



West Midlands Metropolitan Councils bid for 'City Region' Status

The West Midlands is lobbying for 'City Region' Status for the West Midlands Metropolitan area, following discussions with David Milliband last September and again in March of this year.

Council leaders from the West Midlands' metropolitan authorities, together with the Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands and the business community are pressing for strategic policy and funding decisions to be devolved from Whitehall to the proposed City Region so that they are more accountable to Midlands people. In a parallel move, the Potteries is also being promoted as a separate City Region.

The West Midlands is probably the best example of the genuine 'City region' model in the country, with its urban conurbation of Birmingham and the Black Country and its rural hinterland. Members believe more control over funding and policy is the key to securing regional economic growth.

In this edition, we hear from Dr Simon Murphy, the Project Director of the City Region on his ambitions for the future and we also focus on one of the early initiatives being pursued in Birmingham and North Solihull between Solihull Council and Bellway Homes to promote housing renewal.

As part of the move, the Metropolitan authorities (together with Telford) have bid to be considered as a 'growth point', in reply to the invitation in the Government's response to the Barker Report published just before Christmas.

The City Region initiative would involve creating an Executive Board to help determine policy, distribute funds and deliver outcomes on a regional basis for transport, skills, housing, regeneration and economic development with strong and effective local leadership.

These ideas will form an interesting backdrop for our Great Debate on the Future of the West Midlands Region which we will be holding in the autumn (see page 11).

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Courtesy 'Brief History of Birmingham', published by Brewin Books.



Birmingham City Centre.

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

COMMUNITY OR TREASURY?

Just as we're trying to settle down to get to grips with all the implications of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, and make the development plan system work, two things arrive to distract us. Both of which will have quite an effect, although what is hard to say.

The first of these is Kate Barker's review of land use planning. This review is hot on the heels of her first housing review, before the effects of that have bedded down. This review, focusing on the link between planning and economic growth, is again a Treasury-led exercise. There still seems to be a deeply engrained view in the Treasury that planning is holding up Britain's business competitiveness. The RTPI, in responding to her call for evidence, have said that the short term costs of planning to business are outweighed by the longer term financial benefits as well as the overall economic, social and environmental benefits accruing to the locality and nation that are derived from planning. Whilst it is difficult for the planning system to influence decisions made by very large or multi-national companies, it is recognised by many, that companies' main requirements are stability in the planning system and a level playing field. Many planners feel that the new system should be given time to work, without the pressures of yet another review, the product of which may serve to confuse the changes.

Next, is the latest cabinet reshuffle with Ruth Kelly now presiding over a new Department for Communities and Local Government which replaces much of what we had

come know and love as ODPM. The new department name is interesting: is there to be a greater emphasis on 'community'? And in what way? What will happen to the Communities Plan, promoted heavily by John Prescott in a department then without 'communities' in the title? Apart from costly rebranding, at this early stage it is hard to see what changes are likely.

I have to say that I am sorry to see Prescott go. He was the greatest political champion of regeneration that I can recall: he set up the Urban Task Force, taking many of its proposals forward in his urban white paper. He set out ambitious proposals for Thames Gateway, and gave a greater momentum to that region than ever before. He managed to achieve a consensus of support for regeneration from other ministers in a way that we've never seen before. Similarly, David Miliband has been moved on to DEFRA before the ideas he seemed to be formulating about civic leadership and city-regions could take off. Prescott and Miliband left unfinished business.



So, Ruth Kelly has many critical issues to address. She will need to apply some real joined-up-government to link the product of Barker 2 (and the Treasury's aspirations) with regeneration, with how to fund infrastructure, with the planning gain supplement, with the city-region debate, and with product of this summer's energy review. Or perhaps - summing the issues up - preside over community versus Treasury.

Hector Pearson Chair, RTPI West Midlands

RTPI Christmas Ball

Our Regional AGM in April at the Bank restaurant in Birmingham's Brindleyplace proved especially popular. Indeed, many planners in the region, particularly some of our younger members, have expressed a wish to have a major social event this year. So we are thinking of rounding off 2006 - with a Christmas Ball.

Our national president, Clive Harridge, both lives and works in the West Midlands and it would be fitting to end his annual term with a special occasion. The venue is yet to be decided, but both Chateau Impney near

Droitwich and the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham have been explored as possible locations.

The evening would be open to all RTPI members and non-members and you would be welcome to bring your partner and guests. We would be delighted to know how many planners in the region would be keen to come, so please email the usual Tripwire address with your thoughts, or contact either Julie Morgan at Stafford Borough Council who is organising the event, or your Regional Co-ordinator, Sue Griffith Jones on rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

RTPI West Midlands Summer Reception

Fancy a bit of culture? This year's RTPI West Midlands Summer Reception 2006 will be at Compton Verney, Warwickshire, on the evening of TUESDAY 4 JULY.

Compton Verney is an award winning art gallery housed in an 18th century Grade 1 listed mansion designed by Robert Adam surrounded by 120 acres of Capability Brown landscaped parkland.

RTPI National President (from our own West Midlands region) Clive Harridge will be attending the event and will be delighted to meet members and to present the

Regional Awards for Planning Achievement. There will also be refreshments and a chance to meet your colleagues and do a bit of valuable networking. Non-members of RTPI and guests are very welcome.

Full details (time, drinks, meal, cost etc) will be circulated shortly but please make a note of the date, 4th JULY, in your diary. It will be a great evening.

For more information and tickets please contact Sue Griffith-Jones (Branch Co-ordinator) RTPI West Midlands. Tel 0121 709 1599. Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

More Homes needed in Rural Areas

The 'Affordable Rural Housing Commission' Report, published in mid May has signalled a major shortfall in rural housing throughout the country, including the West Midlands. The report highlights a significant problem of poor affordability in rural areas caused by a simple lack of housing supply coupled with lower average incomes. This problem arises partly as a result of the current emphasis on the development of brownfield land and the concentration of housing provision and resources on the cities. However, whilst the report supports the Government's drive for urban regeneration and recognises that growth of cities can take pressure off rural areas, it nevertheless seeks a major increase in the provision of housing in rural communities and an increase in funding and greater cross subsidy to support more affordable housing.

The Commission, which was chaired by former Channel 4 Political Editor, Elinor Goodman, included two planners from the West Midlands, John Acres, Senior Planner from Redrow Homes (and your Tripwire editor), and James Caird, Chief Planning Officer at South Shropshire District Council, as well as representatives from the CPRE, Housing Associations and other key stakeholders. Indeed, South Shropshire emerges as being one of the authorities in the country with the most acute affordability problems.



