



# tripwire

Issue 37 November/December 2006

MAGAZINE OF THE R.T.P.I. WEST MIDLANDS

## The Great Debate

**W**hat should be the balance between social, economic and environmental factors in planning? What is the role and function of Birmingham within the City Region? How should Regional Plans take on the views of local communities? And why do planners push for higher densities when most people seem to prefer low density living? These were just some of the questions posed to the high profile panellists assembled at the 'Great Debate' hosted by Arup Associates on 1st December and organised by the RTPI West Midlands Region.


The joint 'Question Time' discussion was ably chaired by our own Regional Chairman, Hector Pearson. The 5 eloquent and well informed panellists were Clive Harridge (RTPI National President), Olwen Dutton (Chief Executive of WMRA), Glen Howells (RIBA and Chair of MADE), Louise Brooke-Smith (RICS Board member) and Ed Gardiner (ICE West Midlands Chair).

The panellists clearly had very different views about the priority to be given to the three elements of 'sustainable development'. Our President, Clive Harridge set the scene by emphasising that economic, social and environmental factors were all interdependent

and essential elements of the planning process. Olwen Dutton on the other hand felt that 'social justice' was the key priority, whereas Louise Brooke-Smith emphasised the importance of a prosperous economy. Glen Howells underlined the need for innovation imagination and change.

Glen Howells emerged as a strong supporter of the City Region as a means of attracting inward investors. Others agreed. Clive Harridge argued that the pattern would be different in each region.

There were more divergent views however on the role of local consultation in the regional planning process. Louise Brooke Smith felt that there was now a 'consultation overload' in the new planning system, whilst Olwen Dutton and Clive were concerned to stimulate more positive consultation in planning to involve hard to reach groups.

Finally, all the panellists agreed that the more flexible approach to density heralded in PPS3 was welcome, to accommodate more young families. Clive Harridge argued that the pendulum of high density had probably swung too far. But the questioner Richard Hammersley wondered why had no-one suggested a review of the green belt to help address the issue. 



## Inside

Chair's remarks	2
Barker 2: the sequel	3
PPS3 - A new approach towards housing policy	3
A future for the Black Country	4
Climate change case presented at Black Country Examination	4
Options for change - a challenge for the West Midlands	5
Going for a Burton!	5
Live Work in rural areas	6
Request for assistance	6
Climate Change From Locations to Buildings	7
Tackling Global Warming	9
Planning for climate change	10
Herefordshire praised for cutting carbon emissions	10
Editor's thoughts	11
Building a greener future	11
Chinese delegation visits UK	12
Dongtan - how the other half live!	12
European & International Group: Links with Poland	13
Planning Aid needs you!	14
Triptease quiz	15
CPD Events	15

Editor - John Acres, Ripon Cottage, 5 Manor Road, Kilsby, Near Rugby, Warks, CV23 8XS  
 Work: 01827 260600 • Home: 01788 824343 • Email: acresclark@lineone.net

## Chair's remarks

### PLANNING CLIMATE IS CHANGING

**A**s I write this piece, on the day the Barker report on land use planning in England was published; a week after the Eddington study of transport; three weeks after the Stern Report appeared and three months before an expected White Paper on planning, it is clear that it is an exciting time to be a planner. I expressed the same sentiment in July in this column (Tripwire Issue 35). What I didn't expect was quite so much emphasis in the meantime on climate change.

Whilst the focus of any new White Paper will be on the economy and on Kate Barker's identified efficiencies, don't be surprised to find that the climate change debate overtakes it all. Climate change has the potential to change the philosophy of planning, not just planning processes. The Stern Report on climate change is the first in those building blocks. It was preceded by the London Plan which proposes that all new development be carbon neutral. The London Plan is likely to be replicated by most local authorities over time. A new Planning Policy Statement on climate change is planned which will promote the move towards zero carbon development. This has already been signalled in the new DCLG Thames Gateway Interim Plan Policy Framework. You can expect, if you are a local authority planner, to be requesting emissions baseline studies for proposed commercial and domestic buildings. If you are a consultant or developer, expect to provide them for these developments, for transport and for infrastructure developments. Expect EIAs to assess carbon emissions. All will have the aim of moving towards low carbon, then zero carbon development areas.

Expect big changes in planning – not just in practice, but in philosophy and principle too – to reflect climate change concerns. Expect these changes to be not only driven by Government, which is proposing a climate change bill, and by opposition parties (the Conservatives also have their own potential bill), but by the people too. It is something that most planning lobby groups will sign up to. I suspect it is more than just this year's environmental fashion. As I say, exciting times ahead.



\* \* \* \* \*

This is my last Chair's Remarks column for Tripwire. I have been pleased to serve as Chair of your Region for the last two years. I am handing over Chairmanship to John Acres, who you already know as the editor of this esteemed organ.

It has been a very interesting two years for me. I have reached parts of the West Midlands and met many more of you than I would otherwise have done. I have seen much of the good and varied work members throughout the region carry out day-to-day. The Institute has changed in that time – for the better – and it has been interesting to see the change partially from the inside. We became a Region rather than a Branch; We have more autonomy from Botolph Lane than ever before and a much more healthy relationship with HQ. Successes for your Institute Region have been legion: under Ashley Baldwin more young planners are getting involved; (also, more non-young planners are involved!); your CPD programme organised by Sue Griffith-Jones grows from strength to strength; Tripwire has developed into a 'professional' (though prepared entirely voluntarily) publication – it is the envy of other RTPI Regions; Planning Aid in the Region, under Sheena Terrace, remains very strong indeed. Your national president, Clive Harridge, hails from this Region.

It just remains for me to thank Paul Harris and Peter Lindsell who, as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer respectively over many years, have made a huge voluntary contribution to the success of your RTPI Region (and kept your Chair on the straight and narrow). I have also had the benefit of a wise and energetic Regional Activities Committee. I am handing over to a most able new Chair – John Acres.

Thank you for taking the time to read this column – at least in this issue, if not over the last two years. 📄

**Hector Pearson**, Chairman  
RTPI West Midlands

### It never rains but it pours!

**P**lanners have been inundated with a flood of new policy documents in the last few weeks beginning with the new *Planning & Climate Change* consultation document (a supplementary document to PPS1) and the Code for Sustainable Housing entitled '*Building a Greener Future – Towards Zero Carbon Development*'. There is also a new consultation version of PPS23 'Planning and Pollution Control'.

Then of course there is the final version of PPS3 (Housing) – see article on page 3 – published at the end of November together with the companion guide on 'Delivering Affordable Housing'. Guidance on Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments will follow on shortly.

The Barker II report emerged just before the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Statement with a myriad of new ideas for changing the planning system, together with two new consultation documents on planning gain; '*Valuation of Planning Gain Supplement*' and '*Paying for Planning Gain Supplement*' – not to mention a new DCLG consultation document on dealing with s106 agreements in response to PGS.

Finally, and perhaps appropriately, in this deluge of new advice, is the new version of '*Planning and Flood Risk*' (PPS25) and a consultation paper on 'Mandating Water Efficiency in new Buildings'. Have I forgotten anything? 📄

**John Acres** Editor

## Barker 2: the sequel

If all the proposals recommended in the second Barker Review were implemented, planning would never quite be the same again!

