



First two Local Development Frameworks found to be 'unsound'

Lichfield District and Stafford Borough are paying a very high price for being the first two authorities to have their LDF Core Strategies tested at Examination – both have been rejected both as being fundamentally unsound, albeit for somewhat different reasons.

In Lichfield, the Inspector concludes that the authority has failed to provide a 10 year housing land supply, (something which incidentally the Council acknowledged at the Examination) and also that the evidence base beyond 2011 was inadequate in a number of respects, including with regard to the proposals for a new centre at Burntwood.

In Stafford, the Inspector considers that the Core Strategy lacks clarity and coherence and has failed to provide a strategy which is sufficiently distinctive and specific to the Borough. He also feels that the options presented at the earlier stages of the process – based on different levels of restriction – were not appropriate.

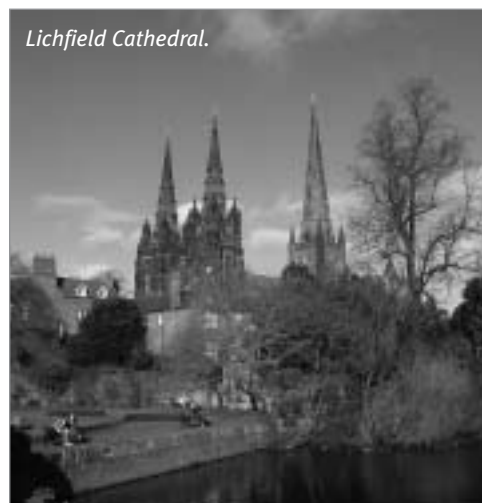
In both cases, the Inspectors criticise the Core Strategies for failing to provide enough flexibility to look forward to the forthcoming review of the Regional Spatial Strategy to take account of the changes which might emerge and in each case they recommend that the Core Strategies be withdrawn.

In shared press statements, both authorities have bitterly complained about the lack of detailed guidance provided by the Government throughout the process. Both received Statements of Conformity beforehand from the Regional Assembly.

Cllr David Smith (Leader of Lichfield DC) reacted strongly; 'We are very disappointed at the Inspector's decision. We know this will come as a huge blow to local residents, particularly those in Burntwood who have supported plans for a new town centre.'

Cllr Neil Roberts (Development portfolio holder for Lichfield) and Cllr Doug David (Planning & Regeneration portfolio holder for Stafford) commented 'We have been at the very forefront in pioneering the new system and have paid the price. Both authorities have worked closely with GOWM and where comments have been made at the right stages tried to respond. At no time has GOWM suggested either plan is "unsound".'

In our next issue we will reflect on the implications of these landmark decisions and explore what they mean for the new planning system and the West Midlands in particular.



Lichfield Cathedral.

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Chair's remarks

This just has to be an exciting time to be a planner. We have just seen the publication of Kate Barker's interim review on planning, and bless my soul, not only is it supportive of planning, but there is even a hint of her differing in view from Gordon Brown. I am old enough to remember quotations by Nicholas Ridley, Secretary of State in Margaret Thatcher's government, about planners locking up jobs in filing cabinets. The famous 'Lifting the Burden' white paper of the mid-1980s denigrated planning for stifling enterprise. Planning then, because of its perceived brake to the economy, was at a low point. So for Kate Barker, advisor to the Bank of England, and trusted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to tell it like it is - this is good stuff. (By way of local interest, at the recent RTPI Annual Convention, Kate Barker revealed that she is from Stoke-on-Trent).



A further excitement, although less related to the West Midlands, is the announcement that Ken Livingstone, mayor of London, is having his powers increased in planning, housing and skills. Whatever you may think of Ken, this has to be good news for regional planning. I was at a recent London Plan meeting, and it was clear that here was one regional authority pushing at conventional wisdom in energy issues and other areas. Personally, I believe that having strategic planning decisions taken at a regional level, sufficiently close to the local electorate to be accountable to it, but sufficiently far from it to get away from local vested and 'Nimby' issues has to be a good thing. London seems to be getting there.


In all regions, big infrastructure issues are going to have to be grasped. Almost by definition, infrastructure development means that a local community is going to be dis-benefited to the advantage of a wider regional or national community. As we all know, everyone likes having their bins collected but no one wants the waste disposal facility anywhere near them. For waste disposal read quarries, airports, sewage plants, power lines, major highway schemes, power plants, ports, prisons, and so on.

Both Barker's interim report and the even more recent DTI Energy Review white paper refer to

issues around improving approval processes for major infrastructure projects. This has to be a theme for planning, one way or another, over the next few years.

So, excitement unlimited, I was delighted to stand in for David Chapman at the RTPI's General Assembly in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in July. David was on business in Malta and Bob Sharples, his deputy, was engaged on Sport England duty. I was very interested to see what happened at these new gatherings which replaced the old Council meetings in the old-style institute. And, I was very pleasantly surprised. Once a quarter, the Institute intends to move its Regional Assembly outside London. So we had a dinner the night before and a walking tour of central Newcastle before getting down to business. Compared to the old style-Council meetings which focused much more on the


Institute's navel, these general assemblies deal much more with key issues. The two discussion issues on the agenda at Newcastle were 'Inclusion and Diversity', and 'Barker 2'. I was very pleasantly surprised by the level of contributions to both debates, not only from the presentations, but from the floor. For inclusion and diversity we had presentations from the Campaign for Racial Equality, from the Gypsies and Travellers' Unit of DCLG, from Oxfam and from the Women's Design Service. We then split into breakout groups before coming together for a plenary session. The output will lead to an RTPI policy statement and hopefully practical ways of both engaging better with communities and improving diversity in the Institute's membership. For Barker 2 we had a presentation from Kelvin McDonald of the Institute. It was clear that the RTPI has not only influenced the interim report, but has influenced press comment on it too.

As I say, it is an exciting time to be a planner: not only is planning being considered pretty positively by a key government influencer, our own Institute is engaging very positively with key issues before us all. 

Hector Pearson Chair, RTPI West Midlands

RTPI Regional Membership Survey

A few months ago we conducted a full membership survey for West Midlands members which was included in the Mach/April edition of Tripwire magazine.

The results of the survey are currently being analysed and the findings will be included in our next edition in September/October. For further information please contact the editor at the usual Tripwire address. 

RTPI West Midlands Summer Reception 4th July

Congratulations, Commendations, Conversations and Culture were the order of the day at the RTPI Summer Reception held at Compton Verney, near Stratford on Avon.