Although national press reports focused largely on the controversial ideas for Government to explore a separate second homes 'use class' and to impose a Second Homes Impact Tax, the main thrust of the report seeks a significant shift in emphasis by effectively re-defining 'sustainable communities' so that transport and accessibility cease to be the primary determinant of the location of housing and social and economic factors play a more important part.

The report sets a target of building some 11,000 affordable homes in rural communities per year, at least three times the current output through public subsidy and emphasises the need to deliver both more affordable housing and more market housing (particularly at the lower end of the spectrum) to provide people with a foot on the ladder. In every region the Commission visited, including the West Midlands, problems of strategic imbalance were identified whereby rural areas were starved of badly needed new housing.

However, although the planning system may be seen as part of the problem – both through the application

of the sequential approach, the current narrow definition of sustainable development and the distribution of housing via the Regional Spatial Strategies – it is also seen as the solution. The Commission argues that a 'plan-led' approach using Housing Market Assessment coupled with a more balanced form of Sustainability Appraisal will help to deliver more sites in rural communities to help them survive and hopefully thrive.




The report, which has been supported by Government, urges authorities to work with developers and others to achieve more affordable rural housing through cross subsidy as well as through 'exceptions sites'. The 'Local Choice' initiative currently being pursued by Stratford on Avon District (which is a combination of both routes) is used as an example of best practice in the report.

The report contains a myriad of recommendations covering such issues as limiting the Right to buy to protect affordable housing in perpetuity, re-defining farm buildings as 'brownfield', promoting the role of the Rural Housing Enabler and creating a smoother pipeline of publicly funded housing schemes.

Above all, the Commission argues that rural people should be given the opportunity to obtain a decent home at an affordable price and that young people should not be forced to move from rural to urban areas simply to find a home that they can afford.



Copies of the report can be sent to any member (via Email) by contacting the Editor (John Acres) at the usual Tripwire address. A half day seminar to discuss the implications of the Affordable Rural Housing Commission's report is being arranged on Wednesday 11th July at Ludlow in South Shropshire. 

City Region Taking Shape

It's a busy time for reports, initiatives and policy pronouncements that affect the planning environment. Sir Michael Lyons' consultation paper and interim report highlights the role of local government as a "place shaper", and calls for fewer centrally set and driven targets allied to more freedoms for Councils. The recent Town and Country Planning Association report into the ever growing regional prosperity gap warns of the dangers of the growing isolation of the national Capital, and makes the case for more powers for larger Councils. Whilst just around the corner lies a long anticipated Government White Paper on the future of Local Government, which must be very near the top of the new Secretary of State Ruth Kelly's in-tray.

It is against this back drop that the efforts of eight urban core West Midland Councils to create a joint strategic way of working on key issues should be seen.

Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton are working collectively under the banner of a City Region. Leaders of seven of the Councils came together more than eighteen months ago to commit to pooling their efforts, and some of their resources, to boost economic and population growth (Telford joined the partnership more recently). The collective aim is to ensure that through their joint action, the eight Councils will make more improvements to the quality of life of their citizens, and make a greater contribution to the growth of the UK economy over the next 25 years, than would be the case if they were operating in isolation.


To achieve this aim, a number of key economic drivers have been identified for the City Region. These are Transport, Skills, Employment and Entrepreneurship; Competitive Locations for a Knowledge Economy, Housing, and Innovation, Creativity and Culture. In all these areas, the aim is to take more local control over the large sums of public money spent in the City Region area, whilst simultaneously introducing quicker and more focussed decision making.

One example of City Region working is transport. At present, even relatively minor transport developments can be subject to long and cumbersome decision making. Bigger schemes, such as the re-development of Birmingham's New St Station, the runway extension at Birmingham International Airport, or the construction of a major new road in the Black Country, can take so long as to actually undermine the competitiveness of the region. The requirement to consult a myriad of bodies, many of them unelected or appointed, can cause strategic transport decision making to occur at a snail's pace. Through the City Region the creation of a single, strategic Transport Board, with stream lined decision making powers could provide a tangible and timely boost to the competitiveness of the West Midlands. And because of our geography, this will also benefit UKplc. Such a Board would also direct large amounts of the Government money allocated to transport.



Another challenge that is being taken up by the City Region is housing. The objective is to arrest and reverse the decline in the population of the urban areas of the West Midlands, setting them on a growth path over the next twenty years. For this to occur, the eight

Council areas will be key to realising and exceeding the Urban Renaissance targets of the Regional Spatial Strategy. In the process there is the prospect of the additional household numbers growth in the City Region having a positive impact upon the potential demands that are being faced by many medium sized or rural district Councils.

Ultimately, the City Region is all about creating a more level playing field across the regions of the United Kingdom. With our neighbours in Wales having their Assembly, Scotland with its Parliament, and London with its GLA and Mayor, the City Region has the potential to help this part of England to compete better in the global market.. 


(Dr) Simon Murphy City Region Project Director

Bellway Homes secures deal with Solihull Council

North Solihull is currently the scene for a major regeneration initiative. As part of a wider effort to promote a new 'growth point' in the West Midlands, Solihull is now working in partnership with Bellway Homes and the Whitefriars Housing Group to improve 12,500 homes and build a further 8000 new houses.

The scheme which is spearheaded by the regeneration company, Inpartnership, aims to take a holistic 'community led approach' to renewal, which will involve building some 10 new primary

schools as part of a string of new 'village centres'. The aim is to lever in about £100 million worth of private investment.

North Solihull, including wards in Chelmsley Wood and Kingshurst, are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country, and yet in the south part of Solihull, most wards are in the least deprived categories. The new scheme will try and somehow bridge the gap in one of the most ambitious community projects in the country. 

Regeneration of North Staffordshire; Outline application submitted for Silverdale Colliery.

English Partnerships has submitted an outline planning application to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council for the future regeneration of the former Silverdale Colliery in North Staffordshire.

In November 2004 English Partnerships (EP) secured £13.6m funding from the government for regeneration plans for the 105 ha former colliery site through its National Coalfields Programme. Since then, EP has developed proposals with partners Newcastle under Lyme Borough and Staffordshire County Council in close consultation with the local community.

The aim is to reconnect this major brownfield with the village of Silverdale, which once depended on it for most of its employment. It is a technically demanding site, with proposals focusing on the sustainable restoration of areas of former opencast mining operations and colliery tips. A first phase, the Silverdale Enterprise Park, is already providing new jobs and this will stand alongside new open space, housing and community facilities.