Charged this time with the task of assessing the impact of the planning system on 'UK plc' (rather than just housing supply, which was the topic of the first Barker Review) Kate Barker's report comes up with some controversial but nevertheless positive ideas

- National Statements of Strategic Objectives for Major Infrastructure to pin down the Government's aims for major infrastructure projects, plus a new Planning Commission to determine and help deliver Infrastructure Projects.
- An update of PPG4 on Economic Development to ensure that the benefits of economic development are fully taken into account.
- A review of Green belts to ensure that development beyond towns and cities occurs in a more sustainable way.
- A streamlined development plan system which delivers Development Plan Documents in 18-24 months, not 3-5 years,
- A new positive planning culture giving an effective 'presumption on favour of development' where the social, economic and environmental circumstances favour approval and a plan is non-existent or silent on an issue,
- A 50% reduction in call-in cases,
- A more streamlined appeals system whereby appeals are handled within 6 months, together with a new Mediation Service.
- A new initiative whereby local authorities could share the benefits of local economic growth.

But although the report underlines that town centres should be the priority for retail location, the idea which has most caught the headlines is the suggestion that the requirement to demonstrate the 'need' for retail development when considering applications should be removed. Barker feels that it is the applicant who bears the risk rather than the local authority and therefore it is he who should ensure that the development is viable. This has been interpreted in some quarters as a return to a free for all which could lead to more 'out of town' development.

Paradoxically, the report also argues that planners should take into account market signals in making decisions. Indeed, it is a lack of commercial awareness which is the criticism often levelled by private sector developers against Council planners, in reaching decisions on their applications.

Essentially, Barker reaches the conclusion that the planning system is far too bureaucratic and is unnecessarily complex. She points to the growing delays brought about by the new Development Plan system and the mountain of information and evidence which developers now need to supply as part of any planning application or Environmental Assessment, a view with which most planners would doubtless concur. But in a climate where the ink is only just dry on the new provisions of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act for example, requiring Design & Access Statements on most applications, it is hard to see how the Government can respond too enthusiastically to these changes. But it has certainly left Ministers with plenty to think about over Christmas! 📄

## PPS3 – a new approach towards housing policy

The final version of PPS3 has created a new and more focused approach towards the assessment of housing needs and demands, but it has imposed a heavy burden on local authorities and developers to deliver. With a much higher national target (at least 200,000 new homes per year) and the expectation of correspondingly higher regional targets, together with the need for a 15 year long term time horizon, PPS3 will undoubtedly concentrate the minds of our Regional Assembly and local Councils.

The key objectives in the new guidance are for:

- High quality well designed housing built to a high standard,
- A mix of both market and affordable housing, in terms of tenure and price,
- Sufficient quantity and choice of housing to reflect need and demand,
- The location of housing to reflect access to jobs, services and infrastructure,
- A flexible and responsive supply of land, with a continuous 5 year supply of deliverable land which is both available, suitable and achievable.

The standard 'sequential approach' is replaced by a more flexible system determined by local authorities' 'sustainability appraisals', with a continued focus on brownfield first, but with a new emphasis on free-

standing new settlements as well as urban extensions, in market areas of high demand. This could fundamentally influence policy in the West Midlands where so far the WMRSS has rejected ideas for new settlements. It could also result in a shift in the distribution of housing to meet the revised policy for providing sufficient with housing in rural areas.

Government is keen to extend the benefits of home ownership, but paradoxically the definition of affordable housing has been altered to exclude low cost market housing. Local authorities will now need to undertake Strategic Housing Market Assessments to gauge the balance of type and tenure of housing, although guidance on this has yet to emerge. The revised version of PPS3 is accompanied by a companion guide 'Delivering Affordable Housing' but as a guidance note, this falls some way short of the publication 'A Guide to the Delivery of Affordable Housing in the West Midlands' recently issued by our own Regional Assembly.

In the meantime, PPS3 looks likely to undermine those authorities which have resorted to 'housing moratoria' to restrict permissions. The new approach to assessing land supply which seeks a continuous 5 year requirement (without recourse to windfall allowances) will mean some authorities will have to think again in turning away applications. 📄

## A future for the Black Country

### The review of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (Phase 1)

The future of the Black Country will be debated at a Public Examination at West Bromwich early in the New Year. The Examination into Phase 1 of the West Midlands RSS Revision opens at the Bethel Convention Centre, West Bromwich on 9th January and is due to last until 18th January 2007.

The Examination will test the Black Country Study - a plan for long term change and development for the whole of the Black Country. The Black Country Study supports a sub-regional strategy, outlining the priorities for regenerating its physical, environmental, social and economic fabric.

The Black Country Study which can be viewed @ [www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk](http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk) is the Urban Renaissance Strategy for the area and aims to:


- Reverse the trend of people leaving the Black Country;
- Raise income levels by ensuring better skills and types of jobs;
- To attract and retain people with higher level skills (change the socio-economic mix);
- Protect and enhance the environment in the Black Country;
- Improve traffic circulation and transportation;
- Transform the housing stock in the sub-region;

- Designate a new strategic town centre in the Region at Brierley Hill/Merry Hill within Dudley Borough.

The examination will not automatically examine all the proposals contained in the Phase 1 Revision or hear all the objections, but will be a discussion of major issues where the independent Panel considers that further information is needed to establish whether the Review is 'sound'. Participants have been selected to ensure a broad mix of viewpoints on each issue for debate.

The 4 Black Country authorities will be represented at the EIP by the Black Country Consortium and the WMRA, with officers from the 4 authorities attending in support as and when required. However, Dudley MBC will be appearing separately on Matter 6 (relating to the proposal for a Strategic Centre at Merry Hill/Brierley Hill) in view of the significant impact of the proposal on the Borough.

The Panel Report is due to be published in summer 2007 with the Secretary of State making the final decision on the recommendations later on in the year.

These are exciting times for the Black Country. The new spatial planning agenda is clear – to achieve the massive regeneration of the area by making the Black Country a high quality place to live, work and spend leisure time. 

**Tim Brown** Senior Planning Officer (Policy) Dudley MBC

#### MATTERS FOR DEBATE:

**Matter 1: Overall Approach.** The scope of the Draft Phase 1 Revision and its role in the evolving strategic policy framework for the West Midlands. Are its objectives clear and its policy approach soundly based?

**Matter 2: Housing Provision.** Whether the Draft Phase One Revision is sound in relying on the existing RPG11 levels of housing pending the Phase 2 Revision, or whether more account should be taken now of the latest projections of future households.

**Matter 3: Employment Land.** Whether the underlying assumptions behind the employment policies are sufficiently clear and justified and whether sufficient locational guidance is provided, particularly having regard to the definition of the Employment Land Investment Corridors,

**Matter 4: Transport and Accessibility.** Whether the Phase 1 Revision provides sufficient and necessary guidance on the issues identified in relation to the Black Country, eg. on investment priorities, and transport investment.

**Matter 5: Environmental Quality.** Issues relating specifically to the Black Country (as opposed to general environmental issues affecting the whole of the West Midlands which will be examined in the Phase 2 Revision).

**Matter 6: Brierley Hill/Merry Hill and Dudley.** The appropriateness of the proposed designation of Brierley Hill/Merry Hill as a strategic town centre in place of Dudley and the future role of the latter.

**Matter 7: Levels and Distribution of Retail Floorspace.** Proposed levels of growth and distribution of comparison retail floorspace in the Black Country up to 2021.