The annual event held on 4th July took on a special importance this year since the Region was welcoming our own Clive Harridge, the Institute's National President, on his home territory in the West Midlands.

Following the drinks reception, sponsored by Phillips Planning Services, visitors were treated to a tour of the galleries and exhibits around the house, including a chance to see the two Canelletto's recently acquired, reputedly for the princely sum of £6million, by the Peter Moores (of Littlewoods fame) who owns Compton Verney.

On what was a fairly hot and humid evening, (with thunderstorms rumbling in the background), there was an opportunity to mingle with colleagues both inside and outside the house whilst drinks and canapés were served.

Then the serious bit, (or in some cases not so serious). Clive Harridge, our President, and the sponsors of the Annual Awards for Planning Achievement, (Alliance Environment & Planning), presented the planning awards, firstly, the award for the **Overall Winner** to Councillor Elizabeth Yeomans, the Leader of **Bridgnorth District Council** for their work in building the impressive and multi-purpose 'Severn Centre' in Highley, built in place of a former Miners Welfare Club and then secondly, a **Commendation** to Solihull MBC for their Supplementary Planning Guidance Document on 'Housing in Context' (See articles on pages 3 and 4).

This was followed by the presentation of three 'Outstanding Service Awards' to Peter Lindsell, Bob Stokes and George Goodall who have each served the Institute in a voluntary capacity for 25 years or more and have all made a remarkable contribution in their own particular ways. Congratulations to all three of them. (See article elsewhere in this magazine).




We were then treated to a personal and amusing illustrated account of Clive Harridge's career in the West Midlands, beginning with his student days in Nottingham in the '70's (the era of free love, apparently), leading on to his roles in the West Midlands County Council, Warwick District Council and Rugby Borough Council before moving on to the private sector with Shankland Cox (now Entec). Clive paid tribute in particular to Alan Cave at the WMCC, his first boss and mentor at the time.

Using a photograph of Clive sat at his desk in his early days, we were invited to identify four key changes in the planners' lifestyle – they were predictably, the lack of a computer terminal, the size of the Planning Encyclopaedia (then only 3 volumes instead of 8), the narrow ties and of course the moustache!



In addressing the more serious issues, Clive highlighted the major changes in the planning system which had occurred in the last few years which he felt had catapulted the planning profession into the front line and given planners a brand new role in society – and a better image. He urged planners to protect their profession against challenge and criticism and to counter the views – particularly from the Treasury – that planning was the problem and not the solution. Clive insisted that it was time to 'get real' about the importance of 'sustainable development'. 'We cannot achieve a sustainable future without planning' he said. Clive concluded by underlining the relationship of sustainability to the emerging threat of climate change, perhaps the biggest issue we face as a nation.

All in all, a most successful and enjoyable evening. 

RTPI West Mids Award for Planning Achievement - Overall Winner

Bridgnorth District Council for 'The Severn Centre, Highley'

This year's 'RTPI West Midlands Award for Planning Achievement' went to Bridgnorth District Council for the design and delivery of 'The Severn Centre at Highley'. The prize was awarded to Councillor Yeomans, the Leader of Bridgnorth Council, at the RTPI Summer Reception on 4th July. In this article, Peter Lindsell explains the background to the project.

The village of Highley (population 3,300) stands on a ridge which forms the western edge of the Severn Valley at a point about half way between Bridgnorth and Bewdley. Once a thriving mining community, it suffered decline when the local coal mine shut down in 1969 with the loss of about a thousand jobs.

An opportunity to bid for Rural Challenge money in the early 1990's, although unsuccessful, brought the local community together and gave them a glimpse of what could be achieved through regeneration activity. An active local amenity group, the 'Highley Initiative', had a string of successes in attracting funding for small and medium sized projects, such as a village centre enhancement scheme, a sculpture trail and the conversion of a former royal mail coach at the nearby Severn Valley Railway station into a tourist information point. These successes gave the community the confidence to seek funding for a much more ambitious scheme.

So it was that in 2000 the community, working with Bridgnorth District Council, decided to seek external funding, initially from the Single Regeneration Budget, to replace four dilapidated community buildings dating from the 1930s – the Miners' Welfare Hall, Social Club, Pavilion and Youth Club – with a purpose built state-of-the-art community centre.

The result was the £3.5 million Severn Centre, which houses sport and leisure facilities, a heated outdoor swimming pool, police station, library child care facilities, a Broadband IT centre and even the local vets! All these activities have been

brought together under one roof to provide a 'one stop shop', meeting point and focus for social activities in the village. Funding came from a range of sources, including SRB, Active England and Advantage West Midlands.

Visually, the building has a dramatic wave-form roof, echoing the nearby Shropshire hills. The design of the heating and lighting systems was chosen to minimise environmental impact and includes low energy fittings and intelligent control systems. Rainwater run-off is captured to irrigate the bowling green and a 60-panel solar hot water system heats the water in the swimming pool. Unlike the old buildings that it replaces, the Centre is fully accessible to people with disabilities. It is managed by the Severn Centre Trust, a registered charity.

The planning achievement is not so much the building itself, but the way in which it was conceived, designed and executed. Planners in the District Council's Local Plans & Regeneration Section were involved with the local community right from the inception of the project. They ensured that the project was community-led through a local project group which was directly involved at every stage, from surveying local opinion, identifying needs, selecting architects and liaising with funders, through to overseeing the detailed design of the building, and selecting final materials and finishes.

Roles played by planners included: community liaison and consultation, project definition, project development, liaison with external funders, making funding applications, directing the professional team, determining the planning applications and producing the Severn Centre Business Plan.

The Severn Centre has done a great deal to help regenerate not only the physical environment, but also the social and community life of the village, and in doing so has created a real sense of local pride. 🏡

Peter Lindsell is Head of Local Plans & Regeneration

Congratulations to all at Bridgnorth District Council (ed.)



RTPI West Mids Award for Planning Achievement - Commendation

Solihull MBC for their Supplementary Planning Guidance document 'New Housing in Context'

The recently published 'New Housing in Context' SPG, produced by Solihull Metropolitan Council has been 'commended' in the RTPI Regional Awards for Planning Achievement. David Simpson explains the background to the paper.


