situation where only the views of a vocal minority were heard).

To date, comments received on the process from the community have been positive. Too often there is a perception that Councils have taken decisions prior to community participation. However, in Mid Fife, communities are welcoming the real opportunity to influence the future of their towns and villages at the very start of the Local Plan process prior to any decisions being taken. Fife Council have found that communities are supportive of this open and transparent approach and believe that if implemented nationally such an approach could help to restore confidence in the planning system.

Craig Walker, Lead Officer (Local Development Plans), Fife Council

The Kirkcaldy and Mid Fife Issues and Options document can be viewed online at www.fifedirect.org.uk/midfifelocalplan

A planner's profile

David Suttie, Area Planning Manager at Dumfries and Galloway Council, describes his background and work, and gives his views on planning reform.



How did you come into planning in the first place?

My first degree was in Geography at Aberdeen University. Whilst I still think Geography is an excellent broad-based subject to study, there are not many careers for geographers as such unless you wish to be a teacher – which I didn't. One of my topics was Urban Geography & Planning and I thought land use planning appeared to be a way of putting aspects of what I'd studied into practice. So I then gained a Post-graduate Diploma In Town And Country Planning from Heriot-Watt University.

What has been your career path to date?

My first job was as a Planning Assistant with the City of Aberdeen District Council, working in Development Control. After becoming a Planner with Aberdeen City Council, I headed from the north-east to the south-west to take up the post of Senior Planner in the Lockerbie DC office of Dumfries & Galloway Council. Around 3½ years ago, I became the Area Planning Manager (Annandale & Eskdale).

What does your job involve?

Being such a large geographical area, Dumfries & Galloway Council's development management function is divided up into 4 areas. I manage the team responsible for the processing of all planning applications, appeals and

enforcement within the Annandale & Eskdale area, which is the easternmost part of Dumfries & Galloway. It includes towns such as Annan, Lockerbie, Moffat, Langholm and Gretna.

How do you see planning reform influencing your work and that of your Council?

I welcome the vast majority of the changes set out in the new Act but I await with interest the consultations on the related secondary legislation. As has often been stated, "the Devil's in the detail" and ensuring that the concepts are transformed into well thought-out practical solutions will be a major challenge for the profession in Scotland. In terms of my own area of work, I see the main issues as being the introduction of a four tier hierarchy of development, the use of local review panels and the related changes to delegated powers / Committee structures, and the revision of the General Permitted Development Order and other secondary legislation. The implications are quite significant for working practices. Greater delegated powers, fewer householder applications and being able to give greater time and resources to major applications may represent the beneficial aspects of the reforms, but the jury is still out on the issues of review panels and Councils being responsible for carrying out neighbour notification.

In what aspects are you involved with the Institute?

I was involved with the Grampian Chapter when I worked in Aberdeen and carried that involvement over to the Dumfries & Galloway Chapter once I moved south. I became its Convenor in 2000 and have remained so ever since (mainly because no-one else has volunteered to take over the role!). As a result of being on the Scottish Executive Committee of the RTPI, I have been involved in various aspects of planning that I would not have been otherwise. Professionally, I have found it invaluable to be able to raise my head from the usual day-to-day routine and see planning in its greater perspective across the country. For example, I recently represented the Institute as one of the judges in the Scottish Borders Council Design Awards. It was a genuinely fascinating 2 days, travelling throughout the Borders, looking at some excellent schemes. I was also asked to chair the Institute's Development Management Task Group. To date, this has not proven too onerous for either myself or the group members but, from the Executive's recent consultation timetable, that is all likely to change shortly!

Finally, how optimistic or pessimistic are you about the future of planning in Scotland?

When you are faced with increasing layers of bureaucracy, are expected to be faster, yet simultaneously produce better quality results and involve the public more, all with fewer resources, and then read that planners are to blame for everything from roundabouts to the weather, it is sometimes difficult to remain positive about the profession! However, if I wasn't sure that planning was an important profession and that it can improve the quality of our country, I'd have found another job years ago. I regard the planning reforms as an opportunity and not a threat and want to do what I can to make sure they work.



Annan Bridge and Town Hall.

Planners in the workplace

Chris Sheridan, Planners in the Workplace (PIWP) manager explains more about how the RTPI is helping members problem-solve in the workplace.