The development includes three hundred energy efficient homes of different sizes, designs and tenure, three new children's play areas, a new village square and allocated space for recreation and community facilities which will be determined through a study by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. This is complemented by major new areas of restored open space, which link into the nearby Apedale Country Park. The masterplan creates a framework which brings these various elements together with safe, accessible pedestrian and cycle links in a landscaped setting, helping to bring the whole site back into viable and sustainable use. The mix of activities and of house types will help to strengthen the local housing market and provide additional support for the existing village centre.

Local people have been closely involved in the emerging proposals through a programme of community engagement over a four-year period. This has embraced drop-in sessions, workshops and exhibitions various venues around the village, and


has covered wide ranging issues of land use, community facilities, access, drainage, environmental quality and land reclamation. The theme of 'Silverdale New Vision' has been adopted to underpin the ongoing regeneration project, and includes a website which can be accessed at www.silverdalenewvision.info.

Fiona Piercy, English Partnerships' Senior Regeneration Manager in the West Midlands said, "We see this development as combining a number of key strands of regional and central government regeneration issues. It is a good example of how major regeneration initiatives such as the National Coalfields Programme can dovetail with other initiatives such as the housing market renewal Pathfinders.

"This is an important step in the regeneration of Silverdale Colliery and the village as a whole. We believe the masterplan, when implemented, will bring very real benefits to this area, immediately in terms of the new housing and facilities and, longer term, through the creation of further new business and jobs."



A planning decision is expected this autumn and if successful, the scheme should commence in 2008 with preparatory remediation and reclamation works next year.

The partners have been supported by Taylor Young, masterplanners for the scheme and White Young Green, planning and engineering consultants.. 

For further information contact: Nicola Rutledge at Willoughby PR on 0121 456 3004 or email nicolar@willoughby-pr.co.uk or Lynn Caddy, English Partnerships' Communications Manager NW/WM on 01925 651144.



Back to the drawing board for Live/work scheme

In what could be a landmark ruling – in more ways than one – an Inspector has decided that a controversial scheme for a large development of live/work units on a brownfield site in the countryside should be dismissed.

The proposal (featured in Tripwire 32; Jan/Feb 2006) by Brockhall Village Ltd was for 58 dwellings each accompanied by associated office/business units (together described as live/work units) on the Brickyard site in the shadow of the famous windmill which stands on Napton on the Hill. This prominent canal-side site lies in Stratford on Avon District in Warwickshire.

The site had been allocated in the, soon to be adopted, Stratford on Avon Local Plan for a mixed use development related to the canal, but the Inspector concludes that the scheme is predominantly residential and that it might set a dangerous precedent for other similar proposals. Although he acknowledges that the developer was prepared to link the occupation of the business units to the residential dwellings, most of them some 200-300 sq metres in size, he noted that they were not prepared to link the homes to occupation




of the businesses – resulting in a weakness in the homes/jobs relationship and therefore a danger that it could create an unsustainable outcome.

In terms of the detail; although he is impressed by the design of the buildings, in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright, (which were intended to replicate the streets and mews of Leamington Spa, some 10 miles away), he considers that this urban style of development would be totally incongruous within the countryside.

But he has certainly not rejected the idea of mixed use development on the site (or indeed the concept of live/work units which he describes as innovatory). After all, as he points out, the proposal for the site is highlighted in the Local Plan which is turn was prepared in the context of the Warwickshire Structure Plan. Nor does he reject the idea of homes in the countryside per se. Furthermore, the ubiquitous Great Crested Newts which turned up in the ponds at a fairly late stage in the process are not regarded as an absolute constraint. Instead he feels that mitigation is the key to their protection.

However, his main concern is to achieve a better balance of land uses within any scheme, with more advantage being taken of the tourist potential of the site and the unique canal-side location. He also argues that the developer should look at other models for achieving 'live/work' units in the countryside with a more secure relationship between any new homes and jobs, perhaps being delivered through a housing association.

So it is now back to the drawing board for the developers and hopefully the potential to come up with a better scheme in conjunction with the local community (who took a very active part in the appeal hearing) and the District Council, in order to achieve a better solution for what is a very sensitive site. 

John Acres

Editor's thoughts...

The juxtaposition of articles within a publication often tell their own story – sometimes more so than the content of the items themselves! In a recent edition of Planning Magazine two items in the Appeals casebook section particularly stood out.

The first example was a case where permission for a gypsy site within the South Yorkshire green belt had been granted on appeal after the Inspector decided that there was an overriding need for the development (a topic covered in a recent edition of Tripwire). Despite the site being occupied by an unauthorised encampment, the view was taken that the needs of the families should be given substantial weight (no doubt following the advice in the new Circular 1/06) and that to deny the development would infringe the human rights of the gypsies and travellers. The Inspector took the view that the harm to the green belt was outweighed by the human rights considerations.

The second example was a case where an Inspector dismissed a proposal for a earth sheltered bungalow in the Bristol and Bath green belt because the view was taken that it would cause material harm to the surrounding area's character and appearance. According to the appellant, only a limited amount of the structure would be above the ground and the building would be highly energy efficient, with consequent savings far exceeding the transport costs associated with living in a rural area. But the Inspector, although recognising that the impact of the dwelling would be very much less than a conventional dwelling, concluded that *'inappropriate development was harmful by definition'* and therefore rejected the appeal.

Of course, it is impossible to weigh up the relative merits of these cases without having been present at the hearings and it is perhaps unwise to draw comparisons, particularly involving potentially sensitive issues such as these. But it does rather highlight the dual standards which seem to apply

That first examination!

It was 9.30am on Tuesday 20th April, the date of the first examination. Everyone was slightly nervous. The seats were arranged in an arc around the Lichfield District Council Committee Room table. Each place had a name on a triangular 'Toblerone' name plate. It was deathly quiet. A stern voice instructed those seated in the Examination room to turn over their question papers. The Examination of the Lichfield Local Development Framework; Core Strategy had begun!

The Inspector, John Mattocks, introduced the Examination with a short address in which he emphasised the importance of 'front loading' of evidence before submission of the Core Strategy and underlined the fact that he had allowed additional opportunities for people to submit further evidence prior to the Examination. The implication was that he wouldn't let it happen again!

The absence of one candidate from the Examination was noted by the Inspector. The Regional Assembly had twice been invited to come, he said, but had declined to attend due to staff shortages. This seemed a tame excuse to those around the table. Perhaps they had not done enough revision beforehand we all wondered!