Since the Government's changes in policy emphasis, introduced by revisions to PPG 3, there has been an increase in high density windfall development particularly apartment blocks within Solihull's residential areas. This has begun to have an impact on the character and local distinctiveness of these suburban areas

The problem was not that housing redevelopment was taking place but how it was taking place. Redevelopment of buildings can provide an attractive punctuation and relief in an otherwise bland monotonous and unremitting run of similar properties, and in another instance it can offend the unity and character of a locally distinctive street

New Housing in Context was Solihull's response to filling the gap between national policy, the strategic broad brush approach set out in the UDP and the determination of individual planning applications.

The guidance sets out a process which developers must follow to demonstrate how their housing proposals respect the local character and distinctiveness of an area or street and provides examples of how higher housing densities can be achieved in a way that is sensitive to the local context.

It enables an awareness of the Council's expectations at an early stage in the design process and provides greater certainty for those concerned in the way decisions on individual sites will be made. It also sets out clearly explicit criteria which govern considerations of impact on neighbours.

It should be emphasised that document which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance is not a negative instrument of control but proactively promotes and exemplifies good practice indeed the guidance has broken new ground and is recognised as good practice reflected in other local authority guidance documents. 

Well done to the planners at Solihull Metropolitan Council (ed.)

Paul Watson (Solihull MBC) receiving commendation.




RTPI West Mids Annual Award for Planning Achievement 2006

The RTPI Regional Awards for Planning Achievement, sponsored by Alliance Environment & Planning, were announced at the Summer Reception at Compton Verney. The Judging Panel comprised Hector Pearson (Regional Chairman), Julie Morgan (Chair of the West Midlands Urban Design Panel) and Ashley Baldwin (Chair of the Young Planners Group).

The overall Winner was Bridgnorth District Council with its new Severn Centre at Highley, a new Leisure and Community Centre built on the site of the old Highley Colliery and Miners Welfare Hall. This year's Commendation went to Solihull Borough Council for its 'New Housing in Context' Supplementary Planning Guidance Document, which arose out of a concern that high density windfall development was affecting the character and local distinctiveness of the mature residential areas of the Borough.

This year's competition attracted a relatively small number of entries. In future therefore the RTPI Region has decided to change the approach. For the past few years, submissions have been sent to the regions after they have been judged for the national RTPI Awards. This arrangement meant that many modest but excellent and ground-breaking schemes, and locally based initiatives were not put forward. For this reason it has been decided next time around to invite entries direct to the Regional Awards to supplement those passed down from the nationals.

So, if you have a scheme, project or initiative which you think deserves to be given recognition, why not think about entering for next year's award. A form has been included in this edition of Tripwire. 

RTPI 'Outstanding Service Award'

Regular Tripwire readers will recall that in February it was announced that three of our longest serving Institute members in the West Midlands region – George Goodall, Peter Lindsell and Bob Stokes – were to be honoured with RTPI 'Outstanding Service Awards'. These awards are presented to members who have actively served in the Institute on a voluntary basis for a period of 25 years or more. Graham Harrison was the first member of this region to receive the 'Outstanding Service Award', back in 2000.

All three were presented with their special awards at the RTPI Summer Reception at Compton Verney by the National President, Clive Harridge. (See photo).

In summary, (and in no particular order) they have undertaken the following roles:

George Goodall

- Member of the Executive Committee since 1982
- Branch Representative on RTPI Council from 1999-2004
- Membership Secretary since 1993
- Branch Chairman in 1989

Peter Lindsell

- Member of the Executive Committee since 1980
- Membership Secretary from 1987-1992
- Treasurer since 1994
- Branch Chairman in 1993

Bob Stokes

- Member of the Executive Committee since 1971
- On the Member Services Group since 1980
- Joint Editor of 'Region and Renaissance' published to mark the Branch's Golden Jubilee in 2000
- Branch Chairman in 1990
- Chauffeur to the stars – RTPI Presidents on their visits to the Region!

The West Midlands Region is indeed fortunate in having colleagues who have been prepared to give so much time and energy to provide services to its members and to promote the planning profession. Without their dedication to the cause this region would not have achieved anywhere near as much as it has over the years and the Institute would undoubtedly be the poorer without them. Congratulations and thanks to each of them. 🏆

Paul Harris Honorary Secretary



Editor's thoughts

Earlier this summer, whilst on holiday in North Devon, I stopped in a sleepy little town called Great Torrington. It is probably one of the few places of its size left in Britain which thrives on small local shops, each with their own particular style, character and appeal. There are no large food retailers in the town, in fact there are very few multiple stores at all.

I noticed however that most of the shop windows had leaflets displayed which said 'No to Tesco'. Apparently, the supermarket giant had recently submitted an application to build a new superstore on a brownfield site on the edge of the town centre. It struck me at the time that if a new supermarket captured much of the trade from local businesses, this could be a very different place in future – and not necessarily for the better!


Of course, with my private sector hat on, I can well accept that there might be positive spin-offs; improved facilities maybe, a better choice of products, lower prices perhaps. There might even be some additional custom for other shops in the town from people coming in to the supermarket from the surrounding villages to offset the decline in customers locally – but then that too would have an impact on the level of business in rural shops. These are difficult issues for planners and the conflicts are not always easy to reconcile. Indeed, there must be many examples of places where the impact of a new supermarket has been explored. To some extent we may never know what would have happened if....!

The CPRE recently published a report (June 2006) which examined a case study in East Suffolk where it tested the outcome of a failed appeal in Saxmundham where a supermarket proposal was successfully resisted. Evidently, a very sophisticated food-web was subsequently established which has since created a whole range of inter-dependent business operations based on local produce – so maybe the wheel really can turn in the opposite direction.

But a recent report presented to Birmingham City Council's Cabinet (31st July) explored the same issue from an urban viewpoint, investigating the activity of the large supermarket operators in expanding their network of stores and securing greater foothold in the City. On balance, the report concluded that *'the probable increase in the number of large supermarkets in the City will provide greater choice for residents and will bring significant regeneration benefits to particular centres'*. The report suggested, somewhat defensively, that *'there is no alternative to engaging with supermarket operators. An approach involving refusing to sell land could be challenged judicially and would not prevent*

continued development in locations which do not require City Council land and could lead to development in less desirable locations with less regeneration benefits'. Too true.