PIWP aims to help RTPI members become better planners, better managers and better leaders in the workplace. One of the key services I provide through PIWP is the ability to offer information and guidance to members, helping them problem-solve issues they face at work. This guidance is sourced from the collective experiences of other planners, the Code of Professional Conduct and RTPI guidance notes. Unfortunately, we don't have all the answers, but we might be able offer a perspective you hadn't considered.

Below are examples of how we've helped members over recent months;

Q. I have a client who has ignored my professional advice and wants to dictate a letter with an alternative view that I do not agree with. Despite my best efforts to persuade the client, they are adamant that their view, not my professional judgement, should be used. I have explained that I cannot put my name to a view that I do not agree with. They seem to think that professional opinions can be altered to suit the purpose!

A. It is a client's prerogative to ignore professional advice. It is tempting to ignore what we do not like, but you will add value to the service you are providing to the client if you make it clear to the client why they should take note of your advice and any potential consequence if they ignore it.

The judgement you make as a professional is of paramount importance. It is true that different professionals can hold different views, what is important is that you hold that view to be correct and can justify your reasoning. If you are unable to agree a way forward with the client then unfortunately you are left with no option but to remove your services. You risk your professional reputation and status if you comply with the client's request.

Q. My Council is in the middle of Single Status, and so far the outcome has seen professional staff facing potential salary reductions of up to £5,000. With a flatter management structure there is little room to progress above this as a planner. Some of us are considering finding employment elsewhere, but there is a real danger that in doing so we will leave behind younger professionals with talent and enthusiasm, but very little experience. What can be done to address this?

A. The RTPI is of course concerned over the negative impacts that Single Status can have. The experiences of public sector planners throughout the UK show that professional knowledge is often devalued, with assessment criteria seeming to favour budgets and numbers of staff managed. Yet it is also clear that other professionals, such as building inspectors, are fairing better.

Anecdotal evidence does point to a lack of awareness amongst many planners on the evaluation process, and how to score their professional activities. We know from some job evaluation cases in England and Wales that members have unfortunately

missed the opportunity to explain in terms understood by the evaluators the value of the job they do and how it benefits the Council and the wider community. For example, when asked questions that relate to financial responsibilities, do consider the estimated value of development work that you have been involved with, especially if it has enabled the Council to realise some of its assets or increased the value of Council owned properties. It may also be appropriate to claim a share of government funding, or any development for community use negotiated from a developer. The skills required to negotiate with developers who are looking to invest £millions, as well as manage any external contractual relationships should also be emphasised.

If you are faced with proposed pay cuts and decide to appeal, then use this time to think through your original evaluation interview to see whether you could have developed your answers so that they reflect the activities, skills and abilities that the evaluators are looking for.

For further information on Planners in the Workplace http://www.rtpi.org.uk/member_services/piwp

Doing Planning Aid is eye opening!



Did you know that 52% of our enquiries are dealt with in less than 30 minutes? The next 30% take less than an hour. So time isn't always a factor in volunteering with Planning Aid for Scotland – the evidence shows that it is not too time consuming.

Our volunteers mostly deal with one enquiry, or case, per month. And it's not all about using up your spare time, as one long term volunteer says:

"Doing Planning Aid is not a chore. Indeed I think it has helped to make me a better planner... I have to do research, understand the legislation, be aware of government advice and identify key issues while at the same time making it easy to understand for the client. As such it adds to my skill base which has a knock on effect in my day to day job."

There are many benefits to being a volunteer. One planner who went for a job interview with a local authority found that it was really helpful to be able to say that she had been to that authority as a volunteer on a Planning Aid community workshop. Others have found that spending time with community members on a workshop away from their own area has meant that they learnt that things are done differently in other places, and that has given them the opportunity to reflect on their own practice. Another volunteer says:

"Being involved in community training has had a major impact on my job – in a holistic way – enabling me to see things from a different point of view. It has been really eye-opening"

As an organisation we have a commitment to provide free training to our volunteers on a range of topics from presentation skills to sustainable development. This, along with the events we organise, can count towards your CPD. It's also a good way to meet planners from other parts of the country and make contacts.

