



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

RTPI UPDATE

October 2007

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MEMBERSHIP, EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING DIRECTORATE

DIRECTOR: SUE PERCY

Assessment of Professional Competence (APC)

- Following a submission deadline in July, 19 new members were elected through the APC on 31 August 2007.
- Since the first assessment deadline in October 2006, 31 Licentiates have been elected to Chartered Membership at the first attempt, with 7 referred and three failed. Each of the five candidates referred at deadlines prior to August 2007 have gone on to be successful having submitted further information.
- The October deadline will mark the start of a full cycle of APC applications, and the RTPI anticipates a large number of applications for this deadline.
- A successful APC Assessor training day was held in London on 4 September, where new Assessors were able to receive the training and previously trained Assessors to refresh their skills ahead of the October deadline.
- The APC will be a feature of two Young Planners events in the East of England and London Regions in September, and the East Midlands in October. The North West is also planning a second event, and the South East, London and East of England young planners are working to stage a large event for young planners, featuring the APC, in November.
- The Membership Team is also happy to attend regional and national events aimed at attracting new members or indeed any event that relates to membership and education issues. Please get in touch with the membership team at membership@rtpi.org.uk
- With the start of the new academic year, representatives from the Membership Team will again begin to visit accredited planning schools to promote the APC.

RTPI Learning Partners

- We are pleased to announce that Cambridge City Council, Charisma Spatial Planning, East Sussex County Council, London South Bank University, Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners, The Planning Inspectorate, The Planning Service Northern Ireland, Savills LLP and Three Rivers District Council have all recently become RTPI Learning Partners.

Associate Membership

- 30 new applications for Associate Membership have been received for consideration at the October meeting of the Membership Panel.

MEMBERSHIP

- As of 24 July 2007, the Institute has a total of **20594 members**.
- Included in this number is: 15,217 corporate members (Chartered Members, Fellows and Legal Members).
- 903 Licentiates of whom 385 were elected in 2007.

- 347 new fee-paying Student Members in 2007.
- 626 free student members (full- and part-time final-year students) in the current academic year.

Education & Lifelong Learning

- University of Glasgow was awarded full accreditation in August 2007.
 In 2005 Professor David Adams, the Ian Mactaggart Chair of Property and Urban Studies, was asked by the University to undertake an extensive consultation and market analysis exploring the potential for a postgraduate programme in property planning at Glasgow. The RTPI subsequently awarded provisional accreditation status in 2006 for a combined intensive master's programme consisting of three courses: City & Regional Planning, City Planning & Real Estate Development, and City Planning & Regeneration. The new courses at Glasgow bring the total number of the one year intensive masters programmes to 20 and compliment the existing accredited Scottish programmes at Heriot Watt University, University of Dundee and University of Aberdeen.
- A second benchmarking visit to South Africa is due to take place in October, visiting:
 University of Johannesburg, North-West University (Potchefstroom), University of the Free State (Bloemfontein), University of Pretoria, University of Venda (Limpopo province).
- Staff will also meet representatives from the South African Planning Institute (SAPI) and South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN) to discuss international planning education issues and exchange experience.
- The RTPI's partnership approach to accreditation is about to enter into its fourth year of operation with 23 universities holding partnership board meetings including, for the first time, the University of Aberdeen.
- The Education Review Steering Group met for the second time in July to progress this review. A work plan was agreed, and a number of recommendations proposed. These will be consulted upon once further recommendations have been agreed after the third meeting in October.

Staff Announcement

We are pleased to announce that Sandra Whitehead joined the RTPI in June of this year to take up the position of Complaints Investigator. Her role is to support the Conduct and Discipline Panel and Appeals Committee in the determination of complaints concerning the professional conduct of its members by assessing information provided by the complainant, investigating and analysing the evidence and reporting to the Panel. Sandra also advises members of the Institute upon matters relating to the professional Code of Conduct.

PROGRAMMES & SERVICES DIRECTORATE DIRECTOR: DEBBIE SORKIN

Overview

Key developments over the past few months have centred around major events such as the National Regeneration Convention; initial preparations for the 2008 Planning Convention; and Planners in the Workplace. The quarter has also seen

the new Directors in Scotland and Wales starting in post, alongside significant developments for membership in Northern Ireland. Planning Aid also goes from strength to strength, and we now have a new Planning Aid Manager in Sheena Terrace, working to Dave Chetwyn in his role as Head of Planning Aid England.