But the most interesting angle which has emerged recently is from a study into 'food miles'. This is an exercise in testing how far food has travelled to arrive on the consumers' plate. Clearly, the more sophisticated the range of choice and the more complex the network of distribution, the longer food has to travel to arrive at its final destination. The fact that supermarkets often pride themselves on being able to supply exotic fruits from the other side of the world and specialise in selling vegetables out of season (from foreign countries rather than home grown) provides a totally new angle on 'sustainability'. Why should the planning system be pre-occupied with trying to reduce people's local journeys to and from work when a growing network of 'logistics' companies are building cavernous warehouses served by an army of juggernauts transporting foodstuffs across the whole country – and throughout Europe.

Needless to say, that as life becomes more rather than less complicated and peoples' time, income and quality of life are factored into the equation, the logic of the one-stop-shop (or supermarket) becomes much more clear. Of course the essence of planning policy in PPG6 is to focus retail activity in town centres where possible in order to promote vitality as well as viability. But if we ever stopped to even think about the energy and sustainability implications of the current approach to retail policy, I suspect we would all be very surprised. 

John Acres Tripwire Editor

(PS. I would be interested to receive a response from retail planning specialists – perhaps this could be a topic for a future issue)



Ambitious new strategy ...

New proposals for the Black Country, designed to spearhead the region's urban renaissance, have recently been released by the Black Country Consortium. These form part of the Phase 1 review of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which has now been submitted. Members have until 23rd August to respond to the new proposals. Carol Trehearn from the Black Country Consortium spells out the changes.

The Black Country is changing! Three years ago, the Black Country's political and business leaders recognised the need to consider radical change in the sub-region to counter the process of decline of the last 30 years. They agreed to work co-operatively and commissioned the work of the Black Country Study. They adopted an innovative vision-led approach to deliver urban renaissance in the Black Country, in accordance with the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. Working as a public/private partnership, the Black Country Consortium (which encompasses the City of Wolverhampton, and the Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall) has established "common purpose" to achieve radical transformation of this heartland of the Industrial Revolution to create a growing and competitive multi-centred urban sub-region.

Black Country leaders have adopted a hands-on approach, proving true leadership for a future Black Country whereby they collectively set a radical Vision for the Black Country in 2031, and then commissioned a holistic set of studies from Economy to Diversity to inform the Black Country Strategy to achieve that Vision. This combination of Vision and evidence based intelligence underpins the Black Country Study. Through a series of Visioning events for the Black Country since 2003, Local Authority leaders, other public agencies, stakeholders and the private sector met to receive evidence from technical studies, debate that knowledge against the Vision aspirations and provide steers for the next stage of technical work.

A portfolio of technical evidence has thus been developed to test the interventions needed to turn the Black Country Vision into reality, with resultant political commitment and common purpose between public and private interests.

The Black Country Study sets out the strategy for future growth and competitiveness of the Black Country, creating jobs and improving skill levels, as well as providing better housing, accessible transport, environmental improvement and better shops.

The Black Country Study was completed at the end of May 2006 and can be downloaded from www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk. It sets out

Canal industrial background Brierley.



- Why the Black Country needs to change
- What needs to be done – the strategic direction and scale of change
- Where that change is to take place – the spatial strategy for the Black Country
- How that change is to be brought about – the delivery strategy

The Study underpins the statutory Draft RSS Phase One Revision, which was specifically called for by the Secretary of State in his approval of the West Midlands RSS. The Black Country Consortium has led on this Review on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The resultant proposed spatial strategy requires radical land use and environmental transformation of the Black Country, with a focus of development on Centres and Corridors. It proposes 100% brownfield land development and aims to protect the existing green belt.

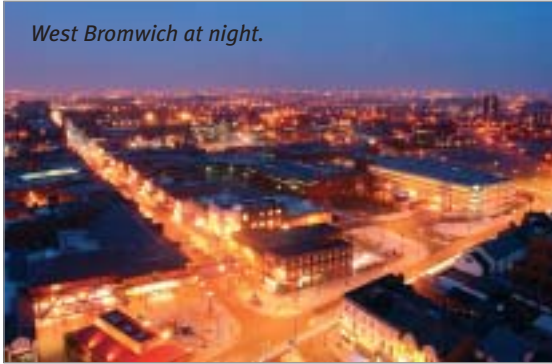
A truly polycentric sub-region is planned. The transformation of the Black Country will be led by the development of its four strategic centres, (Wolverhampton City Centre, Walsall Town Centre, West Bromwich Town Centre and a new strategic centre at Brierley Hill/Merry Hill, replacing the historic Dudley Town Centre) with the emphasis on carefully managed retail and office investment, coupled with leisure and "city living" development. Other centres will be supported to meet the needs of local communities. Dudley Town Centre will become a key location for housing and tourism.

Housing growth will be focused on public transport corridors, supported by environmental improvements in landscape corridors, notably

Sandwell canalside development Tipton.



... for the Black Country



West Bromwich at night.



Walsall Art Gallery.

along canals. Significantly, over 46,000 new homes are envisaged by 2021 (71,000 by 2031), which includes the redevelopment of poor quality industrial land into new housing areas.

80,000 new jobs by 2021 are provided for in the Study, increasing to 160,000 by 2031. Critically important to the strategy is a supply of high quality employment land. Four "employment land investment corridors" are proposed to focus investment on provision of quality employment land to support high technology-led businesses. This will provide for the creation of 1,600ha of employment land of the quality required to accommodate knowledge-led businesses.

The Centres and Corridors approach will be supported by the creation of an integrated transport network to ensure full connectivity between the four strategic centres of the Black Country, with Birmingham, between the proposed employment areas and Black Country communities, and the national transport network.

The Black Country Study provides a holistic strategy for the renaissance of the Black Country to 2031, and underpins changes to planning Policy set out in the draft Phase One Revision to RSS (which runs to 2021). This Revision was submitted to the Secretary of State at the end of May 2006 and is subject to public consultation until 23 August 2006.


Previous formal consultation was held on the **draft Project Plan** (February 05), consultation on **Choices** from November 2005 considered the spatial options, and an informal engagement on the **emerging draft RSS Phase One Revision** followed during March 2006.

Regular stakeholder engagement was achieved through a number of groups, including Thematic Working Groups to provide technical support and direct input into the Draft Revision Process.

The **Pre-submission Consultation Statement** submitted with the draft RSS Phase One Revision at the end of May 2006 outlines the partnership structures and approvals processes undertaken to produce the Revision.

Individuals, companies, organisations and all those with an interest in the Black Country are encouraged to comment on these proposals, which will become a statutory document when approved by Government. An RTPI members meeting was held on 15th August at the Black Country Consortium Headquarters at Oldbury.

The Examination in Public will commence 9 January 2007 and the Revised RSS is expected late 2007.