**Matter 8: Office Floorspace.** The technical justification for the proposed levels of office floorspace, in terms of growth and distribution.


**Matter 9: Delivery.** The Regional Assembly's Draft Implementation Plan, in relation to the Draft Phase 1 Revision. Whether there is an adequate framework for implementation, monitoring and review.

## Climate change case presented at Black Country Examination

Not for the first time, one of our most senior and experienced, albeit retired RTPI members is well ahead of his time! Graham Harrison, an RTPI Outstanding Service Medal holder, has chosen to focus on the climate change issue in presenting the Institute's case to the West Midlands RSS Phase 1 Public Examination which starts in January in West Bromwich.

The case (prepared before the publication of the new 'Planning and Climate Change' draft policy document)

emphasises the need to build-in measures to combat climate change into the Regional Assembly's ambitious proposals for the Black Country.

The paper, produced for the Environmental Quality debate (Matter 5), calls for a two pronged approach to enable the Black Country to respond to the changes resulting from Climate Change whilst at the same time pursuing mitigation measures to avoid the long term climatic trends. 

## Options for Change – a challenge for the West Midlands

### The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 revision

The Regional Planning Partnership of the Assembly has already approved the Spatial Options Paper for the review of Phase 2 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. As reported in the last edition of Tripwire, this presents 3 alternative scenarios for the growth of new housing ranging from some 385,000 new homes (up to 2026) – a continuation of the present level – up to 575,000 homes, about 50% higher, albeit consistent with the Government's new projections of housing growth.

The review seems bound to create some difficult challenges for authorities accustomed to experiencing high pressures for housing (both market and affordable) but not used to facing the need to allocate more housing land.

Although the 'Urban Renaissance' strategy will continue, it is hard to see how development can be limited to the Major Urban Areas when the capacity of Birmingham and the Black Country remains finite.



The Regional Strategy aims to deflect 'excess' growth to the 'sub-regional foci' of Rugby, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Worcester, Telford (and now Burton on Trent) on the periphery of the Region. But new advice in PPS3 now recommends providing land within Housing Market Areas to meet market demand and need, unless there are clear reasons for not doing so and suggests allocating land in free-standing new settlements and urban extensions. It also promotes making housing provision in 'sustainable rural communities' which runs somewhat counter to the present strategy. Certainly the current policy of imposing


'maximum' limits on the Shire Districts looks somewhat out of step with the new approach in PPS3 – if rural housing needs are going to be met.



The Options Paper remains open-minded about whether employment land requirements should be determined in the RSS. The document explores a 'Minimum Reservoir Approach' to ensure that the Councils have sufficient portfolio of employment land and includes an indicative range of employment land release in each District.



Potential locations for 'Strategic Park and Ride' are floated but there is no suggestion that there should be any review of green belt boundaries, contrary to the view taken by Kate Barker in her recent report.


The Options Paper will now be subject to public consultation for a period of 8 weeks between 8th January and 5th March 2007. 

## Going for a Burton!

**B**urton upon Trent has been chosen as a new 'Growth Area' by Government and has also been highlighted as a possible 'sub-regional focus' in the Regional Spatial Strategy 'Options Paper'.

The announcement from DCLG gives the Borough Council £315,000 and the chance to explore the potential of Burton becoming a 'Growth Point' town over the next 20 years. The Council was approached by GOWM a few months ago to be considered as a Growth Point, an initiative combining increased housing with jobs, town centre regeneration and higher design and environmental standards. Those with long memories will recall that the last review of the West Midlands RPG (now RSS)

proposed Burton as a sub-regional focus, but the idea was deleted on the advice of the EIP Panel Chairman.

Cllr Alex Fox, Leader of the Council, said: "This is an opportunity we can now explore and start work to see if this is a viable and suitable option for us and the Borough, remembering that we will be making decisions that will have a major impact on residents and future generations. We should ensure that we consider all options before making a final commitment." 

For more information please contact Sandra Ford, Development & Regeneration Manager, East Staffordshire BC. 01283 508362

## Live Work in Rural Areas

On 27 November Wychavon DC hosted a well attended half-day seminar organised by the RTPI West Midlands Region to raise awareness of 'Live/Work' in rural areas.

The RTPI has been seeking to raise the profile and knowledge of 'Live/Work' at a national level both with the Barker team and with DCLG. 'Live/Work' is more than just home-working in a spare room, it implies a more sophisticated form of mixed use - an opportunity to make development more sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. It involves re-thinking our approach to land-use and urban form instead of concentrating on a single-use zoning and the use-class approach.

**Tim Dwelly**, Director of the 'Live/Work Network' explained that the concept originated in urban areas, associated with 'loft' living. However, there has since been an increase in home working in the countryside. In the West Midlands, there is a high proportion of people working from home and hence the potential market for rural Live/Work development is significant.

Tim emphasised the 'sustainable' nature of 'Live/Work' development, in terms of reducing commuting, developing a thriving micro-business environment, supporting the daytime economy in rural towns and villages and providing a better work-life balance.

But in planning terms there are real and perceived problems to implementation. Planning guidance is limited, (currently the only definition of 'Live/work' is in Circular 03/2005 'Changes of Use of Buildings and Land' which refers to "purpose built premises that are a mix of residential and business uses that have been given a *sui generis* class"). There are also tax and VAT disincentives and an emphasis by local authorities on safeguarding traditional employment sites. Planners often struggle to make the concept fit in policy terms.

In the absence of any reference to 'Live/Work' in PPS3, DCLG have hinted that 'Live/Work' may appear in some form in a new PPS4. The recently published Barker Report recognises the blurring of the residential and employment boundary, the role it can play in supporting rural diversification and the need for a reappraisal of the range of uses safeguarded as employment sites.

Meanwhile, Councils now have the opportunity to be more proactive by introducing policies through the LDF and he invited planners to keep an open mind on 'Live/work' applications and to work with specialist developers to achieve sustainable 'cluster' developments with a 'business buzz'!

**Liz Nicholson** from Stratford-on-Avon DC highlighted the outcome of an appeal into 56 live/work units on a brownfield site at Napton, Warwickshire, which was dismissed. The site

was allocated in the adopted Local Plan for a mixed-use development which had opened up the possibility of a live/work development (see *Tripwire* Jan/Feb 2006).

The Inspector generally supported the 'Live/work' concept, but rejected the scale of the proposed development and the non-sustainable nature of the location. He was concerned that, in a high demand area, the units should be genuinely used for 'Live/work'. Clearly, there is no panacea to guarantee this. Occupancy models need to be explored to secure the 'work' element either through a legal agreement or a management company to hold the lease. The Council will now be looking for a revised 'Live/work' scheme that provides substantial benefits.


**Paul Fong** of Hunter Page Planning, described the elements of a 'Live/work' proposal - often B1 use, albeit including separate kitchen/bathroom facilities with a separate entrance to the workspace for visitors and employees. Space should be flexible to enable the business to expand. The 'work' element could be 20-25% of the overall floorspace, although authorities with adopted policies normally expect the residential element to be subordinate to the commercial part a scheme.

Paul looked at a number of case studies, where a 'hub' facility, i.e. a cluster of live work units and associated facilities such as meeting rooms and secretarial services, can be used by local community groups to overcome problems of rural isolation.