National Regeneration Convention 2007

The National Regeneration Convention took place over three days at the end of July at Loughborough University. Although attracting similar numbers as the Planning Convention, its appeal is to a community-wide as well as professional audience. Now in its eighth year, the Convention is becoming the UK-wide event aimed specifically at people involved in local and community regeneration, with large numbers of delegates from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Above all, it is an event where planners come together with community representatives and activists, people from housing associations, policy makers and politicians to explore, network, reflect and learn on equal terms.

*Within the title *People, power and poverty: the role of communities in shaping places*, the Convention showcased good practice and experience from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Four main themes of place, power, deprivation and cohesion reflected the enormous development in the practice of neighbourhood renewal in different parts of the UK.*

At the same time, it was gratifying to see the central role accorded to planning across all of the themes. As a plenary speaker during the 'place' theme, for example, Raymond Young, Chair of Architecture and Design Scotland, called on planning to reclaim the visionary and central role it had had in driving regeneration in local government. Julia Unwin, the new Director of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, called for a refocusing of planning away from a system perceived to be based on objection, towards a more positive approach. And John Nicholls, Chief Executive of the Leicester Regeneration Company and a planner by background, called for an end to the false distinction between economic, physical and community regeneration, suggesting that they were different aspects of the same idea within planning.

There were also salutary reminders of why regeneration remains so necessary and fundamental. There are still vast disparities in living standards and social mobility in the UK. Andrew Ross, Head of Economic Regeneration at Leicester City Council, noted that there was a ten-year difference in life expectancy levels in different parts of the city. And whilst physical regeneration may be taking place, cohesion is a growing concern. A report from the Institute of Community Cohesion suggested that, if anything, cohesion was becoming worse at school level, with children increasingly gathering in ethnic groups and even resorting to ethnic languages in order to exclude others.

That aside, there was an emphasis this year on learning from people's experiences at grass-roots level. Bernadette McAliskey, now Director of the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme, went so far as to advise community groups not to take funding until they had their partnerships in place and knew how they were going to spend it. And Ros Dunn, Director, Local Development and Renewal at CLG, not only explicitly asked convention delegates to contact her so that CLG could hear about experiences of community regeneration on the ground, but gave them her email address, thereby suiting the action to the word.

The learning from plenary sessions were complemented by a wide range of workshops and masterclasses, with topics ranging from civic and cultural identity, focusing on the role public art can play in bringing communities together, through to tackling racism, engaging gypsy and traveller communities, place-shaping in city centres, creating sustainable places, LDFs and LSPs, and putting communities at the heart of the housing and regeneration agenda.

Next year, the Convention is likely to take place in Scotland for the first time. Hazel Blears, the Secretary of State for Communities, has already confirmed her interest in speaking at the event, diaries permitting.

We would welcome the views of GA members on the format and content of the Convention. Please contact Debbie.sorkin@rtpi.org.uk.

Planning Convention 2008

Preparations for next year's Convention, which will take place on 12 – 13 June at the QE II Centre, have already begun. Initial thoughts include refreshing the format for the event, so that there will be a mixture of plenaries and workshops on both main days, alongside an opening address from the President, a Ministerial address and a plenary debate on Day 2. Sue Percy, Director of Membership, Education and Lifelong Learning, has joined the Core Group and we would welcome hearing from GA members who are also interested in playing a part – again, please contact Debbie.sorkin@rtpi.org.uk. A small task group is taking forward the detailed work around the programme and the Core Group will next meet on 5 October.