The Black Country Study, the submitted draft RSS Phase One Revision and all supporting technical studies are on the Black Country Consortium website www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk 

For hard copies of the Revision documents, contact Carol Trehearn 0121 569 2396, or email carol_trehearn@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk



Changes to the Development Control System ...

On 10th August 2006, new Government regulations on Design & Access Statements came into play. These new provisions are incorporated in the new Government Circular 01/2006.

Clive Rand of Barton Willmore spells out what the new Design & Access Statements mean for planners in the West Midlands.

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENTS

Introduction

The new Design and Access Statements are a fundamental change in the Development Control system. They are part of a seemingly inexorable drift towards more detail earlier in the planning process. The impact on outline applications will be particularly significant, requiring a step change in the level of information that needs to be provided.

What are they?

With effect from 10th August 2006, a new legal requirement (under S42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) for the preparation and submission of Design Access Statements to accompany planning applications will come into force.

The Design and Access Statement is a tool to explain and justify the design and access principles and concepts on which a development proposal is based, and how these will be reflected in individual aspects of the scheme. It should support other more detailed material submitted as part of the scheme.

The requirement for a Statement will apply to the majority of planning applications for full and outline planning permission, and to applications for listed building consent. There are few exceptions.*

This new legal requirement will affect your timescales for submitting planning applications and progression through the development control system.

Section 42 also inserts a new section 327A into the 1990 Act, which enables Local Planning Authorities to refuse to register applications which are submitted without a Design and Access Statement on the grounds that they are invalid.

The Design and Access Statement will be a material consideration, and the commitments made within them will be enforced through conditions or Legal Agreements.

One statement should cover both design and access, allowing applicants to demonstrate an integrated approach that will deliver inclusive design and address a full range of access requirements throughout the design process.

The Process

The Design and Access Statement is the output of the process, and must illustrate through drawings, images and text how the following steps have been addressed:

Assessment

Demonstrate an understanding of the context of the site and its surroundings. Consider the Physical, Social, Economic and Planning Policy Context

Involvement

Indicate who you have consulted: Local Interest Groups, Local Residents, Advisory Bodies, Local Planning Authority.

Evaluation

Evaluate and analyse the information, identify constraints and opportunities, resolve issues and conflicts, identify initial options.

Design

Design the scheme based on the earlier stages of the process.

** Exceptions are: (1) Engineering or mining operations; (2) development within the curtilage of single dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse where no part of that dwelling or curtilage is within a designated area eg. a conservation area; (3) a change in use of the land.*

Contents of the Design & Access Statements

Guidance relating to the contents of Design and Access Statements is provided by DCLG Circular 01/2006. CABE have issued their own guidance in 'Design and Access statements How to write, read and use them' May 2006. The following aspects of the design should be considered and discussed:

DESIGN COMPONENT

Response to Context

Demonstrate how the proposals respond to the physical, social, economic and planning policy context.



Amount

Explain and justify the amount of development proposed for each use, its distribution across the site, its relationship to its surroundings, and how accessibility is maximised.



Scale

Explain and justify the scale of buildings proposed (height, width, and length), why the selected parameters have been chosen, and how they relate to their surroundings.

Table 3

Area Use	Length (m)	Width (m)	Height (m)
Terrace	7	10	4
Detached	8	12	5/6
Area Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Height (m)
Terrace	7	10	4
Detached	8	12	6
Area Three	Length (m)	Width (m)	Height (m)
Terrace	7	10	4
Detached	8	12	6

Layout

Information relating to the location of buildings, routes and open spaces proposed. Explain and justify the principles behind the choice of locations of each use within the site

Appearance

The aspects of the place or building which determines the visual impression it makes. Explain and justify the principles behind the intended appearance. This should include consideration of architecture, external lighting, materials, decoration, colour, texture and detailing of the development.

Landscaping

Explain and justify the principles behind any future or proposed landscaping schemes. Address enhancement and protection, biodiversity, amenity, safety, appearance and sustainability.

ACCESS COMPONENT*

Equal Access

Explain and justify how all users of the buildings will have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network in perpetuity.

Policy

Explain the approach to access and how policies relating to access in relevant LDDs have been taken into account. Also indicate the applicant's policy and approach to access. Explain the principles which will inform the access arrangements at all scales from neighbourhood movement patterns where appropriate, to details of individual access points to buildings.

Consultation

Indicate who has been consulted in relation to access for all, particularly the disabled. Describe how sources of advice on design and accessibility and technical issues will be and have been followed.

Emergency Access

Access for emergency services should be explained including circulation routes around the site.

Site Circumstances

Illustrate how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

* Does not include internal aspects of individual buildings.

PRACTICE

In my experience, few of us are ready for Design and Access Statements. Essentially they are an audit of a comprehensive and logical design development process that seldom exists in reality. Added to this are the very many grey areas that authorities and applicants are going to have to

grapple with. This will lead to uncertainty for many months to come as the circular mix of aspirations and requirements turned into a deliverable and meaningful product. A particular challenge for designers will be to go beyond the aesthetics and embrace social and economic issues to ensure 'inclusive' developments.

SUMMARY

Statements will:

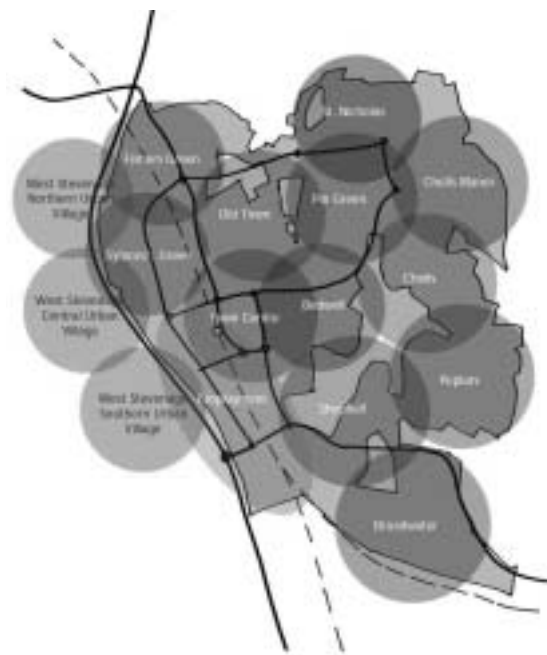
- Be mandatory for most types of development
- Be submitted in support of a planning application
- Be required for works to a listed building
- Be required with an Environmental Statement
- Be comprehensive and concise
- Be accessible with relevant drawings, plans, illustrations and images
- Ensure that design is of a high standard
- Ensure that the context has been appraised and taken into account
- Tell the story of the Assessment, Involvement, Evaluation and Design Process
- Reflect consultation
- Be an aid to Pre Application discussions with the LPA
- Be carried forward in part to the reserved matters/implementation stage

Statements will not:

- Be optional
- Be a substitute for drawings or the existing process
- Be retro fitted

Barton Willmore is one of the largest independent multi-disciplined companies in the UK.