You don't need to sign up for the rest of your life either. Whilst we do have some volunteers who have been with us for many years, this is not always the case. We are happy to give volunteers breaks, if they are busy at home or at work. In fact, one of the reasons we are always looking for new volunteers is to make the system as flexible as possible. Every time we call you to ask you to take on a case or get involved in a training workshop, you can choose whether or not you would like to do it.

"There's no pressure on you, you can choose your cases. And you can dip in and out if you're busy. I took six months out each time I had Maternity Leave from work."

Volunteers find working with the public can be rewarding:

"At workshops one of the great joys is changing people's attitudes about planning. Inevitably at the start of the day there is a degree of dislike for planning and planners in general. It is usually a result of lack of information about the system. By the end of the day we have usually turned them around and they have the ability to both understand and interact better with planning and planners."

And it really can be half an hour on a case:

"It can be two short contacts, with a bit of research in between. It's often quite simple. People are looking for reassurance."

Please consider being a volunteer with us. This autumn we have arranged two volunteer inductions, in both Edinburgh (2 October) and Glasgow (11 October). If you're interested in finding out more about being a Planning Aid for Scotland volunteer, book a place and come along. Or, if that's not convenient, email me – we do events in other places too. There are more details about volunteering with us and our events on our website www.planningaidscotland.org.uk.

"Planning Aid is a breath of fresh air. You step back and see the bigger picture about how the system works and why the work we do is relevant."

Robert Pickles,
Volunteer Development Officer

Planning Development Programme Update

Policy, planning and economics consultancy firm Arup has been commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the Planning Development Programme. Their remit is to assess the effect the learning opportunities provided for planning staff and elected members have had so far and the value to the individuals and the planning authorities. The project is programmed to run until December with the final report published in January.

Kynesis, an organisational development consultancy based in Glasgow, has been commissioned to prepare a learning and development guide for managers of planning services. The guide will provide advice and information on good management practice in staff development. It will be developed from the experiences of planning authority managers and other relevant organisations. A questionnaire will be circulated to all planning authorities on current learning and development processes and experiences.

A survey undertaken by the Improvement Service of 400 elected members who stood down before the May elections is showing some interesting initial results. Almost half of respondents had extensive experience in planning, the highest percentage of any area, suggesting that local government has lost a wealth of experience in planning in particular. 73% of respondents had attended training and development sessions in planning during their time as a councillor, which again was the highest percentage for any area. The full results of the survey will be published later this year.

A work shadowing scheme is being run in partnership with Homes for Scotland. This aims to provide all planners working in a local or national park authority the chance to work with a development company for one week. The objective of the scheme is to give both parties different perspectives on their working practices and to improve communication between them. Guidance notes and application forms are available on the Improvement Service website.

If you would like more information in the Planning Development Programme, please contact me on 01506 775558 or 07990 531029 or at emma.richardson@improvementservice.org.uk

Emma Richardson
Planning Development Programme Manager

Scotland features in latest RTPI Planning Awards

Established in 1978 and held every year, the prestigious RTPI National Planning Awards celebrate the planning profession's contribution to the quality of life throughout the UK and Ireland. The Awards raise awareness and understanding of the pioneering work accomplished by our profession and demonstrate just how the daily lives of so many people have been improved by planners.

Projects and plans in Scotland have been regularly singled out for RTPI Awards: last year, for example, Black Law Wind Farm in South Lanarkshire was commended in the 'Climate Change' category for its work, and the New Gorbals in Glasgow won the Award for New Neighbourhoods in 2005. For the 2007 Awards, two very different projects in Scotland have already been shortlisted for site visits by the judges: the Isle of Gigha Physical Masterplan and Design Guides, and Glasgow International Financial Services District.

The submission for the development and implementation of the Isle of Gigha's Masterplan has been put forward by a consortium of organisations involved with the project, on the basis of its featuring an innovative process including substantial input from the Island's community and its contributing to the provision of high quality development there. The Masterplan followed the production of a five-year development plan by the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust, and has been prepared in partnership both with the Trust and the local community, following the latter's buy-out of the Island in 2003. It is seen as a good example of Master Planning in a sensitive rural context, taking into account the needs and aspirations of the local community whilst allowing for successful development, and has attracted significant interest from other rural communities considering community buy-outs in economically marginal but sensitive physical locations.