Other Events

The **Masterclass series in spatial planning**, given by Janice Morphet, has now begun, with planners at Savills taking part in a class in September. This will be followed by a Masterclass forming part of the **Independent Consultants' Annual Event** in London in October. **The Young Planners' Annual Conference** will be taking place this year in Glasgow on 19 – 20 October, with a theme of *Changing Climate – Changing Planning*. In addition, a workshop in collaboration with Oxfam, on **Gender, Planning and Regeneration** is planned for the end of this year. The **RTPI in Scotland Annual Conference**, entitled *Fulfilling Planning's Potential*, will be taking place in Edinburgh on 16 November, with Jim Claydon amongst the speakers. **RTPI North West** will be holding its **Regional Conference and Annual Dinner** on 19 October: the Conference will focus on innovative approaches to sustainability, plan-making and housing provision, with speakers including Leonora Rozee, Jim Claydon, Professor Peter Roberts and Dr Oliver Hartwich of the Policy Exchange Think-tank. And **RTPI East Midlands and RTPI West Midlands** are holding a joint event to mark World Town Planning Day on 8 November.

In collaboration with the TRICS Consortium of local authorities in England, the RTPI is co-hosting the **19th Annual Transport and Development Planning Conference** on Tuesday 20 and Wednesday 21 November 2007. Jim Claydon will chair the first day. Speakers include Rosie Winterton, the Minister for Transport, the Rt Hon John Gummer MP, Teresa Villiers MP (Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury), Chris Shepley, Leonora Rozee and Karen Dee, Head of Infrastructure at the CBI.

Awards

The 2007 RTPI Planning Awards 2007 garnered a total of 87 entries this year, from which the judges selected 32 to go through to the second stage of the judging process. Site visits to second-stage projects are underway, with a view to the judges making their decisions on winners and commendations towards the end of this year. The Awards lunch and presentation will be held on **Thursday 7 February** at The London Hilton in Park Lane.

The London Planning Awards, run jointly with London First and the GLA, received 40 entries this year, significantly up on last year. Again, judging is underway with Richard Lemon, Senior Consultant at Roger Tym & Partners and a past Chair of RTPI London representing the RTPI. The presentations will be made by the Mayor of London on **Tuesday 15 January 2008**.

There is still time to enter the **Planning Consultancy of the Year Award** and/or the **Young Planner of the Year Award**: the closing date for both awards is Friday 28 September 2007.

The Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2007, run by the Institute in association with the Scottish Executive, have received 38 entries this year, up from 30 in 2006. There are four categories this year: Development Plans, Development Management, Development on the Ground and Community Involvement. The judges are Joan Burnie, Fiona Moriarty and Richard Holland and they will be meeting later in September to shortlist the entries. The awards will be made at a ceremony in March 2008.

Simon Jenkins, the *Guardian* columnist, political journalist and author, will be giving next year's **RTPI Annual Lecture**, which will again be held at the SOAS Brunei Gallery, London on **Wednesday 20 February 2008**.

Finally, it should be noted that there was a record attendance at the **Past Presidents' lunch** and meeting held in July, chaired by Chief Planning Adviser Kelvin MacDonald. Their evening dinner will be held at the Royal Overseas League on Tuesday 4 December.

Planners in the Workplace

PIWP continues to develop, with the number of enquiries increasing across a broad range of issues and monthly features in *Planning*. In particular, over the past three months, Chris Sheridan, *PIWP* Manager, has been working closely with RTPI in Scotland on a RICS-led initiative to raise the profile of professional staff in the public sector. We are finalising our guide to developing Collaborative Working Groups, following the piloting of a cross-disciplinary group in RTPI Yorkshire, and Chris is in discussion with RTPI North West about starting a similar group in Manchester in partnership with Construction Knowledge Exchange. Chris has also supported a Leeds-based initiative where local employers are working together to recruit and retain skilled professionals within Leeds. In the meantime, we are looking to develop a toolkit for Performance Management designed around helping local planning authority planners to develop their management and leadership skills. For further information, please contact chris.sheridan@rtpi.org.uk.

Member Services

The Regions and Nations continue with a packed programme of events. Jim Claydon is still going strong on his tour of the Regions and Nations visiting planners wherever they may work, landing in Northern Ireland in September and heading off to the North East and the delights of Newcastle in October. At the same time, the Regional Websites are evolving their own identities and are excellent source of local news on planning issues and events.

Many regions are preparing for their annual general meetings and this is an opportunity to stand for election on Regional Activities Committees and Regional Management Boards. Chairs, Treasurers and Secretaries of the world come forth! The Regions and Nations Panel have convened a sub-group to look at resourcing of Regions in the future and they will report with suggestions next year. Following a joint meeting of the Regions and Nations and the International Committee a good practice guide for running international events is being put together and will be posted on the website.