For contact details please email
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David Addyman

David Addyman, Head of Service for Strategy Support in the Environment & Economy Directorate at Warwickshire County Council, sadly passed away on 31st May after a courageous five year battle with leukaemia.

David graduated from Lanchester Polytechnic in 1976 with a degree in Urban and Regional Planning. His sandwich course gave him work experience at the Northampton Development Corporation between 1974 and 1975, and on graduating David worked as a Research Assistant at the London Borough of Redbridge between 1976 and 1978. He went on to work at Wakefield Metropolitan Council from 1978 to 1981.

David joined the Planning Department of Warwickshire County Council in July 1981. He was appointed Group Manager for Information Management & Research in October 1985 following the merger of the Planning and Engineering departments. He subsequently joined the departmental Leadership Team in October 1999 as Head of Performance Management.



A strategic thinker, David helped to give the Authority a clear sense of direction. He led the way in information management, developing the principles and foundations which the Council continues to use today.

David was visionary in his approach to work, widening his influence to play a crucial part in the development of service planning, e-government, ICT, and achieving excellence in CPA.

He contributed nationally through the Planning Officers Society, particularly in the fields of research and information management. Throughout his career, and despite his illness, David maintained his commitment to his profession, his employers, and his colleagues.

Outside work, David was an enthusiastic walker, artistic photographer, music lover, badminton player, quiz-master, and committed Christian. David leaves a wife and two daughters.

Colleagues will miss him, his work and his sense of fairness. An all round nice guy.

Stuart McNidder MBE

Members may recall that Tripwire published an obituary of Stuart McNidder in the last edition of Tripwire. Stuart joined the City Council in 1985 and is credited with being in the vanguard of what has been termed in recent years the 'Worcester Renaissance'. He was awarded the MBE in 2005 for services to planning and conservation in the City of Worcester. Many of Stuart's friends, colleagues and a number of developers have supported the idea of a public memorial to his work.

Councillor Ian Imray (the Mayor of Worcester) has circulated a letter to notify people about the

Stuart McNidder Memorial Appeal. The most popular suggestion is a suitable piece of contemporary public art in the city centre – Stuart often used to complain that Worcester has a dearth of good public sculpture and we believe he would approve if money raised in his memory were to be used in this way.

RTPI members are invited to contribute to the Memorial Fund by sending cheques payable to The Stuart McNidder Memorial Fund and forward them to the Mayor of Worcester at Mayors Parlour, Guildhall, High Street, Worcester, WR1 2EY.

Planning Consultancy of the Year Award 2006

Entries are now invited for the 'Planning Consultancy of the Year' award which is open to all consultants including independent consultancies and sole practitioners.

All entrants will be assessed on the basis of evidence of the consultancy's capacity to provide high-quality planning services, their contribution to the development of sound professional planning practice and their track record in

implementation, as demonstrated in up to five specific projects.

The entry form can be downloaded from: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/about-the-rtpi/awards/consultancy/index.html> or contact the awards office on 020 7929 9473 or email: awards@rtpi.org.uk

Closing date 29 September 2006

Postcard from China – from Christina Mannering

Isn't it strange how a place, in this case Shanghai, enters your consciousness through a number of different channels? And here you may need an atlas to hand, as that, which was once on the fuzzy edge of my geographic understanding was suddenly brought sharply into focus on a recent study visit. A small delegation, comprising two town planners, two architects and an engineer all members of the West Midlands European and International Group, visited not only Shanghai but also Nanton and Nanjing.

The week's highlight was our presentation to senior officials of the Nanton Planning Bureau where we exchanged ideas on a number of wide ranging issues from 'park and ride' to building conservation. We all enjoyed the event and are grateful to our hosts for their hospitality and informative discussions. En route we also met engineers and made a visit to Arup's Shanghai office where they explained the ambitious plans for a new sustainable city for the Dongtan Eco-city. This rural island that lies in the mouth of the Yangtze River, along with bridges to Nanton, all being part of Shanghai's expansion.

Our itinerary included the former capital Nanjing where the contrast of historic and modern is fascinating as was the restaurant that could seat only 5000 people. The overwhelming memory is that China, and we only touched the edge (check that atlas) is the pure scale of everything from the Maglev train (431Km/hr), Shanghai's high rise, the new 4 lane motorways, the endless manufacturing areas, the longest bridge soon to be completed and the controlled chaos of the traffic. I hope we can arrange further visits...



Note: The European and International Group are organising a further trip to China in September for 8 days including a visit to Nanjing and an opportunity to visit the Chinese Grand Prix on 1st October. For further details please contact Christina_mannering@sandwell.gov.uk



Summer BBQ

The Young Planners in association with Judd Farris held another very successful event recently. Around 35 young planners (and a few older ones) for both the public sector and the private sector met on Friday 28th July to enjoy a summer BBQ at the Malthouse Pub at

Brindleyplace. Thanks go to Steve Simmonds of Judd Farris for organising the event as fun was had by all.

Please contact Ashley.Baldwin@redditchbc.gov.uk with any ideas for future Young Planners' event.

Young Planner of the Year Award 2006

How about a week in Philadelphia in April next year all expenses paid? This could be you, as guest of the American Planning Association at their 2007 National Planning Conference.

Then persuade your employers, colleagues, friends or relations to nominate you, or you can put yourself forward for this award.

Details of the award and an entry form can be found on <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/about-the-rtpi/awards/youngplanner/index.html> but remember you must be under the age of 35 and be a member of the RTPI.


Closing date 29 September 2006

West Midlands Planning Aid AGM

Clive Harridge, the RTPI president visited St Philips Chambers, Temple Row Birmingham in June to celebrate the achievements of West Midlands Planning Aid Service in the past year. Over 60 Planning Aid volunteers, Friends, planning professionals and clients of West Midlands Planning Aid Service attended.