Where effective consultation has occurred with the local community, developers have had more success in bringing 'Live/work' schemes forward, due to individual schemes being seen in a more positive light.

Finally, architect **Piers Taylor** of Mitchell Taylor Workshop presented a range of innovative approaches to reusing redundant rural buildings and addressed the design issues relating to 'hub' Live/work developments.

During **Questions**, some delegates raised concerns about the residential element 'out living' the work unit. But private sector representatives emphasised the importance of achieving long-term viability. Concern was expressed from some practitioners that live/work proposals are in isolated locations that fly in the face of sustainable development principles. There may also be an issue of Enforcement. But speakers also pointed out that many existing rural employment uses generate unsuitable travel patterns - 'Live work' removes this from the equation.

All in all, a fascinating afternoon - watch this 'Live/Work' space! 


**Andrew Ford** Senior Planning Officer, Wychavon District Council

## Live Work examples: Request for assistance

**E**mma Wilkinson of Darlington BC is carrying out research for her MA in Town and Country Planning with the Joint Distance Learning Consortium of Planning schools with UWE and would be grateful for assistance from any members who have experience of Live/work development, either through dealing with planning applications, implementation or enforcement.

The title of the dissertation is:- 'Live / work' development in the UK: Is it a sustainable compromise

*in current national advice to LPA's to give consideration to the re-allocation of employment land for other uses?"*

She would welcome your views or examples of best or worst practice, especially sites on employment allocations or conversions of existing buildings in employment use. Please email [emma.wilkinson@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:emma.wilkinson@darlington.gov.uk). Many thanks. 

# Climate Change

The Government believes that local authorities have a key role to play in tackling climate change and achieving the country's long-term goal of a 60% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050 and the Local Government White Paper (published on 26 October 2006) calls on local authorities to rise to the challenge whether as estate managers, statutory service providers or community leaders.

## How can local authorities help?

### As land and property owners ...

- manage the energy consumption of their own buildings - participating for example in the Energy Performance Commitment carbon trading scheme;
- introduce green travel plans for major council sites to reduce reliance on car travel;
- implement a green procurement policy;
- develop local, renewable sources of energy for their own use.

### As statutory service providers ...

- use spatial planning to achieve sustainable development for example:
- by requiring that a percentage of the energy in new developments comes from on-site renewables;
- by framing and consulting on planning policies relating to location, siting and design of new developments;
- enforce building regulation compliance;
- provide energy efficiency information to householders or developers when planning applications are made;
- invest in sustainable transport and managing the demand for road transport;
- use "well-being" powers under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, for example to set up local energy service companies and work with energy service supply companies to develop innovative mechanisms to improve energy efficiency in housing.

### As community leaders ...

- lead by example, championing climate change issues and demonstrating that a low-carbon economy can make a positive contribution to economic growth, job creation and enhanced local environments;
- identify and spread best practice - supporting energy efficient projects, promoting the Code for Sustainable Homes and supporting adaptation activities;
- encourage parish and town councils to use their powers provided by the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006 to promote energy-saving measures such as microgeneration.

### So what's new?

Many authorities are already at the forefront of good practice in reducing carbon emissions. For example, about 140 authorities have signed up to the Nottingham Declaration showing a commitment to addressing the causes and impact of climate change according to local priorities.

Powers already exist for local authorities (as regulators of the built environment through Building Regulations and through the development planning system) to tackle climate change and the Stern review of climate change economics emphasises that "the planning system will be a key tool for encouraging both private and public investment in locations that are less vulnerable to climate risks today and in the future". And if there was any doubt that the new spatial planning system can legitimately tackle climate change, the anticipated Planning

Policy Statement (assuming it follows the approach recommended by the Town and Country Planning Association's mock PPS) is likely to require policies in RSSs and LDFs to take into account anticipated direct and indirect impacts of climate change and plan for adaptation. Planning authorities should also be able to "look favourably on applications which contribute to reducing overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change" and should "consider rejecting applications which, by adding significantly to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions or to climate change vulnerabilities, do not conform to the objectives of the development plan".

Nonetheless, the Local Government White Paper makes clear that local authorities can and should play a yet more proactive role and a number of initiatives are identified in the White Paper which will provide the incentives and tools required.

## Climate Change: the White Paper proposals

### Local Area Agreements

There will be a statutory duty on upper tier or unitary authorities to prepare Local Area Agreements (LAAs) in consultation with named local partners. LAAs will form the delivery plans for the statutory Sustainable Community Strategies. Where appropriate climate change targets will be included in LAAs and the Secretary of State will have the power to identify partners with the responsibility to achieve these targets and to hold them to account.


### Community Call for Action (CCfA)

The community call for action is a mechanism proposed in the Police and Justice Bill, allowing members of the public who are dissatisfied with service provision to ask their local councillor to call for action from the local authority and its partners. The Local Government White Paper proposes that this remedy should be available to cover those issues that local authorities are responsible for either alone or in partnership with others. Although planning will not be covered (because it is already subject to a statutory appeal process) people could use the proposed CCfA to call for local authorities to improve or introduce climate change initiatives.

### Additional funding

The Government is allocating additional funding to Salix Finance, an independent company set up by the Carbon Trust, to support investment in energy efficiency measures and technologies on local authority property. To promote joint working, more area-based funding streams will be placed in the LAA funding pot.

### City Regions

The Government is encouraging authorities to work in partnership at a city-region level. Stronger regional partnerships pooling funding and resources through Multi Area Agreements will be better able to stimulate a market for those offering energy services and low carbon technologies. 

### Lynne Franklin

Head of Planning and Environment Team  
Martineau Johnson Solicitors, © Martineau Johnson 2006



MARTINEAU JOHNSON

# From Locations to Buildings

Planning policies for Climate Change by Michael Thompson

ARUP

In October 2006, English Partnerships commissioned Arup to undertake a rapid survey of a sample of planning authorities in England to look at the scope of development plan policies affecting the house building sector with respect to sustainable development. This survey identified a wide variation in approaches across the sample and highlighted some of the strengths and weaknesses in the planning regime. These policies have been reviewed against the background of 'The Stern Report' and existing bodies of scientific evidence that have established a strong 'national interest' in addressing climate change.

The built environment has a very significant impact on climate change contributing almost 50% of carbon dioxide emissions. The development plan system can, therefore, play a significant role in making a difference, however the speed of the review process needs to match the urgency with which climate change has been expressed as an issue.

The Climate Change PPS provides an opportunity to use the planning system to make a significant contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions from the built environment. However, it is important that a distinction is made between policies that contribute to the creation of "sustainable locations" and those that contribute to "sustainable buildings". The code for sustainable homes must be aligned to the proposed PPS on climate change so that they compliment rather than contradict one another.

From the perspective of the PPS, differentiating between "sustainable locations" and "sustainable buildings" also offers a low risk means of distinguishing where it would be safe for a national planning policy statement to take a more prescriptive approach in driving change without prejudicing the interpretation of local need.

Under "sustainable locations", geography is clearly a determinant in adapting to the consequences of irreversible climate change (e.g. flooding) and through determining the types of renewable generation power opportunities available to a locality (e.g. variations in wind speeds). The development plan route is, therefore, best placed to deal with adapting to the irreversible consequences of climate change and setting policies to exploit low carbon and renewable energy technologies and resources (e.g. wind generation, solar energy and biomass etc).