The Council gave their opening address, reeling off a whole list of duties and obligations which they had performed, quoting from the new Act. Then the Examination started in earnest. There were some initial skirmishes in which some participants raised procedural points about the conduct of the Examination in the context of the new Act. They may have regretted it. The responses by the Inspector and his initial probing showed that he had clearly given these matters a lot of thought. It all seemed very new, the process of testing 'soundness' was clearly going to be a difficult task.

In fact, after these early somewhat tense exchanges, the Opening Day turned out to be one of the most interesting 'Inquiry' sessions which many of the connoisseurs of the planning process had experienced.

The Inspector made it clear virtually from the outset that he welcomed discussion and debate, both on the policies and procedures and that he was interested in the views of fellow professionals. Often, exchanges would turn into conversations in which each and every participant was looking for the answer, even if they weren't always sure what the question was. But there was a broad common denominator between all the parties, including the Inspector, we were all learning!

As always on these occasions, everyone had their own interests and the evidence was dissected and numbers traded between the participants. Should there be a 10 or 15 year housing land supply? How much flexibility should be allowed? What was the status of draft PPS3? Above all, what actually constitutes a lack of 'soundness'?

However, the one key difference in this new Examination process which the Inspector explained time and again – was that firstly, he would have to report on the principles within the Core Strategy before he commented on the merits of specific policies or sites. (That would come later in his Development Control Policies Examination and Development Plan Allocations Examination later in the year). Some pointed out that it might be difficult to achieve one without the other – but as he stressed the system is clear, and secondly, that his decisions are binding – a change which places a much greater responsibility on his shoulders.

So now Lichfield District Council will have to wait patiently for their Examination results in July. Will they pass the 'soundness' test and carry on to the next Exam? Or will they be forced to try again and re-take the Examination later in the year? Only time will tell. 🏠

John Acres Tripwire Editor (and one of the participants at the first few days of the Lichfield LDF Core Strategy Examination)

...Editor's thoughts

when considering human rights (an issue recently taken up in Parliament), not to mention the strange attitudes the planning profession appears to have adopted towards accommodating development in the countryside and especially in green belt.

The Affordable Rural Housing Commission report, which was published earlier this month (and on which I have been serving for the last 6 months or so) takes a fresh look at rural housing (or rather the lack of it) and concludes that the planning system needs to adopt a more positive approach towards identifying rural housing sites, both for affordable housing and for market housing (whether as a means to lever in more social housing or as a benefit in itself). The term 'Sustainable Communities' has almost become synonymous with 'urban areas', meaning that under the sequential approach, rural communities have completely lost out. This has resulted in soaring house prices and a desperate problem of affordability for local people. The Commission report aims to reverse

that trend and recommends using the planning system – both through Sustainability Appraisal and Housing Market Assessments - to pinpoint where housing need and demand exists and ensure that new homes are delivered.

According to both the ARHC report and recent research by the Commission for Rural Communities, meeting the need for new rural homes would only mean building a handful of new houses in each community. Maybe now is the time to also re-assess the impact of new development in the countryside and decide whether it contributes positively or negatively. Perhaps those dwellings which have a minimal impact, for example those designed to achieve high levels of energy efficiency or where people can live and work in one place should be treated as a special case. Surely Human Rights dictate that everyone should have access to a decent home at a price they can reasonably afford. 🏠

The Futures Bright... The Futures Coventry...

Coventry seems to have hit the headlines a lot recently and so your editor thought that a bit of an update wouldn't go amiss. So muggins here got the job of writing it!

So lets start with the national news.

Jean Martin Folz, Chief Executive of PSA Peugeot Citroen flew into Coventry on 18th April to announce the closure of Peugeot's assembly plant at Ryton with 2300 direct job loses and inevitably more in the supply chain. The world's press rushed to be filmed outside the Peugeot gates and claimed to be reporting from Coventry. Actually Ryton is just outside the City boundary and is in Warwickshire in Rugby Borough.

Obviously in the light of the recent closure of Browns Lane for Jaguar assembly, this was a further blow, and almost the demise of major car manufacturing in the area.

Coventry has become used to dealing with these "opportunities" and a task force of key players from Warwickshire, and Coventry, now known as the Peugeot Partnership, was announced the following day and is already meeting regularly to consider the impact on employees, the economy, local communities together with the planning implications.

There is no way of disguising that this is bad news particularly for the workers and their families affected but the Coventry and Warwickshire economy has shown remarkable resilience and innovation in developing new opportunities to replace the old smoke stack industries.

On the positive side in relation to former manufacturing sites: -

- Peugeot have announced that redevelopment of their Stoke Plant in Coventry's inner city is safe and they will still be building their new UK headquarters there which will retain over 1000 Peugeot jobs in Coventry. The mixed use redevelopment scheme including commercial development and housing, which has been the subject of 5 years of planning work, is a major boost for the area and a key catalyst in regenerating the Stoke Aldermoor part of the City.
- Jaguar's Brown's Lane Assembly Plant has been brought by a new company, Delamar, wholly for manufacturing

modular housing units which utilise innovative and as yet secret processes.

- The closure of the Browns Lane Assembly Plant has not however signalled the end of Jaguar's long association with Coventry, indeed the opposite is true. Jaguar are keeping their Research & Development Division at their Whitley site on the south side of the City and transferring their headquarters, museum and veneer facilities from Browns Lane to there Jaguar have also signed a deal with St Modwen's to develop a major business park at Whitley which will provide further opportunities to diversify the local economy.
- Major redevelopment is already underway on the former Agco/Massey Ferguson site on the western periphery of the City. Again a mixed-use scheme has been developed with a major employment content likely to be aimed at the niche manufacturing and development market.

So what else are we up to...?

The UK's first truly City Centre Ikea has actually started on site with the demolition of the former Co-op store which currently stands on the site. The new



...An upbeat report by James Russell

store should be ready for trading in time for Christmas 2007 and we are working on how to best capture its catalyst effect for the regeneration of the City Centre.

We have submitted our bid for the UK's first regional casino to be located at the Ricoh Arena, the new home of Coventry City FC. The Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport has appointed an independent Advisory Panel under the Chairmanship of Professor Stephen Crow to advise on the location of the first pilot. The Panel have received 27 applications and at the time of writing we are sat here with bated breath awaiting the decision on the short list to go forward for further consideration, which is due to be announced on Friday 19th May. Nobody's betting on the outcome but by the time you read this you will know whether we are Premiership contenders or have just missed the play off! Even if we don't hook the really big one, a major casino is already being fitted out by the Isle of Capri within the existing Ricoh complex under existing planning permission and licensing provision. The Isle of Capri are spending about £30M on the fit out including WOW factors including indoor lakes and waterfalls!