In a very different setting, Glasgow's International Financial Services District, centred on the south of the city's principal office area, is a ten-year project



New affordable housing designed for Isle of Gigha Trust

which aims to create a highly attractive inward investment location for leading financial service companies and a relocation option for Glasgow-based companies seeking to expand their businesses. Through innovative and imaginative physical planning and the development of an economic strategy, the opportunity has been created for the renaissance of this location. It was determined at an early stage that the IFSD would be the catalyst for dynamic regeneration and the creation of new commercial, residential and leisure opportunities. It would also act as a multi-use environment embracing the very best aspects of modern city working and living. £28 million has already been invested in public realm improvements which include streetscape works, lighting installations and improvements to local stations, and another £30 million has been earmarked for further investment.

The judging process for the 2007 RTPI Awards is already underway, and the winners will be announced at a lunch ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in London on 7th February 2008.

Members News

We would like to welcome the following members who have recently moved to Scotland.

Corporate

Aubrey Fawcett	Inverclyde Council
Nigel Hackett	Scott Wilson
Andrew Turner	-
Derek Walsh	Faber Maunsell

Licentiate

Kirsten Williamson	-
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We would also like to welcome the following who have recently been elected to the Institute:

Corporate

Alan Davidson	Aberdeenshire Council
Peter Doe	McCrae and McCrae
Sharon Dorward	Fife Council
Andrew Evans	Scottish Borders Council
Kirsty Jane Gray	
Derek Hollywood	Keppie Planning
Zoe Kemp	Scottish Natural Heritage
Gordon Liddell	North Lanarkshire Council
Iain McFarlane	Midlothian Council
Scott McInroy	Fife Council
Suzanne McIntosh	Midlothian Council
Robert Monro	Mono Consultants
Richard Morris	RPS
David Niven	Perth and Kinross Council
Lindsay Pratt	Glasgow City Council
Ann Ramsay	Renfrewshire Council
John Wilson	Moray Council

Technical

Jon McSherry	City of Edinburgh Council
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Licentiate

Meabhann Crowe	Halliday Fraser Munro
Robbie McNaugher	University of Dundee
Matthew Taylor	Shetland Islands Council
Alison Waite	Fife Council
Craig Wood	City of Edinburgh Council
Timothy Xu	Aberdeenshire Council

Student

Alistair McGibbon	-
Erika Pryde	Midlothian Council
Susan Vass	Communities Scotland
Gillian Webster	Heriot Watt University

Congratulations to **Shiela McDonald** ARIBA MRTPI(Rtd) who has received a letter from the Institute commemorating 50 years membership.

ELECTIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

This issue of Scottish Planner includes nomination papers for next year's Scottish Executive Committee. Positions available are Senior Vice Convenor, Junior Vice Convenor, 3 places for corporate members, 1 student member and 1 technical member.

The deadline for nominations is 28th September.

Support your local chapter

Chapters play a crucial role in the Institute in Scotland. They provide a wide range of low cost CPD events, and offer the opportunity for members to be involved in the Institute at a local level. They are also a good way to meet other members in the area.

The chapter system has been in existence since the 1980s and was set up to ensure all members throughout Scotland could be involved in the Institute. There are currently seven chapters – Central, Dumfries and Galloway, East of Scotland, Edinburgh Lothian Borders and Fife, Grampian, Highlands and Islands, and West of Scotland. These are all run entirely by volunteer members, who put together a programme of events for the year, arrange speakers and venues, and circulate information to members.

Chapters vary greatly in size, from West of Scotland chapter with over 700 members to Dumfries and Galloway with around 50, along with the number of core members who help to organise events. Some cover remote areas where members may find it difficult to come to meetings and those chapters are keen to try and address this. West of Scotland chapter raised this in the last issue of Scottish Planner. If you have ideas about how to support members in these areas or you would like to help organise something, please contact your chapter.

Often events and meetings are held after work, but some feedback suggests lunchtime would be better and some chapters are looking at the feasibility of doing this. Many chapters are also keen to widen the range of members who come along to their events, particularly young planners, students, and members from the private sector.