At the same time, we are now reaching out to more members than ever before. The RTPI E-Bulletin is now reaching 6,000 members a month and is proving to be a popular and useful point of contact between members and the Institute.

For further information, please contact charles.veal@rtpi.org.uk.

Northern Ireland

We recently received some excellent news from the Planning Service in Northern Ireland, which confirmed that it would begin to pay RTPI member subscriptions. This has been a long-standing issue and represents a real turnaround for the Institute. Because of this, we had a 'roadshow' emphasis to the RTPI Presidential Visit to Northern Ireland in September, with visits to planners across the public and private sectors, listening to their issues and setting out what the RTPI could offer them. Further visits are in the pipeline, and we are also framing meetings with the Head of the Planning Service and the Department of the Environment in terms of how the RTPI can help them meet their recruitment and retention/development aims.

RTPI in Scotland

Veronica Burbridge took up the post of National Director of RTPI in Scotland on 2 July. Veronica has been the RTPI in Scotland's Planning Policy Officer since 2005, dealing with policy issues and the implications of the new planning reform legislation. The Institute is currently in the process of recruiting a new Scottish Policy Officer, and we are hoping to be in a position to interview candidates on 27 September. Veronica has been featured in *Scottish Planner* and in the RTPI Pages of *Planning*, and arrangements have been made for Veronica, the SEC Convenor and the Senior Vice-Convenor to meet with Steward Stevenson, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change on Monday 15 October.

At the same time, A Scottish Parliamentary Cross Party Group on Architecture and the Built Environment has been established. The National Director, RTPI in Scotland will act as the Treasurer of this Group. Members of the RTPI in Scotland's Task Group on Development Management have met with staff from the Scottish Government to discuss forthcoming consultation on Development

Planning Regulations; and members of the Task Group on the National Planning Framework have met with Scottish Government staff to discuss the proposed content of the NPF and have submitted comments on the SEA Options Paper.

Veronica has also attended a meeting of the RICS chaired Public Sector Professional Futures Group at which concerns regarding employment of professional across the public sector were discussed. It was agreed to write to John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary Finance and Sustainable Growth and to discuss possible research with the Improvement Service.

The Scottish Planning Education Forum is currently developing an action plan for promoting planning education and careers. The role to be played by the RTPI will be discussed by the Events, Training and Communications Sub-Committee.

RTPI Cymru

Dr Roisin Willmott took up her post of National Director, RTPI Cymru at the beginning of September. Roisin is responsible for both policy issues and membership development across Wales.

Whilst, as in many areas, activity over the summer period has been relatively quiet, work for RTPI Cymru over the forthcoming months will be busy. The Welsh Assembly elections in May and the agreement by Labour and Plaid Cymru to join forces have led to new Ministerial Portfolios. Jane Davidson is the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, and has responsibility for planning. She was one of a number of Welsh speakers to address the Summer Schools in Swansea this year. The assembly is likely to be placing a great deal of emphasis on pursuing policies which promote the climate change agenda and affordable housing. RTPI Cymru will be seeking to work closely with the Assembly Government in its work. RTPI Cymru are a partner in the Regeneration Skills Collective, along with five other built environment professional institutes (engineers, architects, landscape architects, housing professionals and surveyors). The Collective held its annual conference in September and will be launching its Memorandum of Understanding. The Collective have recently commissioned a research contract to assess the current and anticipated professional and cross-professional skills capacities required to deliver high quality, integrated and sustainable regeneration throughout Wales over the next ten years.

Networks and Associations

This has been a busy time for the Institute's Networks and Associations, which have grown to approaching 5,000 members. The new Rural Planning Network was launched at the Planning Convention in June and already has 100 members. NAPE, the National Association for Planning Enforcement, held its first annual conference in September, which was over-subscribed. Jim Claydon provided the keynote address.

Six new members have been elected to NAPE's Management Committee, providing for full regional representation. PIPA (the Politicians in Planning Network) held its first conference in Birmingham in June, receiving very positive feedback.

A joint networks meeting was held in August allowing members to discuss the RTPI's proposed response to the Planning White Paper directly with the Director of Policy & Communications.