In terms of the bigger picture the City Council is working with partners to bring forward major area regeneration schemes at: -

- Swanswell. To extend the City Centre northwards with a mixed use development covering 60h including offices, new City College and Learning Quarter, City Centre Medical facility, Creative Industries Business Park and major housing redevelopment.
- Paragon Park. To regenerate the heart of the inner city with 1000 new dwellings, employment and leisure uses.
- Henley Green & Wood End NDC. To create a new sustainable community of 3000 plus dwellings to replace a worn out peripheral former public housing area with multiple problems.
- Canley Regeneration. A regeneration initiative focused on a major area of former public housing on the west side of the City to create a more sustainable community with a new focus and greater job opportunities.

On the even bigger scale we have been grappling with the challenge of the new planning system to turn the Government rhetoric of a "better, simpler, faster more accessible system" into reality. We've set it all out in our approved Local Development Scheme, we're out to consultation on our SCI and Core Strategy and will be consulting very shortly on our approach to Sustainability Appraisal. With a fair wind we'll be publishing our preferred options in the

Autumn on our first batch of Development Plan Documents on Housing, Employment and Retailing.

That's all very well but what are you doing on the regional front, I hear you cry! Strategic Authorities have been asked by the Regional Planning Body (RPB) to provide them with advice in relation to the Phase 2 Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. Coventry was not content to submit one load of advice, we decided we needed to submit two! Coventry sees itself very much in two Sub Regions, the Coventry Solihull & Warwickshire Sub Region and the West Midlands Metropolitan City Region, which now incorporates Telford, so we were party to both sets of advice and clearly had a bit of a task to try and ensure they were compatible and complementary. Hopefully we've succeeded.

Finally, the political control of the Council changed at the recent local elections and were now Conservative for the first time in over 25 years. We've been in No Overall Control for the last year but with a Conservative Executive, so the change probably won't be as dramatic as might be imagined. The Conservative administration have a clear vision for a growing city so there is probably be quite a bit here for planners to do! 🏠

James Russell Head of Planning and Strategic Transportation; Coventry City Council

The RTPI Going Global ...

The RTPI is arguably the world's leading planning organisation and it is very active internationally. This article identifies some of the international work of the RTPI and sets out my own views on international planning issues. My involvement in international planning began when I was Chair of the West Midlands Branch in 1995 when my theme was 'Europe'. Although at the time there was a great deal of interest in European issues, there was also much scepticism (nothing changes then!). I set up the West Midlands Europe Group and the group has continued to develop since then, now being much more international.

As President of the RTPI I have had great opportunity to further develop the RTPI's international role through working with the Institute's International Committee, the International Development Network and the Commonwealth Association of Planners.

Some may say: *Why bother with international interests? Haven't we enough problems to deal with in the UK? We have nothing to learn from other countries – their cultures and politics are often very different from our own, and planning approaches are not transferable.*

I say in response that we ignore international issues at our peril. There are many reasons why the RTPI should work internationally; these are just some of them:

International Members: the RTPI around 1000 members overseas whose interests as members need to be addressed.

European influence - There will no doubt be Euro-sceptics among you who believe we should pull out of Europe or substantially diminish our involvement. I take the opposite view and believe that by working proactively within Europe we can improve our own opportunities as well as assisting other European countries particularly the accession states.

Globalisation of business – many large companies operate globally and think globally. Those of us in the consultancy sector see many opportunities for international work including through our UK clients with overseas interests. Also, decisions taken by global companies can provide valuable opportunities for the UK but can also lead to dire consequences when plants close or businesses relocate. Sadly we have plenty experience of the latter in the West Midlands.

Climate Change – this can only be properly dealt with through action at an international level. Planning has a significant role in addressing the causes and impacts of climate change – if this premise is true in the UK then it will also be the case elsewhere in the world ... and we need to say so!



... by Clive Harridge (National President)

Poverty and rapid urbanisation – in my view these problems are far more urgent than climate change. With some 30% of the world's population living in poverty and some 70% of the urban population of Africa living in poverty stricken slums and informal settlements the problems are acute and immediate. If we believe that planning helps improve quality of life (if you don't believe this then contact me straight away!), then how much more that will be the case in those areas where the basic resources of life (food, water, sanitation and shelter) are missing. Planners addressing these issues is just one way to help 'make poverty history'.

Additional planning resources – Overseas planners (principally from Australia and New Zealand) are the mainstay of planning in many London boroughs and elsewhere – without these overseas inputs many planning departments just would not be able to function. I have been discussing with the Planning Institute of Australia the possibility of mutual recognition between our two institutes. This would make it much easier for UK planners to work in Australia, and vice versa.

The RTPI has a very strong international reputation, and the UK planning system is admired by many around the world (perhaps some in the UK may find that hard to believe!). One of my roles as President is to help strengthen our international relationships. We already have good international links through the Commonwealth Association of Planners, but these need to be developed further - many Commonwealth countries are in real need of support to tackle poverty and rapid urbanisation as referred to above. A few years ago I was

involved in an initiative to develop an international Planning Aid programme – at the time this did not get funding and no progress was made. I am keen to look at this again and see what opportunities there may be. One model might be an approach taken by the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA). PIA put together an effective Government funded planning aid package for Sri Lanka to help in the response to the Asian tsunami disaster. There may be potential for this approach to be used in other locations where urgent action is needed. I will be discussing this idea further with the RTPI and others.

Over recent weeks I have visited Australia and USA where I held discussions about the forthcoming World Urban Forum and World Planners Congress to be held in Vancouver in June. The RTPI is one of the leading organisations involved in both these globally important events which will be discussing planning's role in tackling urban poverty – see my column in Planning for more details. I have also been having discussion with the Urban Planning Society of China and I am hopeful of strengthening links there as well – I was delighted to hear that the West Midlands International group recently carried out a study visit to China. I believe there is much to gain from links with China and there are potentially great business opportunities for us as well. 🏢

Clive Harridge RTPI National President

*Please contact me on clive.harridge@rtpi.org.uk with any comments on this article or any other RTPI matter. **Clive Harridge, President, RTPI, Director, Entec UK Ltd***

The future of the West Midlands - the big debate!

Major changes are likely to occur in the West Midlands region over the next decade. Birmingham, the Black Country and the Potteries are in the throes of regeneration and a Phase 1 review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is already well underway. A more fundamental review of the RSS (Phase 2) which will incorporate new higher housing requirements is moving towards its Options stage in September, with a major Examination programmed for next year and the Regional Economic Strategy is also exploring Options for Review.