Our review of Local Authority environmental policies highlighted the pioneering work of a select group of authorities in establishing a new genre of planning policy concerned with the technical performance of the built environment. The London Borough of Merton approach of specifying an 'on site' renewable contribution to the energy demanded by a development has become a milestone along with a greater involvement of planning policy in terms of energy performance, waste recycling, water usage and so forth. This genre of policy has been adopted by a number of local authorities (and regional planning bodies) as a means of addressing a market failure responding to PPS22. More recent policies have looked at promoting

"sustainable construction" as a whole including the use of development standards like "Ecohomes".

The technical performance of a building is, of course, related to its geographic setting (e.g. ambient temperature, wind speed and so forth); nevertheless, a precedent has been set through the UK Building Regulations that such matters should be considered in relation to a set of national standards. Whilst a set of national standards may reduce some flexibility, the UK has long accepted that the benefits that flow from having a single and communicable standard outweighs any local design benefit in devolving responsibility for setting standards.

The Planning system, possibly through a desire on the part of certain local planning authorities to accelerate change faster than the pace set by Building Regulations, has now entered a policy sphere hitherto occupied by a national system of regulation which is itself being targeted by government to address the same issues.

Consistency between the two systems suggests that there is an overwhelming case for setting the standards that appear in "sustainable buildings" style planning policies at a national level based on the understanding that these policies are effectively extending the technical performance of buildings beyond those found in the current set of standards.

Our review of Local Authority policies in this area demonstrates that the articulation of these policies through individual development plans has, led to variations across England in the:

- coverage of policies of this kind;
- speed of adoption;
- relative weight attached to the policy (in terms of plan type and level of representation in both tiers of the development plan); and
- detailed application of the policy itself (houses/ non domestic or both; applicable development thresholds; percentage levels and the use of carbon emissions or energy).

These variations demonstrate the relative importance attached by the local authority to climate change at the time review takes place. Moreover, the tests applied to ensure consistency between the regional and local tiers of the development plan would not appear to offer any guarantee that the new development plans will be any more consistent than the ones that will be replaced.

It would seem appropriate therefore that the new PPS set a global standard that would apply across all local authorities. The development plans can then "catch up" with the prevailing standard within the review timetables set out for them in PPS11 and PPS12.

This stance would have immediate benefits for all parties in the development process.

1. It would deliver consistency across the country and thereby create clarity and certainty among developers and its supply chain about what was expected of them.
2. Incorporating a target within the PPS would mean that planning decisions could take this into account as a material consideration;


## From Locations to Buildings (contin...)

3. The market for low and zero carbon technologies would be expanded, which would encourage investment in this sector;
4. Local Planning Authorities could use their time and resources to focus on geographical aspects of climate change, for example adaptation and avoidance of risk to flooding etc;

In setting a clear target for carbon reductions that could be applied across the country it is important to determine whether this should be a renewable target or a carbon reduction target. Our review demonstrates that a number of local authorities have adopted carbon targets whilst the majority have or are focussing on renewable energy.

If the objective is to tackle climate change then carbon and not renewable energy generation should be the focus. This has the additional merit of promoting a wider range of options including energy efficiency and low carbon distributed systems like combined heat and power.

The advantages that focussing on renewables offer are firstly that it will stimulate a market and therefore investment and research in renewable energy technologies in the UK and secondly it would build on the suite of policies that Local Authorities like Merton, some of the regions and the Greater London Authority have adopted.

The renewables option however is relatively expensive and as importantly, there are significant issues about the capacity of the house building and supply industry to meet the levels of demand that a national renewables policy would create. This could therefore have a significant impact on the supply of new housing if such a policy were introduced too quickly. 

*Michael Thompson is Senior Planning & Sustainable Development Consultant with Arup Associates.*

ARUP

## Tackling Global Warming

**M**elting icecaps, species loss, drought, extreme weather events – the signs of climate change have been saturating the media in recent months. Whilst overwhelming in scale, it is an issue in which all must play their part. So what opportunities does it present planners? Whether we like it or not spatial planning is at the forefront of the climate change battle. Planners help mould and shape communities, cities, regions and nations. This goes beyond merely blindly enforcing planning regulations and policies. Planners have significant scope to use their experience to respond to the challenges of climate change.


The Government has been driven to action by sense of urgency following the publication of the Stern Report. The report highlights the economic cost of not doing anything to tackle climate change. Thus, in her speech to parliament the Queen detailed the governments legislative and policy agenda. Initiatives include a White Paper on 'climate change' which will include measures to meet future energy needs, while reducing emissions. Bills will be introduced to tackle road congestion and public transport issues, as well as a reform of the planning system.

So, what does this all mean for planners? Significantly it shows that the Government is serious about climate change. It also presents planners with an historic opportunity. Planners are confronted with decisions and issues that go right to the heart of the sustainable development challenge. As a result there is a wealth of knowledge and experience that can be utilised to guide the climate change policy agenda.

The RTPI Environmental Planning and Protection (EPP) Network has realised the opportunities the present political climate offers. Thus, it has decided to make climate change the focus of the networks activities. To do this it has established a policy task group to explore

the relationship between climate change and spatial planning. The group has been separated into four key topic areas; Biodiversity, Health, Water and Energy.

Under each of these four topic areas is a network of competing and interrelating planning issues. As climate change intensifies, its effect on the protection of biodiversity will require planners to address habitat protection and adaptation strategies to prevent species loss. Increases in urban pollution, heat stress and extreme weather events will necessitate new approaches to planning healthy communities. Planning in relation to water resources and infrastructure will be challenged by an increase in drought and flood cycles. Planning energy resources and infrastructure might see greater emphasis being placed on utilising renewable technology. Thus planners may need to consider prioritising renewable energy projects by exempting them from planning permission.

These issues are just the tip of the (melting) iceberg. For some time planners have been dealing with issues around sustainable development. Now is the time to discuss and share experiences. The EPP network task group is an example of one way to encourage planners to get directly involved in discussing the issues and forging new responses to the challenges. This is a vital exchange of ideas that can feed planners experiences and expertise into the development of the national policy agenda. 

**Andrew Burns Environmental Planning and Protection Network Manager**

*If you are interested in finding out more about the Environmental Planning and Protection Network got to <http://epp.rtpi.org.uk>. If you are interested in making a contribution to the climate change task group contact [epp@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:epp@rtpi.org.uk)*

## Planning for Climate Change

### A view from the Environment Agency by Ruth Meek

**C**limate change is the biggest threat to our future. Scientists agree it is happening and that human activity is increasing it. The level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is higher now than at any time in the last 20 million years. Over the past century, global temperatures have risen, with the 1990s being the warmest decade and the 20th century the warmest century. Society needs to act now if 'dangerous' levels of climate change, triggered by a global increase of 2°C, are to be averted.

Climate change needs to be tackled on two fronts: adapt to the changes in climate expected over the next 30-40 years that we are already too late to prevent; reduce (mitigate) greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO<sub>2</sub> from burning fossil fuels, to limit further climate change.

In the West Midlands we are likely to experience, warmer, wetter winters, hotter, dryer summers and more extreme events.