If you are an RTPI member in Scotland, you are already a member of your local chapter as all members are automatically allocated to a chapter depending on where they live.

What else can you do to support your chapter? You can attend events. Most chapters have developed email networks for contacting their local membership about forthcoming events and if you are not already on your chapter's network, you can email them at one of the addresses below. Events are listed on the chapter pages of the website – see www.scotland.rtpi.org.uk. You can attend events run by any other chapter as well.

You might also consider joining the chapter's committee and helping with organising the events programme for the year. If your time is more limited, help with one event is also welcome.

Chapters are a valuable resource in Scotland but they need your support to keep going. If you have not been along to an event before, contact your chapter below and find out when the next one is.

Contact chapters at these addresses:

Central – central.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Dumfries and Galloway – dumgal.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

East of Scotland – east.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Edinburgh Lothian Borders Fife – elbf.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Grampian – grampian.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Highlands and Islands – highlandislands.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

West of Scotland – west.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

For more information on chapters and what they do, contact the RTPI in Scotland office.

Chapter News

WEST OF SCOTLAND

Regeneration of Anchor Mills, Paisley

The regeneration of the historic Anchor Mill Threadworks in Paisley was the focus of a Chapter event in early July.

Crawford Russell, Head of Planning at Renfrewshire Council, led members through the story of the former threadworks complex and its regeneration with a presentation at Paisley Town Hall. The threadworks, a 7ha site at the heart of Paisley town centre, has been subject to comprehensive redevelopment for residential, business and retail uses following the winding down of the once thriving cotton thread industry in the early 1980s.

The presentation focused on the recent £12m redevelopment of the Domestic Finishing Mill for residential and business use as a crucial element of the regeneration strategy for the area. The iconic, Category A listed building occupies a prominent position overlooking Paisley town centre and enjoys a deep rooted link with the development of the town and its people. The redevelopment of the Mill was achieved through a unique public/private partnership with innovative use of planning gain. In his presentation Crawford outlined the core processes and skills involved in the realisation of the project.

The group then enjoyed a visit to the Domestic Finishing Mill and a tour of the atrium within the building, where a lively question and answer session took place.

A number of issues were explored, particularly the positives and pitfalls experienced by the partnership and the tenacity required to guide the project to completion!

Members clearly found the event both entertaining and informative and a return visit to Renfrewshire is likely in the very near future.

Jamie Mackie

Policy Briefing

POLICY BULLETIN

Recent publications from the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament

PUBLICATIONS FROM THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

■ Planning Circular 6 2007 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Avian Influenza) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2007

This circular came into force on 26 March 2007. The purpose of the Order is to amend the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 to grant a temporary planning

permission for development to address the housing of poultry and other captive birds in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/182711/0051776.pdf>

■ National Planning Framework Newsletter: Small Country, Big Plans Campaign: Feedback - No. 2 Summer 2007

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/182296/0051731.pdf>

■ NPF2 Participation Statement Update July 2007

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/182063/0051714.pdf>

■ Forthcoming Scottish Planning Policies and Planning Advice Notes (as at 12th July 2007)

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/180957/0051347.pdf>

■ Scotland's People. Results from the 2005 / 2006 Scottish Household Survey Annual Report, TNS System Three and Ipsos MORI

The survey provides representative information about population, housing and households, economic activity and involvement in communities nationally and at a more local level. There is a particular focus on information for policy on transport, communities and local government. This is the eighth of a series of annual reports.

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/193421/0052120.pdf>

■ Annual Population Survey in Scotland: a compendium of labour market statistics

Scottish Executive Statistics Summary publication of results from the Annual Population Survey 2006, presenting analysis on the labour market, education and training. Results are provided at Scotland and sub-Scotland levels.

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/06/26165000/0>

■ Gypsies/Travellers in Scotland: The Twice-yearly Count - No. 11: January 2007

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/180708/0051322.pdf>

■ Local Authority Housing Income and Expenditure 2005-06 to 2007-08

Indicates that average rents across Scotland are projected to increase in 2007-08 by 4.5%, to £48.19 per week, while average expenditure on managing and maintaining local authority dwelling stock is expected to increase by 3.4%. Housing debt in Scotland is expected to increase and there is still a wide variation across local authorities in their levels of debt; Orkney Islands is expected to remain debt free, whereas Shetland and City of Edinburgh are expected to have the highest outstanding housing debt of

£28,121 and £12,475 per unit respectively. Total capital expenditure in 2007-08 is projected to be £501 million, an increase of £39 million (8.4%) on 2006-07, with Midlothian, Angus and Perth and Kinross projecting the highest increases.