These are testing times. The RTPI Region is keen to generate a debate on the potential and emerging options. What does a City Region

concept mean for the West Midlands? How can we stimulate urban regeneration in the conurbations whilst at the same time not stifling the potential of the rest of the West Midlands? How are we to address rural issues in a region which is 80% countryside but where the vast majority of people live in the urban areas?

The West Midlands RTPI proposes to stage a major debate early in the autumn to address these key issues which will include our National President, Clive Harridge alongside representatives of other professional bodies and of course the Government Office, Regional Assembly and Advantage West Midlands. Watch this space for more information. 🏢

Obituary for Stuart McNidder MBE

Many of you will recall that Stuart McNidder, (Head of Development Services) was awarded an MBE in last years New Year's honours list (reported in the Jan/Feb 2005 edition of Tripwire). Sadly on 22nd April Stuart died after a long battle against cancer. The following tribute is a summary of an obituary written by Paul O'Connor (The Planning Manager) at Worcester City Council.

It is often said 'There will not be another person like him'. In this case it is probably true. Stuart McNidder was qualified both as an architect and a town planner and his ability to understand the implications of any proposal from both perspectives was one of his great strengths.

Stuart was educated at Solihull School, (the *alma mater* for the McNidders) which is where his passion for the built environment emerged. He continued his education at the Birmingham School of Architecture from 1961 to 1966 and Birmingham School of Planning from 1966 to 1968. He qualified as an architect in 1969 and then spent another two years qualifying as a planner.

Following work with Birmingham City Council and Harlow Development Corporation (where his interest in the new town ethos was sparked), he moved to Coventry City Corporation as a Housing Architect and then Architect/Planner. The late 1960s was a time of great change in Coventry and the city was buoyant with the confidence that comes with economic prosperity. Stuart was therefore able to apply his architectural skills during his early career on a very broad canvass, but he also developed a very close attention to detail, taking a keen interest in the design of a window, the use of render or the colour of a front door!

He joined Redditch in 1971, which had been designated a New Town in 1964 to take Birmingham overspill. Stuart rose to become Chief Planner and an acknowledged expert on Master Planning and the methods needed to address the opportunities and limitations for strategic growth. However, he retained his concern about matter of detail on issues such as crime prevention, design and layout and sense of place so that the development of Redditch was of the highest quality.

But Stuart will be remembered most for his work at the City of Worcester, where he spent the last 21 years of his life as Chief Architect, Planning Officer, Director of Technical Services and Director of Development Services. Stuart has been very much at the forefront of the renaissance which has

occurred in Worcester over the last 20 years and now has an outstanding reputation for planning and conservation.

During his term at Worcester City, Warndon Villages received both local and national awards from the RTPI for its attention to detail; the great improvements to retailing in the city centre were recognised by being acknowledged as an outstanding town centre by the RICS, the in-house designed South Quay fountain was rewarded for its townscape value and finally the City's transportation policy was highlighted as best practice by ODPM at the first introduction of its restrictive policies in PPG13.



It is fitting that the day after Stuart's death the Worcester News ran a feature on the 'Rough Guide of England' that criticised buildings in the city. None of them were built in Stuart's time and the *vox pop* highlighted the merits of the City. Residents and visitors said of Worcester, 'It is beautiful. I like the layout and the way the Council has integrated the old buildings and the new. It is a lovely place to visit and live. I wouldn't go anywhere else.' Little did they realise they were giving Stuart the most appropriate epitaph.

The renaissance of Worcester continues. Stuart was fully committed to leading the way in future projects to enhance the city. It was Stuart's vision to resolve the problems of the Cathedral Roundabout and the Riverside and to improve the lot of the local football club by the provision of a new stadium. He also had a passion for the St Clement's Gate regeneration project that will soon see the development of a second campus for the newest university in the country.

Stuart spent his whole career in public service and was recognised locally, regionally and nationally as an authority in planning and architecture, becoming a Fellow of the RTPI and, most deservedly, being awarded the MBE for his services to planning and conservation in the City of Worcester. He will be missed by his family, his colleagues and the planning profession for his professionalism, zeal, energy, drive, attention to detail and sheer enthusiasm. The worlds of local government, planning and architecture will be poorer for his passing and Worcester has lost a true public servant. 🏛️

A full obituary may be obtained from the editor or from Paul O'Connor (The Planning Manager) Worcester City Council (01905) 722534 poconnor@cityofworcester.go.uk.

New focus and new name for RTPI Consultants' network

The Sole Practitioners' Network (SPN) has recently changed its name to the Independent Consultants' Network (ICN). Catherine Middleton, Network Manager, outlines the reasons behind this and the plans for future network activities.

The Sole Practitioners' Network was first formed in 1997 and aimed to reflect the interests and concerns of self-employed consultants, and consultants working in SME practices. Recently, though, members felt increasingly that the Network's name did not fully reflect its make-up, and that it might even be deterring potential members from joining. Accordingly the name has been changed to the *Independent Consultants' Network*, to reflect more accurately the nature of its membership whilst retaining its unique ethos.

It is felt that the new name will appeal both to existing and new members, and that it will help to make the Network more inclusive by providing a voice for both sole practitioners and consultants working in small, independent consultancies. It also recognises the fact that independent consultancies with a small number of staff face many of the same issues as sole practitioners (e.g. in terms of running a business).

The Network welcomes independent consultants from all regions who would like to meet with others working in a similar set up, and participate

in events that are tailor-made for independent consultants. Members receive a weekly email bulletin and invitations to attend free or low-cost events. Joining is free for RTPI members and can be done online at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/cgi-bin/memsys/network-signup.php>.

It's only been quite recently that the Network has had its own manager, and this increase in available staff time means that we can now look at a wider programme of activities. The next event will be the Network's second annual conference, a one-day event on Friday 9 June. The conference will build on the success of last year's event and bring together a variety of speakers covering topics relevant to independent consultants. One of the things I would really like to do is organise Network events in different locations, as many of the past meetings have been held in London.

The Network is also looking for Steering Group members, and is keen to ensure that both sole practitioners and those working in small, independent practices are represented. Please do contact me if you are interested in this role and would like to know more about what's involved, if you would like more information about the conference, or indeed with any queries about the Network. I can be reached on 020 7515 1913 or catherine.middleton@rtpi.org.uk. 📞

Catherine Middleton Network Manager

National Association of Planning Enforcement (NAPE)

By the time you read this edition, the National Association of Planning Enforcement (NAPE) will have been launched. A new Constitution and Business Plan has been prepared for the birth of NAPE at an event on 6th June at the RTPI headquarters at Botolph Lane in London.