The impacts from climate change will be felt across the whole of society. In 1998, 2003 and 2004, the insurance bill for flooding came to £500M, £1B and over £300M respectively. Not included in these figures are the costs to the economy from disruption to business, industry, transport or power networks, or the emotional and health cost to those individuals and families affected. Flood risk is set to increase due to wetter winters, increased storminess and urban flash flooding. Other impacts include an increase in air and water pollution and a strain on water availability for people and the environment triggered by longer, hotter summers. There is now sufficient knowledge of climate risk available to enable the issues of flooding and water availability to be taken into account through both the regional and local planning framework.


Of the planning proposals the Environment Agency objected to in 2006, only 5% were approved contrary to our advice by local planning authorities. This represents a year on year improvement and reflects an increased understanding of climate change risks. 2006 saw the highest July temperature ever recorded in the UK and the hottest month on record.

Whilst individual events can not be blamed on climate change, they can serve to give us a glimpse of the

conditions we may need to adapt to. The NHS 'Heatwave' plan for England identified the risk of a heatwave in England in 2006 as severe as that in France in 2003 as being less than 0.1%. However, the predictions are that by 2050, a heatwave, such as that in 2003, will be happening every other year. Deaths associated with heat stress occur very rapidly as temperatures rise, therefore although emergency planning is essential, the best way of saving lives will be through incorporating adaptation principles into everyday building design. Pursuing energy efficient standards in buildings is only part of the climate change solution. Ensuring buildings remain comfortable in hotter summers, whilst minimising the need for energy intensive air conditioning, is as yet a largely overlooked issue.

With regard to reducing our carbon emissions, some difficult lifestyle choices will need to be made, particularly around the subject of transport, as both car journeys and air travel are predicted to increase as other emissions are being cut. However, there is considerable scope to reduce emissions, with only positive impacts for our society. Much of the energy generated at large power stations, coal, gas or nuclear, is simply wasted through cooling towers or other cooling systems. With a further loss of energy in the grid transmission and distribution networks, only about 25-30 per cent of the energy produced reaches our homes.

Decentralised energy technologies such as Combined Heat and Power can achieve efficiencies of 85-90 per cent. By decentralising power generation energy bills can be cut and the security of supply increased. Planning policies that not only encourage but also require developments to use microgeneration and renewable energy to decentralise power supply are essential to ensure carbon emissions are reduced.

The West Midlands Spatial Strategy is currently being reviewed and this is a great opportunity for the region to adapt to a climate that is already changing. By imbedding climate change thinking across the whole of the spatial strategy, a platform is created which enables Local Authorities to mitigate and adapt at the community level. As made clear in the Stern Review, early action makes both economic and environmental sense. We have a window of opportunity when radical action can prevent the worst impacts of climate change. Failure to act now may be catastrophic. 

**Ruth Meek** Principal Officer Environment Agency


## Herefordshire praised for cutting carbon emissions

**H**erefordshire Council is one of just 20 authorities in the country to have gained funding to spend on eco-friendly schemes to reduce the authority's energy bills. In doing so, the Council has won praise from Climate Change Minister Ian Pearson.

A grant of £200,000 comes from Salix, an independent company set up by the Carbon Trust in 2004 to work with the public sector to reduce carbon emissions through investment in energy efficiency measures and technologies. To gain the funding, the council had to show a good track record of energy management.

75% of schools in the county are registered as EcoSchools as part of a European scheme which

promotes recycling, energy conservation, healthy eating and bio-diversity. Pupils at five schools have been playing a climate change game to promote awareness of climate change issues.

Herefordshire Council has also developed a Carbon Management Action Plan, CMAP, to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and already buys all of its electricity on a "green" tariff. The council is a signatory to the Nottingham Agreement and thus committed to actively tackling climate change and working with others to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. 

For more information, please contact Alison Grange at Herefordshire Council 01432 260658

## Editor's thoughts – Getting things into perspective

Climate change is now pricking the conscience, not just of planners but the public at large. Before long, enough newsprint will have been spent on the subject of global warming to fell a whole rain forest. As Hector Pearson says in his Chair's remarks, climate change is heralding major changes in planning with exciting times ahead.

But it is also generating some strange paradoxes. Last week Anneka Rice was seen in the TV programme 'Extinction' swooping over the Polar ice caps in a helicopter (no doubt supported by a full camera team) urging the viewers to turn off the lights to combat global warming, whilst somewhat bizarrely aiming a tranquilliser gun at a couple of innocent Polar bears. Oh well, it may have raised the awareness of Climate change if nothing else!

Like me, I suspect you feel the problem of global warming is so immense that you are unsure what you can do to help. Whilst we can all move to low energy light bulbs and turn off our computers at night, this will only have a minimal impact on the earth's resources. We need to get things into proportion.

In terms of domestic consumption it is space heating and water consumption which use the most energy, closely followed by tumble dryers (which use about 3kw of power – compared with a 60w light-bulb) – so better insulation, more efficient boilers, passive solar heating and washing lines are the answer! Individual wind turbines may look impressive, but are expensive to install and have long payback periods, as well as potential planning and

aesthetic problems. Moreover it is the existing housing stock where action is most needed, not the new stock where energy efficiency is already built-in.

The biggest consumers of fuel are paradoxically the power stations, so greater efficiency in terms of operation and location (so that cooling water can be re-used) ought to be the solution.

Finally, whilst motor cars (and commercial vehicles) all contribute to global warming and pollution – especially within towns and cities – it is aviation which makes the biggest impact. Just over 4 years ago, in the wake of the Airports Policy Consultation, I devoted my 'Editor's thoughts' column to the Government's curious transport policy, which promoted growth of Airports to meet growing demand whilst it was (and still is) cheaper to fly from Birmingham to Barcelona than it is to take the morning train to London. I wrote to the Chancellor at the time to point this out and make some suggestions.

A fortnight ago, in the Chancellor's pre-budget statement he made a gesture by increasing Airport tax by £5 and raising petrol by 1.5p per litre (in line with RPI) – hardly a move likely to trigger major behavioural change. Air fuel remains free of tax altogether.

What is needed is a more co-ordinated international response to global warming to run in parallel with national, regional and local efforts – we can't do it all ourselves.

John Acres Editor

## Building a Greener Future


New draft advice on combating Climate Change, as a supplement to PPS1, looks set to 'raise the bar' in terms of energy efficiency and the reduction of carbon emissions with the setting of 'trajectories of carbon performance'. The draft Code for Sustainable Housing entitled 'Building a Greener Future – towards zero carbon development' is designed to help deliver the dream.

The Code sets sustainability standards which can be applied to all homes. There are 6 levels of standard within the Code. At each level there are minimum energy efficiency/carbon emissions and water efficiency targets. The Code rewards other environmental considerations such as sustainable construction methods and the availability of recycling facilities, cycle spaces and home offices. These features are awarded credits which all go towards making a sustainable home.

New homes (and in due course other homes when they are bought and sold) will require an energy performance certificate under the 'Energy Performance in Building Directive' due to be introduced from June 2007. These are intended to be voluntary standards. The Government is not proposing that any development or building will be required to meet these higher standards for the time being unless public funding is involved. However, should the Government decide to make the higher standards mandatory the logical route would be through the Building Regulations. The consultation document indicates that achieve net zero carbon impact by 2106 as part of a step by step approach.