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/182740/0051785.pdf>

■ International Comparisons of Rail Networks and Policy Lessons for Scotland

Steer, Davies Gleave for the Scottish Executive

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the rail networks in Scotland and six comparator countries or regions including Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and New Zealand. The research examines the structure, ownership, control, planning, funding, operation and regulation of each, identifying success and any possible lessons for the rail network in Scotland.

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/181524/0051580.pdf>
Research Findings at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/181541/0051581.pdf>

■ Scotland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

This Programme contains: socio-economic and environmental background and review of the 2000-06 Scotland Rural Development Programme; strategic approach to the 2007-13 Scotland Rural Development Programme and policy priorities; financing of the 2007-13 SRDP; and, implementation of the 2007-13 SRDP, covering the measures, state aid support, complementarity with other funding programmes, competent authorities, monitoring and evaluation, communications, consultations, equality issues and technical assistance.

Available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/182462/0051769.pdf>

■ Evaluation of the Rural Voices Action Research Competition. An Independent Research Evaluation of the Scottish Executive Pilot Community Capacity Building Programme.

Overall, the evaluation highlights the potential value of, and benefits from, community action research as a tool for addressing community needs and progressing community aspirations. The experience of

POLICY STATEMENTS

The RTPi in Scotland has published a Policy Statement on Planning and Affordable Housing. The full text is available on our website at: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/760/23/5/3>

The statement notes that many issues of concern relating to implementation and funding of affordable housing lie outside the scope of the statutory planning system. However, the Institute considers that the spatial planning discipline has an important role to play in policy integration. Equally, there is a need for a clear statement of the role of land use planning in the provision of affordable housing and for the issue of affordable housing to be addressed in close collaboration by a number of stakeholders. Planning issues need to be examined within the wider macro-economic context which influences house prices and affordability and within wider objectives of creating and nurturing sustainable communities. In particular, the contribution to be made by the land use planning system needs to be set alongside efforts to address: the specific role of new build in the overall pattern of supply across all tenures; issues of deficiencies in the quality of social rented housing stock and their local environs; the development of new housing stock with a zero-carbon footprint; mechanisms to maintain a supply of social-rented homes as 'affordable' in the longer term; more flexible and programmed approaches to housing finance; a more transparent and more efficient approach to planning agreements; and specific issues pertaining in rural areas.

The Institute considers that further work is required to: update and revise the SPP3 policy context to include the operation of the 25% benchmark; revise PAN 74 to cover further guidance on housing needs assessments; the valuation of land for affordable housing; the definition of low cost home ownership; and the use of model policies; develop guidance on joint working between Local Housing Strategies and Development Plans; develop a new partnership approach and methodology for the preparation of local housing assessments, recognising that a 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate; develop specific advice on the operation of s75 Agreements as applied to affordable housing as part of new arrangements under the Planning etc (Scotland) Act; develop mechanisms which will maintain a supply of social rented homes as 'affordable' in the longer term; develop design codes relating to neighbourhoods as well as individual buildings addressing issues of quality as well as quantity; develop new training initiatives to address skills and resource requirements in planning and housing departments; and develop detailed guidance on practice and delivery in partnership with housing, community, local government finance and developer interests.

The Institute is working closely with the Chartered Institute of Housing, which has recently commissioned Newhaven Research to review progress in relation to the delivery of Affordable Housing Policies in Scotland. An on-line survey and telephone and face to face discussions with local authority and national park housing and planning staff, developers and national and regional RSLs will be undertaken during September as part of this research.

Policy Briefing

implementation of Rural Voices suggests, however, that to achieve a desired policy effect, this activity must be clearly defined, tightly specified, adequately structured, and robustly managed. On the basis of the evidence available, the opportunities to continue to roll out, or upscale Rural Voices as a stand-alone approach are regarded as limited. The value for money of the Rural Voices model has not been demonstrated. As a broad approach with an intended focus on community led consultation on rural services, however, it continues to offer something relatively distinctive. As such, the learning from Rural Voices might be incorporated into related policy and funding instruments.