Over the last 2 to 3 years, a Steering Group has been working on creating the new association out of the existing Planning Executives Association. The new association has the full support of the RTPI.

The NAPE is not intended to replace the very successful Enforcement Forums which have occurred on a fairly regular basis all over the country. These will continue. There will also be a networking helpline, a proper career structure for enforcement officers, quality training for enforcement staff and an Annual Conference. The annual fee, which will not apply to existing RTPI members, will be £48 per annum.

The key aims of the Association will be to:-

- Act as a representative body to provide a voice for those working across planning enforcement,
- To raise the profile of planning enforcement within and beyond the planning community and to gain recognition for its importance within the planning process,
- To extend good practice within planning enforcement,
- To raise levels of professionalism in planning enforcement and to gain recognition for that professionalism, encouraging professional development and working closely with the RTPI to encourage members to undertake professional qualifications and
- To facilitate networking amongst planning enforcement staff.

For more information please contact Michael Cowley at Sandwell MBC. 📞

Planning Aid AGM


Planning Aid AGM

**Wednesday 14th June 2006 at 5.45pm
at St Philips Chambers, 55 Temple Row,
Birmingham B2 5LS**

**"The role of the Planning Inspectorate
and the new development
plan system"**

You are warmly welcome to attend the Annual Meeting of West Midlands Planning Aid Service. This year it is to be hosted by St Philips Chambers, in Birmingham City Centre on **Wednesday 14th June 2006**. A light buffet will be provided from 5.45pm. The meeting will begin at 6.30pm. Clive Harridge President of the Royal Town Planning Institute will attend and

promote the recently launched Planning Aid Community Champions initiative. The event will include a review of the year by the Chair of WMPAS Advisory Group, Mark Clarke.

Guest speaker Leonora Rozee OBE BA (Hons) MRTPI, Director of Policy and Head of Profession at the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) who will talk on the progress of the Inspectorate in the context of the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 

*If you would like to attend the meeting please contact Sandra Newton, Planning Aid Caseworker, WMPAS, Unit 319, The Custard Factory, Gibb St, Birmingham B9 4AA
Tel 0121 766 8044
Email wmcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk*

RTPI West Midlands Members' Survey

Don't miss the opportunity to have your say!!!!


The response to the Membership Survey included in the last edition has been encouraging, but we have decided to extend the deadline for replies to ensure that we get a clear and more representative response from regional members.

It is therefore not too late to send in your completed members survey and if you include your name & email address on the form you could still win the £30 book or record token.

Responses to date suggest that:-

- everyone reads Tripwire and finds it interesting
- most members haven't noticed any real improvements from the "New Institute"
- Birmingham is the most popular venue for CPD events
- the 'Planners in the Workplace' service needs a lot more publicity
- the majority of members aren't particularly interested in RTPI social events
- a specialist group for 'Old Planners' is needed!!

The survey is in the centre of the March/April Tripwire. If you have mislaid or already 're-cycled' your copy, please visit the RTPI website where past issues of Tripwire are displayed at <http://westmidlands.rtpi.org.uk/newsletters/> or either contact the Tripwire Editor; John Acres

at acresclark@lineone.net or the Regional Administrator Sue Griffith-Jones Tel 0121 709 1599 and at Email westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk who will send you another copy. 

Sue Griffith Jones RTPI Regional Co-ordinator

PLAN AHEAD BUILD A BETTER FUTURE

We are a major centre for planning education with a national reputation for high-quality industry focused, accredited study programmes.

Our courses offer an opportunity for the discerning student to explore a breadth of subjects which will lead them into a valuable and rewarding professional career.

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'Joinedupdesignforschools'; Touring Exhibition Event

As part of an innovative design exhibition series, a number of meetings have been held in the early part of 2006 at the Custard Factory in Digbeth, Birmingham. I attended one meeting primarily about showing how young people can and should become involved in the design process of major projects i.e. schools. It is an important, yet often overlooked issue, as are the youngsters who have to use and look after these facilities. It has been widely recognised that the best way of ensuring that a building has a long-term future is to ensure that the people who use it have a sense of ownership about the place they are using. This makes the building 'socially sustainable'.

An example of this approach was that of the Hugh Myddelton Primary School in London. There, a pupil client team was set up to interact with professional designers over two school terms, thus allowing pupils to convey what they actually wanted from any new building project for their school. Issues that came up from this consultation included the pupils wanting more colour to enhance the atmosphere and mood of their school, desiring sheltered spaces at break where they could chat and 'chill', as well as wanting secure places to put their books,

stationary, bags and coats. The process enabled the designers to use this information to inform their architecture, create models of what the new buildings could look like and then have the pupils look over them and make comments and suggestions. The designers benefited by ending up with much more successful buildings, and the young people taking part gained and enhanced essential career skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, presentation and reasoning skills.

The main lesson of the exhibition was that the best way of ensuring success and long-term sustainability in major projects is to involve the people who will have to use and live with them at the earliest possible stage. This means not just talking to them, but also actively using interactive methods that embrace them and that make sure that their contribution is accurately and positively reflected in final design proposals.

I would highly recommend any upcoming similar events to anyone interested in finding out more about the process of 'young-people friendly' urban design. 

Andrew Morgan NAI-Fullerpeiser



Judd Farris
property recruitment



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Plan ahead with Judd Farris

Director of Planning

... BIRMINGHAM - Up to £65k + Bonus + Bens

Leading global property firm is currently seeking to appoint a new Director for their Birmingham office. You will be an ambitious, dynamic, experienced planner with a proven track record presently working at either Associate or Director level within a leading organisation. On offer is a highly competitive salary, bonus structure plus a wealth of benefits.

steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk Ref: SS/17603

Assistant Planner Required!

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

Dynamic, expanding planning consultancy based in central Birmingham, are looking for an Assistant Planner to join their team. You will be bright, ambitious and have a genuine interest in Planning. With at least 12 months experience you will be working towards full RTPI status and looking to take the next step in your career.

steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk Ref: SS/17609

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

Senior Planners Wanted!

... WEST MIDS - Up to £34k + Benefits

A fantastic opportunity exists for a Senior Planner to join an expanding team in the West Midlands. You will have at least 4 years PQE from either the public or private sector combined with a genuine enthusiasm for Planning issues. Experience of EIA assessments would prove advantageous to your application.

steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk Ref: SS/17612

Interim DC Planners Wanted!