Clive talked about Planning Aid England's Community Champions initiative. Leonora Rozee,

Director of Policy and Head of Profession at The Planning Inspectorate gave a stimulating presentation on the role of the Planning Inspectorate and the new development plan system.


For more information please contact: Sandra Newton at West Midlands Planning Aid Service, telephone 0121 766 8044 or e-mail wmcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk 

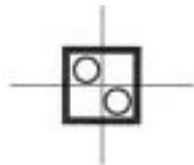
Members needed for the Conduct and Discipline Panel

We are currently looking for members to join the Conduct and Discipline Panel. The RTPI is committed to maintaining high standards of professional conduct and at present we receive approximately 30 – 40 complaints a year. The Conduct and Discipline Panel investigates and considers these complaints.

We are looking for two RTPI members to replace two of the current members who are both retiring from the Panel. In particular we would like one of these members to be a senior member of staff within a local authority planning department. The other member may be from any category of

membership, but must have an understanding of professional integrity and social justice issues. The remaining members of the Panel include a consultant planner and three lay members. Appointments are normally for three years initially.

The Panel meets four times a year in London and all expenses are paid. If you would like to be considered, please contact Ruth Richards for an application form or for an initial discussion. You can Email Ruth Richards, who is the RTPI's Complaints Investigator, at ruth.richards@rtpi.org.uk. 



WILBRAHAM ASSOCIATES LIMITED

Chartered Town Planning Consultants

Wilbraham Associates Limited is a busy, dynamic practice providing planning services to clients nationally, though our core areas are the Midlands, East Anglia, Home Counties and London.

Due to expanding workload we are looking to create two new posts:

Senior Planner

The person appointed will have a proven track record in consultancy, but also some Local Government experience, preferably in development control. An existing client base would be advantageous. We are looking for an individual who can work with minimum supervision, taking projects forward from conception to conclusion.

Planner

This post would ideally suit someone with a minimum of two years post graduate experience, preferably in Local Government. The successful candidate should be able to work under their own initiative, be enthusiastic and have good communication skills.

Both post holders must have corporate RTPI Membership.

Attractive salary packages are available for the right candidates, as well as the opportunity to develop within a growing practice with a strong client base.

Please apply in confidence with your CV and covering letter stating current salary and benefits to: Laurence Wilbraham, Wilbraham Associates Limited, 18a Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PN. Alternatively apply by email to info@wilbrahamassociates.co.uk

More information about Wilbraham Associates is available on our website www.wilbrahamassociates.co.uk

Closing date for applications: 8 September 2006

Membership, Education & Lifelong Learning

Forthcoming Consultations

I am pleased to give advanced notice of forthcoming consultations on two important RTPI initiatives due to be launched in 2006.

Further details on each initiative will be available in the consultation documentation, and the RTPI welcomes responses to shape the emergence of these important initiatives.

RTPI Learning Partnerships – promoting best practice in training & development

Through Learning Partner status, employers will be able to benchmark their training and development practices against RTPI standards, and can promote their commitment to these practices through the Learning Partner 'badge'. This aims to build and strengthen learning & development opportunities

for members and those seeking membership. Due to be launched in the autumn of 2006, with a three week consultation beginning **mid July**.

Associate Membership – a membership opportunity for a wider range of professionals involved in spatial planning

This new non-corporate class of membership will be a partial qualification and class of membership in its own right, as well as offering a structured route through to Corporate Membership. This is likely to appeal to professionals involved in spatial planning but who do not hold an accredited qualification.

Due to be launched late in 2006, with a four week consultation beginning **early September**.

Jacqui Ward jacqui.ward@rtpi.org.uk

Temporary Planning Officer (Maternity Cover) Shrewsbury & Atcham

Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council require a temporary Planning Officer for a minimum period of 6 months as maternity cover. We are seeking an enthusiastic planner to help with a large and varied workload including pre-application advice, applications and appeal work. The applicant should have a degree in Town Planning, good IT skills and preferably a minimum of 2 years post qualification experience. Salary range, £16,137 - £26,187 per annum.

For an application form see www.shrewsbury.gov.uk/jobs.

For an informal chat contact Geoff Harrison on 01743 281346 or Kate Stephens on 01743 281306. Closing date Monday 4th September 2006.



Judd Farris
property recruitment



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BRISTOL - 0117 974 2000

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HONG KONG - +852 2802 8062

Plan Ahead with Judd Farris

Head of Planning

...✚ **BIRMINGHAM** - £Neg + Excellent Benefits

Based in central Birmingham, an excellent opportunity exists within an International property firm who are currently seeking an experienced Town Planner to run their busy Planning department. You will currently be in either an Associate or Director level position and offer a track record of generating new business whilst continuing to foster existing client relationships. The role comes with an excellent salary negotiable on experience combined with an extensive benefits list. If interested, please contact me for a highly confidential discussion.

steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk Ref: SS17603

Senior Regeneration Planner

...✚ **BIRMINGHAM** - Up to £45k + Benefits

International consultancy who provide a comprehensive range of planning, management and environmental services seek a Senior Regeneration Planner to join their team. The role will involve working on an eclectic range of interesting projects throughout the Midlands region and further a field. You will be RTPI qualified with at least 4 years PQE combined with a proven track record in Regeneration. The role offers a fantastic salary, impressive benefits and the opportunity to work within one of the finest organisations in the region.

steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk Ref: SS16394

...✚ ...✚ For more information please contact Steve Simmonds on 0121 200 0800

● For our latest vacancies please visit www.juddfarris.com

Fancy a Clientside Role?

...✚ **WARWICKSHIRE** - Up to £33k + Benefits

A client side opportunity exists within a national organization for an experienced Policy planner. This varied role will include advising on Planning Policy issues whilst promoting the organization and their guidelines to external agents. You will be RTPI qualified with at least 3 years experience and possess strong communication skills. Any Utilities experience would prove advantageous. An impressive benefits package along with competitive salary are available for the right individual who wishes to move from a LA or consultancy background.

steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk Ref: SS16326

RTPI Planners

...✚ **BIRMINGHAM** - Up to £25k + Benefits

An international, independent, full-service commercial property consultancy are currently seeking recently accredited RTPI planners for their expanding team. You will be an articulate, intelligent, enthusiastic ambitious planner with at least two years planning experience keen to move forward their planning career. The role will give you the exposure and opportunity to work on a wealth of exciting projects. You will be supported with excellent career progression opportunities and impressive salary and benefits package.

steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk Ref: SS17348

tripwire

Events • Events • Events • Events • Events

REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Non-members of RTPI welcome to attend.

TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER Parish & Community Plans and Local Development Frameworks

How to integrate Community Plans into Core Strategy Policies, Site Specific Allocations, Area Action Plans and other Development Plan Documents. Joint event with RTPI East Midlands Programme will include:
Countryside Agency Pilot Project (2005) and DEFRA Study (2006)
Herefordshire case study
Role of the Rural Community Councils
Latest government advice on integrating plans
Speakers: Jeff Bishop – BDOR Ltd.
Felicity Sylvester – Freelance consultant planner
Malcolm Reid - West Midlands Planning Aid
Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council
Venue: Erewash Borough Council, The Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Long Eaton Derbyshire NG10 1HU
Time: 10am – 4pm (registration from 9.30am)
Cost: **£47.00 incl. VAT**
Details & Booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel & Fax: 0121 705 0136
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER Strategic Environmental Assessment & Sustainability Appraisal

Two years after the introduction of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) this day conference looks at how the process is working in practice.
Joint event with RTPI East Midlands. Sponsored by WSP Environmental Ltd
Programme will include:
• When SEA/SA should be carried out, the legal requirements
• Structure of SEA/SA
• Integrating other assessments such as flood risk assessment
• Involving consultee organisations
• Managing the process from a planner's view point
• Auditing, bench marks and best practice
Speakers to include:
Sean Nicholson - WSP Environmental Ltd
Ian Smith - English Nature
Charlotte Robinson - Lincoln City Council

Karl Fuller - Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
Legal representative
Environment Agency representative
Venue: Nottingham Racecourse Colwick Park
Nottingham NG2 4BE
Time: 10am – 4pm (registration from 9.30am)

Cost: **£88.13 incl. VAT** (£44.07 incl. VAT for full-time students & unwaged).
Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel 0121 705 0136
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER Sustainability by Design

Joint event with RIBA & RICS West Mids for Urban Design Week 2006.
Venue: Light House, Chubb Building, Fryer Street,
Wolverhampton WV1 1HT
Time: 10am – 2pm (Registration from 9.30am)
Cost: **£35.25 inc VAT** for morning conference & lunch
Speakers: James Fisher (BRE) "Sustainable construction & design".
Case Study 1 – Low Hill South, Wolverhampton.
Speaker Nigel Brown
(Wolverhampton City Council)
Case Study 2 – North Solihull Regeneration.
Speaker Jim Chapman (EDAW)
Details & Booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel & Fax: 0121 705 0136,
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

**WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER
Delivering Affordable Housing in Rural Areas**
Findings of Royal Commission
Venue: Assembly Rooms, **Ludlow**, Shropshire
SY8 1AZ
Time: Afternoon
Cost: **Free**
Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel: 0121 705 0136
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

OTHER EVENTS

SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER (10am – 4pm)
English Heritage event.
A Special Open Day to mark the 150th Anniversary of Singers Hill Synagogue, Blecher Street, Bham. (next to Mailbox)
For further information please contact Warren Lessar
0121 429 1500 or 0121 643 0854

TUESDAY 5 – WEDNESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER Planning Summer School

Organiser: TCPSS
Venue: University of Kent at Canterbury
Details & booking: SAS Event Management
Tel: 01722 339811
Email: info@planningsummerschool.org

SUNDAY 10 – TUESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER Isle of Man: It's not Little Britain

Organiser: RTPI North West
Venue: Douglas, **Isle of Man**
Cost: **£258.50 incl VAT**
Details & booking: Bev Watson Tel 0161 969 3815
Email: Beverley.Watson@rtpi.org.uk

THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER Retail Update Breakfast Meeting

Venue: Metro Bar **Birmingham**
Time: 7.30am
Organiser: RICS Birmingham Local Association
Cost: **£17.62 incl VAT** & full English breakfast
Details & booking: Carol Boyd Tel 0121 643 0105
Email: cboyd@rics.org

WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER – FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER 21st Century Development in the Historic Environment

Venue: **Bury St Edmunds**
Organiser: EHTF
Cost: **£135 - £400**
Details & booking: EHTF Tel: 0117 975 0459
Email: ehtf@uwe.ac.uk

WEDNESDAY 22 NOVEMBER

East & West Midlands Landmark Conference
The conference covers the following topics and issues; Planning Law update, Planning policy for development controllers, Gypsies, Section 215 notices, Flood Risk, Contaminated Land, Tall buildings.
Venue: Central Baptist Church, Charles Street, Leicester.
Cost £85 + VAT (includes lunch) (concessions £20)
Contact Jonathan Weekes 0116 254 7391
jw@landmarkplanning.co.uk
Brochures are downloadable from www.landmarkplanning.co.uk

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41 Botolph Lane, London, EC3R 8DL

tripwire

CPD

July / Aug 16

Triptease

Once again we have another set of teasing questions for you to tackle:

The questions this time are as follows:

1. Which state of the USA has the capital of Trenton?
2. Which fortified wine has 4 types: Malvasia, Bual, Verdelho and Sercial?
3. Which of the 7 Wonders of the World was a statue of Helios?
4. What is the world's largest surviving carnivorous marsupial?
5. What is celebrated on the 40th day after Easter Sunday?
6. On what day does Annie Lennox of Eurythmics, celebrate her birthday?

What are the answers to the six questions above and what is the theme which connects all six?

The first correct entry by post or Email in response to this edition of Tripwire will receive a copy of the award winning book 'Region and Renaissance' which records the planning changes in the West Midlands during the 50 years from 1950 to 2000, the lifetime of the West Midlands

RTPI Branch. The winner of the last *Triptease* competition was Graham Harrison who wins a copy of the book which he actually co-edited with his wife Janet.

The questions and answers to the last quiz were as follows:

1. Where did the 2006 Commonwealth Games take place? *Melbourne, Australia*
2. Which English Cathedral is home to the oldest clock in the world? *Salisbury*
3. Which race course is known as the home of the Kentucky Derby? *Churchill Downs*
4. What was the name of the astronaut in the David Bowie hit "A Space Oddity"? *Major Tom*
5. Who is the Director of Policy and Research at the RTPI? *Kevin MacDonald*
6. Which Birmingham Square is surrounded by the Central Library, The Town Hall, and the Museum and Art Gallery? *Chamberlain*

The theme common to all six was of course *Prime Ministers!*

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