Some would no doubt feel that a more sensible approach might be to tackle the existing stock where there is greater scope for energy savings, but the Government clearly feel that the political impact of trying to encourage existing homes owners and tenants to adapt their living conditions (whatever the outcome in terms of energy saving) is likely to be more difficult than encouraging the house-building industry to address the issue at source. Currently there are no plans to impose a similar Code on non-residential buildings.

So how will all this be achieved? The document is less clear about the measures which will need to be introduced to achieve net zero carbon emissions. Clearly improved insulation, air tightness, and more energy efficient building materials will be key elements of any assessment. The paper also mentions individual combined heat and power units as providing a contribution to savings.

But many new initiatives such as photo voltaic cells and wind turbines create their own planning problems, are expensive to install and have relatively long pay-back periods. From the house-builders' perspective they will need to be convinced that the customers actually value the improved energy efficiency levels and more important are prepared to pay the additional costs of construction. The good news is that there are now growing signs that as a result of increased public awareness, they are. 

## Chinese delegation visits UK

### Director General of the Construction Bureau from Jiangsu Province, Peoples Republic of China Visit to the United Kingdom

**O**n the 20th of October 2006, representatives of TPS and RTPI welcomed the Chinese delegation to the Institution of Civil Engineers at 1 George Street, London. The visit came about following two recent RTPI West Midlands visits to China.

Twenty-two Chinese construction engineers were welcomed by TPS/RTPI member Victoria Hills, and TPS

member Peter James. The U.K. Planning System was explained by Planning Consultant Simon Rowberry followed by a lively discussion on Urbanization in China, the U.K. Green Belt System, London Congestion Charging, Thames River Water quality and Park and Ride Schemes. The delegation regarded the event as a huge success and offered to host a return visit to China.

Anyone requiring further information regarding this event or any further links with China please contact Christina Mannering on [christina\\_mannering@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:christina_mannering@sandwell.gov.uk) 



Delegation picture "left to right": Pin Fang, Victoria Hills, Simon Rowberry, Zhou You "Director General" and Peter James



Victoria Hills explains the London Congestion Charging System.

## Dongtan – how the other half live!


**A** well-attended meeting at Arup's offices in Solihull heard Nicola White of Arup Associates tell us all about Dongtan - a proposed "eco-city" in China. Arup's interest is as master planners for the development. The proposal is for a sustainable, self-contained 'city' of 50,000, housed on 630ha, by 2010 - although this is actually the first phase of a much bigger urbanisation of the island of Chongming. The island sits across the mouth of the Yang-tze from Shanghai and is currently the agricultural breadbasket of the city. The river is over ten miles wide at this point and, under this, it is intended to build a road tunnel - not impossible given the scale of infrastructure developments already underway in the region (although interestingly there is no commitment as yet to extending the city metro system to the island). In reality the city will be an extension of Shanghai, but it is certainly intended that only a minority (but how big?) will commute back to the city centre.



It is in the design principles of the plan where the real claim to be an 'eco-city' lies: the balance of housing, services, employment and open space should provide an attractive environment where the need to move about will be minimised. All manner of eco-friendly technologies will be incorporated, from renewable energy sources to

recycling facilities to low-emission transport systems. The development will make use of its site - in low-lying marshlands - to create a canal and lake system protected from the ocean by bunds and sluices, capable of taking on climate-change induced rises in the sea level. And, compared with high-rise Shanghai, will present a much more human-scale medium-rise, but still high-density, development which will hopefully be a model for other Chinese cities to follow.



Questions were asked about the practicality of the time scales and infrastructure demands, but the answers lie very much in the political determination of the national and city authorities to see through such developments. Given what is happening currently in China, there is no reason to believe this will not happen as the plan demands. There are also bigger questions about the overall national policy framework which creates such urbanisation pressures and about the human rights of people who might get the way of such developments - not really questions for Arup's to answer! 

Richard Hammersley

## European & International Group: Links with Poland

The RTPI West Midlands Region's Europe and International Group has long been trying to foster relations with some of the 'Accession States' to the east of the European Union. We have links with Lithuania, Poland and the Czech Republic – and of course a long-standing link (through Birmingham School of Planning) with Malta.

The particular focus of interest at the moment is with Poland – or more precisely, with the Regional Planning Bureau of Lower Silesia, based in Wroclaw. Members of the Group have been several times to Wroclaw for a variety of events and reciprocal visits have been arranged. Last year the Planning Bureau attempted to gain a LEONARDO grant to help with the costs of a series of 9 week placements for Bureau staff to various planning agencies around the region.



However the EU gravy train has now fallen off the track (was it ever on?!) and the level of the grant was nowhere near enough to meet real costs. So, instead some Bureau staff will be coming over here for 2 week stints, relying on the generosity of planning offices to offer short-term 'job-shadowing' placements (5/8 working days?) and on individuals to offer 'cheap' accommodation. The staff involved come from a variety of professional backgrounds: architecture, historic buildings, landscape protection, environmental protection, demographics and so on.

The idea for the programme now is that the Polish planners come over one at a time, with a few months in between. In fact one has already been hosted by Telford & Wrekin BC. We have a number of other offers from planning offices for 'placements', but more would be welcome. Perhaps of greater concern is to find people who are prepared to put our Polish friends up for a week or two for, say, £50 per week. It is worth remarking that wage levels – even for professionals – are less than one third of UK rates.

The Europe and International Group also arranges visits to other destinations for example, the opportunity to go to China! We are thinking about another visit to Brussels to see how EU policies are shaping up, and what about the new 'Accession' States? More ideas welcome - and of course more RTPI members to join the Group. 🏠

Please contact Christina Mannering or Richard Hammersley for details.



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## New Year... New Job...

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→ BIRMINGHAM - Up to £26k + Car Allowance + Benefits

Leading Birmingham based consultancy is currently seeking an ambitious and dynamic planner to join their expanding team. You will work on a number of eclectic projects for both public and private sector clients throughout the region. You will be RTPI qualified with at least 2 years experience combined with the ambition and drive to make a difference. This role within one of the leading planning teams in the UK offers excellent career progression opportunities, highly competitive salary and a fantastic benefits package.

Ref: SS17690

### Associate Town Planner

→ BIRMINGHAM - Up to £40k + Car Allowance + Benefits

One of the world's largest property advisors are looking for an Associate Planner. Based in prestigious offices in Birmingham, this is an excellent opportunity for an experienced Senior Planner to take the next step in their career. You will be at least 5 years PQE with the motivation and dynamism to succeed. You will be supported and encouraged to develop new client contacts whilst working on an existing caseload. An exceptional salary and benefits package are on offer for the right individual.

Ref: SS17980

→ → If any of the above opportunities are of interest to you then please do not hesitate to contact Steve Simmonds on 0121 200 0800 or email [steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk](mailto:steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk)

### Assistant Planner

→ BIRMINGHAM - Up to £23k + Benefits

A superb opportunity exists within a highly respected international property advisor in Birmingham. You will have at least 12 months planning experience and will be either working towards or recently completed RTPI status. You will have the chance to work on a variety of projects including Retail, Residential and Mixed Used developments. In return you will benefit from a supportive environment combined with a highly competitive salary and benefits package. This role would suit somebody considering a move from local authority.