... MIDLANDS - Up to £20 per hour

A number of Development Control opportunities exist within a large Local Authority in the Midlands for up to 6 months. You will ideally offer at least 18 months previous DC experience. The role will focus on the processing of a variety of planning applications from across the region.

steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk Ref: SS/17604

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

tripwire

Events • Events • Events • Events • Events

REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Non-members of RTPI welcome to attend.

TUESDAY 20 JUNE

Birmingham International Airport

Guided tour (land & air side) plus presentation on planning & development at the airport. Airport security limits numbers.

Airport guides/speakers: Jack Wilson (Head of Community & Environment) & Steve Hill (Planning & Transportation)
Venue: Birmingham International Airport
Time: 1.45pm – 5.00pm
Cost: £11.75 (including VAT) £5.87 (for students and unwaged)
Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel/Fax: 0121 705 0136
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE

Midsummer stroll along the Heart of England Way

Meet at the foot of Castle Mount, by St Nicholas Church, at the end of Beaudesert Lane, Henley in Arden at 6.45pm. Walk to Fleur de Lys pub for a drink. Walk back to Henley in Arden.
Time: 6.45pm – 10pm
Cost: **No charge**
No need to book. Non-members of RTPI welcome
Details: Sue Griffith-Jones Tel: 0121 709 1599
Email: westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk

TUESDAY 27 JUNE

Environmental Impact Assessment

Venue: Offices of MJ Carter Associates, Baddesley Colliery Offices,
Main Road, Baxterley, Atherstone, CV9 2LE
Time: 4.30pm – 6.30pm
Speaker: Leslie Heasman, MJCA
Cost: **£10 incl VAT**
Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel: 0121 705 0136
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

TUESDAY 4 JULY

RTPI West Midlands Summer Reception

& presentation of Regional Awards for Planning Achievement (sponsored by Alliance Environment &

Planning Ltd) & RTPI Outstanding Service Awards
Venue: **Compton Verney, Warwickshire CV35 9HZ**

7.00 pm Welcome drink, courtesy of Phillips Planning Services Ltd

7.15pm Tour of Compton Verney art gallery

8.30pm Drinks & canapés

9.00pm Short address & presentation of Regional Awards by RTPI President, CLIVE HARRIDGE

9.45pm Departure

Cost: **£17 incl VAT** for drinks, canapés & entrance to the art gallery
Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel: 0121 709 1599
Email: westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk

THURSDAY 6 JULY

So what is good urban design?

Venue: Council Chamber, Lichfield
Time: 1.30pm – 3.30pm
Speakers: Dan Roberts (Lichfield DC), Meredith Evans (Borough of Telford & Wrekin & CABE) & Geoff Wright (AIMS & CABE)
Cost: **£10 incl VAT**
Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel: 0121 705 0136
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

TUESDAY 11 JULY

Waste & Planning

The approach to planning & regulation of waste management is changing. New technologies demand a new approach. Conference will review the changes in EU thinking & the proposed changes to the Waste Strategy 2000.
Joint event with RTPI East Midlands & CIWM
Venue: Nottingham Racecourse, Colwick Park, Nottingham NG2 4BE
Cost: **£88.13 incl VAT**
Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel: 0121 705 0136
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

TUESDAY 11 JULY

Delivering affordable housing in rural areas. The Affordable Rural Housing Commission's findings

Cost: **Free by appointment**

Venue: Assembly Rooms, Ludlow
Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones
Tel: 0121 705 0136
Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

OTHER EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE

Protecting Our Water

What the Water Frame Directive means for you
Venue: **Nottingham Belfry Hotel**
Organiser: ADAS
Cost: **£88.13 incl VAT**
Details & booking: Lisa Hallington
Tel 01623 848335
Email: lisa.hallington@adas.co.uk

WEDNESDAY JUNE 28 – FRIDAY JUNE 30

Planning Convention 2006

Planning - the cutting edge
Venue: Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London
Cost: £250 + VAT (reduced rates for students, unwaged etc)
Details & booking: RTPI conferences
Tel 0845 120 9602
Email: services@rtpiconferences.co.uk

TUESDAY 4 JULY

Trees & Development: the Roots to Best Practice

Venue: Belfry Hotel, Wishaw, near Birmingham
Organisers: The Arbor Centre & Cheshire Woodlands
Cost: **£170 plus VAT**
Time: 9am - 5pm
Details & booking: Tel 01225 351849
Email: info@arborcentre.co.uk

MONDAY 24 – WEDNESDAY 26 JULY

National Regeneration Conference

Regeneration-doing it better: engaging people, changing neighbourhoods
Venue: **Warwick University**
Organiser: ROOMatRTPI
Cost: **£145 - £380 + VAT**
Details & booking: Emma Tozer Tel 020 7929 9490
Email: emma.tozer@rtpi.org.uk

Triptease

Our *Triptease* competition seems to be growing in popularity. The questions are set by Sheena Terrace, Planning Aid Co-ordinator, and a compulsive quizzier herself.

The questions this time are as follows:

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

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

The winner of the last *Triptease* competition was Brian Roberts from Dudley MBC. He wins a copy of the award winning book 'Region and Renaissance' which chronicles the planning changes in the West Midlands during the 50 years from 1950 to 2000, the lifetime of the West Midlands RTPI Branch. The first correct entry by post or Email in response to this edition of Tripwire will receive a copy of the book.

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

1. 12th March 06 has seen the first Formula One G. P. being raced in which country? *Answer: BAHRAIN.*
2. "Corridors of Power" was a phrase coined by whom in 1956, and subsequently used as the title of his 1964 novel. *Answer: C.P.SNOW*
3. Written by James Sanderson and produced by him as a show in the US, based on Scott's poem "Lady of the Lake" and referred to by him as "The Boat Song", which piece of music is now most commonly associated with the President of the U.S.? *Answer: HAIL TO THE CHIEF.*
4. What was the name of Edward Heath's yacht? *Answer: MORNING CLOUD.*
5. Originally the name of a 1971 album containing Lindisfarne's first hit, which song was a No. 2 for them aided by Paul Gascoigne in 1990? *Answer: FOG ON THE TYNE.*
6. According to Christopher Isherwood's poem why does "the common cormorant or shag, lays eggs inside a paper bag"? *Answer: To keep the LIGHTNING out.*

The theme common to all six was *the weather!*

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

tripwire

CPD

May / June 16