Research findings 2 / 2007 available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/181731/0051636.pdf>

■ **Review of the Renewing Local Democracy Project: Research for the Scottish Executive: Final Report**
ECOTEC Research and Consulting for the Scottish Executive.

This study evaluates the community e-Democracy pilot project 'Renewing Local Democracy'.

The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the project in terms of its impact on community engagement, its impact on the role and functioning of community councils; and the potential for rollout more widely throughout Scotland. In cost-benefit terms, the study concluded that the pilot was an ambitious and relatively high-cost attempt to stimulate citizen participation in community council activity, with mixed results to date.

Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/183111/0051975.pdf>

■ **The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland**
Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1052/0051688.pdf>

■ **The Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals: review of the Year 2006-2007**

Includes information on volumes and types of cases; method of determination and success rates; major inquiries; local plan inquiries; claims for award of expenses; Court of Session Challenges; and performance against Ministerial Targets.

Available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/194746/0052312.pdf>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

■ **Proposed Energy Efficiency and Micro-generation (Scotland) Bill**

Proposed by Sarah Boyack
14th June 2007

Information available at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/MembersBills/index.htm>

Publications from the Scottish Parliament Information Service

■ **Energy – subject profile**

Available at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/briefings-07/SB07-35.pdf>

■ **Tourism in Scotland – subject profile**

Available at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/briefings-07/SB07-34.pdf>

■ **Economic Development – subject profile**

Available at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/pdf_subj_maps/SMSP07-05.pdf

RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM SEPA

■ **Research into Land Use Planning (Air Quality) Final Report**

Land Use Consultants for SEPA

Available at: http://www.sepa.org.uk/pdf/publications/reports4sepa/Air_Quality_Land_Use_Planning_Final%20Report.pdf

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM PUBLIC BODIES

■ **UK Countryside Survey**

The latest UK countryside survey was launched in May 2007. The survey will report individually for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Countryside Survey Partnership consists of the Natural Environment Research Council, the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and eight government departments and agencies headed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Further Information available at: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/news.html>

■ **SNH to review role in planning**

24/07/2007

Local authorities across Scotland are among those to be consulted in a major review of the role of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in the planning process. SNH has commissioned Heriot Watt University to carry out the review. It will include examining SNH's internal procedures for handling planning cases, as well as the nature and quality of its responses.

The research will involve canvassing the views of other organisations, including other public bodies, planning authorities and developers. The review will make recommendations on where possible improvements can be made to the way SNH handles planning casework in terms of process, style and content of responses. The work will be overseen by a steering group including senior representatives from SNH, the Scottish Executive and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/182740/0051785.pdf>

POLICY ISSUES AND CONSULTATIONS

Current consultations published by the Scottish Executive and other public bodies in Scotland to which the Institute may wish to respond are listed below. To assist the Institute in preparing a representative response, Members are invited to contribute their views by post or email (see page 2).

CONSULTATIONS FROM THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

■ **Strategic Development Planning Authorities: designation orders and statutory guidance**

Consultation by Planning Directorate, Planning Modernisation and Coordination Division
Responses requested by 26th October 2007

Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/182862/0051877.pdf>

■ **Environmental Impact Assessment of Reserved Matters Applications**

Consultation by Planning Directorate,
Responses requested by 19th September 2007

Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/180769/0051327.pdf>

■ **The Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 200(7) - draft (second consultation) (forthcoming)**

Consultation by Local Government Division, Public Sector Directorate
Responses requested by 19th October 2007

Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/Current>

■ **Consultation on the proposed EU Soil Framework Directive and initial Regulatory Impact Assessment**

Consultation by Environmental Quality Directorate Soil Policy Co-ordination Team
Responses requested by 20th October 2007

Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/184887/0052024.pdf>

■ **The Social Content of the Scottish House Condition Survey 2008 – 2010**

Consultation by Scottish Executive
Responses requested by 28th September 2007

Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/Current>

■ **The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2007**

Consultation by Scottish Executive Transport Directorate
Responses requested by 15th October 2007

Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/07/2007>