Ref: SS17700

### Planner/ Senior Planner

→ BIRMINGHAM - £Negotiable + Car Allowance + Benefits

International Property consultancy in Birmingham is seeking enthusiastic Planners and Senior Planners with a positive attitude to join their growing planning team. You will be involved in a wide variety of planning work involving planning applications and appeals relating to a wide variety of projects across all sectors including commercial, residential and retail. You will have at least 2 years planning experience in either the public or private sector. This opportunity offers an excellent package in terms of both salary and benefits.

Ref: SS17691

For our latest vacancies please visit [www.juddfarris.com](http://www.juddfarris.com)

tripwire

## Planning Aid Needs You!

**W**est Midlands Planning Aid Service has been very successful over the years in delivering advice to many hundreds of clients. This success is built on the hard work of volunteers who assist many clients play an active role in the planning system.

The service currently has many willing volunteers but the number of Corporate Members is less than 50% of the total. This is important because it is only Corporate Members who can take on cases and give advice. Student members and other non members can help out at events, but at present we have sufficient non Corporate Members to cover events.

At the last meeting of the Advisory Group it was decided to review the current list of volunteers and put new student or non-members on a waiting list and at the same time try and recruit more new Corporate Members.

If you are a Corporate Member and would like to volunteer for Planning Aid please give us a call. It is

an excellent opportunity to learn new skills, undertake continuing professional development and learn about the planning system from the public point of view. In addition the service runs regular training events for volunteers. This year the training has been on the planning system, gypsies and travellers, a planning law update and the role of the Planning Inspectorate in the new planning system.

Any day now, Planning Aid is due to hear about our application for a 'Big Lottery' grant to fund a new project "Get Really Involved in Planning" (GRIP) where training is provided for community groups on the new planning system. This offers new opportunities for volunteers to give training sessions.

If you would like to volunteer or would like further information please contact Sheena Terrace, 0121 693 5568, [wmco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:wmco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk) or view [www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

## Consultation on Associate Membership

**T**he Institute has just issued a consultation document which sets out the likely entry criteria for Associate Membership and the means by which such candidates would apply for this new membership class.

Associate Membership was proposed by the RTPI Education Commission in 2003, and approved for introduction as a new membership class by the RTPI Executive Board in December 2005. As well as providing a partial professional qualification and a membership class in its own right. Associate Membership will offer a structured route to Chartered status for candidates who do not hold an accredited qualification.

The RTPI wants to establish whether the proposed criteria would appeal to potential candidates but also be sufficiently rigorous as to preserve the value of

Associate Membership as a meaningful **partial** professional qualification. As such, the RTPI has invited respondents, particularly if they themselves are potential candidates for Associate Membership, to provide with their response an outline of their professional background, their academic attainment and their professional experience. This should allow the Institute to build up case studies of potential Associate Members, as well as testing the Associate Membership eligibility criteria.

If you have any questions relating to the consultation document, please contact Jacqui Ward in the Membership Education & Lifelong Learning Department: [jacqui.ward@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:jacqui.ward@rtpi.org.uk)

*Sue Percy, Director, Membership Education & Lifelong Learning*

## Launch of RTPI Learning Partners

**T**he RTPI will be formally launching the 'Learning Partners' initiative at an event on Wednesday 10th January 2007. The event will be held at lunchtime (12noon - 2pm) at the DCLG offices at Eland House, in London.

RTPI Learning Partner status will be a mark of excellence in an employer's training & professional development practices. It demonstrates an employer's commitment to supporting planning employees in maintaining and developing their competence at all stages of their careers, whether they are involved in professional, technical or support functions.

Employers will apply for RTPI Learning Partner status by providing evidence of how their training and

development policies and practices meet certain key commitments. This information will be reviewed by the RTPI and Learning Partner status awarded to successful applicants who can then use the RTPI Learning Partner logo. They will be advertised through the RTPI's online list of Learning Partners.

As places are limited, attendance at the launch will be by invitation only. However, if you have a particular interest in attending this event, please do let me know.

If you would like to receive any further information on RTPI Learning Partners please don't hesitate to contact me on 0207 929 9494.

**Jacqui Ward** RTPI HQ

## RTPI West Midlands CPD events in 2007

Your input to the RTPI West Midlands CPD Programme is always very welcome. To suggest topics, speakers or venues please contact Sue Griffith-Jones, Programme Organiser, on 0121 709 1599 or email [westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk).

RTPI West Midlands CPD events arranged for first few weeks of 2007:

**Planning & Climate Change**, Thursday 25 January, Birmingham, hosted by Martineau Johnson solicitors. Climate change represents one of the greatest threats to

our society. The planning system will play an important part in tackling its effects and the forthcoming PPS will provide the policy justification for local planning authorities to take into account the anticipated direct and indirect impacts of climate change in both plan making and decision taking.

**Planning Law Update**, Wednesday 7 February, Worcester.


**Planning & Housing**, Wednesday 7 March, Wolverhampton, organised with CIH.

For further details & to book places please contact Sue on 0121 709 1599 or email [westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk)

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## Young Planner of the Year Award 2007

Just to let you all know that the voting for Young Planner of the Year Award opens on 1 December and will close at midnight on Tuesday 2nd January 2007. I trust this edition of Tripwire reaches you in time. There are 4 contenders and you will find the online voting page on <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/about-the-rtpi/awards/youngplanner/index.html>

We need as many members as possible to cast their votes so I should be grateful if you could spread the word. The winner will receive an all expenses paid trip to Philadelphia for the APA Conference to be held from the 14th - 18th April. 

## Triptease

Once again, we had a bumper response to the Triptease competition in the last issue. The questions and answers were as follows:

1. What was the title of the UB40 September 1983 No. 1 hit? **Answer:** *Red Red Wine*
2. Which Premier Rugby Union Team is known as the Tigers? **Answer:** *Leicester*
3. What is the common name of the herb *Salvia Officinalis*? **Answer:** *Sage*
4. Which was the most southerly city that Bonnie Prince Charlie reached in England during the Jacobite rebellion? **Answer:** *Derby*
5. What was the title of the collection of poems about childhood written by A E Housman published 1896? **Answer:** *A Shropshire Lad*
6. Which childrens' TV programme hosts have included Christopher Trace, Valerie Singleton, Sarah Greene, Janet Ellis and Diane- Louise Jordan? **Answer:** *Blue Peter*


The first entrant with the correct answer drawn out of the hat was Trevor Cornfoot from Advantage West Midlands. He wins a copy of the RTPI Award winning book, *Region and Renaissance* which charts the history of the West Midlands during the 50 years from

1950 (the birth of the RTPI Branch) and 2000. Congratulations and Happy Christmas.

We have another set of questions for you to consider in our next Triptease competition. What are the answers to the following questions and what do they all have in common? As always, the first correct entry to be drawn out of the hat will receive a copy of the *Region & Renaissance* book – yes, there are one or two still left!

1. What was the second name of the Queen's sister, Princes Margaret?
2. Who was reportedly one of the most beautiful actresses in Britain and became the mistress of Prince Edward later Edward VII?
3. Whose novels included *Rebecca* and *Jamaica Inn*?
4. What plant does the spice saffron come from?
5. What is the coloured part of the human eye called?
6. What is the nick name of Sir Paul McCartney's divorce lawyer, Fiona Shackleton?

And what is the theme which is common to all 6 questions?

Please send you replies either by post or email to the usual Tripwire address. 



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Email [westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk)

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Royal Town Planning Institute 41 Boleyn Lane  
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