The networks are writing a year-long series of articles for RTPI News on climate change. Contributions from the Rural Planning Network and the Young Planners' Network have been published to date.

The Networks hosted a reception at Planning Summer School this year and PIPA hosted a reception for the Elected Members' School. The Development Planning Network and Transport Planning Network have joined forces to hold a one-day conference in Birmingham in October on *Spatial Plans and Transport Planning*. The Independent Consultants' Network's annual conference is being held in October and will be an update on spatial planning tutored by Janice Morphet.

Planning Aid

The profile of Planning Aid in England has been raised significantly in the last few months, with eleven mentions of the service in the Planning White Paper, a reference to Planning Aid by Ruth Kelly in her speech introducing the White Paper in Parliament, and continuing appearances in regional and trade media. Paul Hudson, Chief Planner at CLG, publicly committed to doubling the funding for Planning Aid at his speech to the Planning Convention in July, and there is a further undertaking to make an additional £1.5 million available to 'bodies such as Planning Aid' in relation to supporting community engagement in major infrastructure projects.

Following on from the publication of the White Paper, Planning Aid England was specifically asked by CLG to undertake a consultation exercise in each region, using focus groups of people who had been directly helped by the service. These groups have now taken place and the report sent to CLG.

Whilst the final decision on funding for 2008-2011 will await the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October, we are continuing to prepare the ground, making the case both to CLG and to other external stakeholders about the role, value and value-for-money that Planning Aid provides. 2006-07 produced record results for Planning Aid England, with some 38,000 people being directly helped last year through casework, community planning and education activities. It is also estimated that 11,000 volunteer hours were worked during the 2006-07 financial year, equating to a consultancy value in excess of £1 million. More information on the service is contained in this year's Annual Report, which has now been published. Hard copies will be available at the Committee meeting or can be obtained from the National Planning Aid Unit – please contact planningaid@rtpi.org.uk. At the same time, there have been developments within the National Unit, with Sheena Terrace, formerly Coordinator of West Midlands Planning Aid Service, appointed to the post of Planning Aid Manager, working to Dave Chetwyn in his role as Head of Planning Aid England. Sandra Newton has taken on the role of West Midlands Planning Aid Coordinator on an interim basis.

International

The European Council of Spatial Planners continues to be active in promoting the planning profession at European level. It has officially moved its registered

office to new premises in the “European Quarter” of Brussels, and its profile in the city is now the highest it has ever been; its officers are regularly invited to participate in round tables, juries and conferences which (for better or worse) tend to be in the European capital. Jointly with RTPI, ECTP plans a conference in the autumn (or perhaps very early in 2008) on the implications of the “European Territorial Cohesion” for regional strategic planning. (There is a useful briefing about this development on the website of the German spatial planning ministry: http://www.bmvbs.de/-_2655.997066/Informal-Ministerial-Meeting-o.htm, explaining the importance of two key documents adopted at the Leipzig meeting of ministers of regional planning. ECTP submitted a policy paper to the Ministers; members of ECTP including RTPI then wrote to ministers concerned to ask for EU consultation with planning practitioners in pursuit of territorial (spatial) cohesion alongside the other EU goals of social and economic cohesion.

RTPI and its partners in the Global Planners Network are preparing for the next World Urban Forum (the fourth) to be held in Nanjing, China in October 2008 under the auspices of UN-Habitat. GPN will have its own Congress immediately before the main forum, and has chosen the theme “Urbanisation, Poverty and Climate Change” for this event. We are working with Chinese hosts in Zhenjiang (Jiangsu Province) to make an event which will appeal to Chinese planners as much as visitors; we plan to organise a study tour to bring people to Zhenjiang (and on to Nanjing for the UN-Habitat event if they wish).

As part of the preparation for these two events in China, the Institute is to research into the world-wide capacity for planning, and we have secured a grant of \$50,000 from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in the USA to pursue this. Will French has been recruited to champion this work.

RTPI is now an active member of PI-UKChina, the 17-member network of UK built environment professional institutes with a shared office in Shanghai. Our special responsibility is communications, including helping to develop a new website and editing the quarterly newsletter. For more information visit the website <http://www.pi-ukchina.org.cn/en> or ask the International Affairs Officer (international@rtpi.org.uk) for the PI-UKChina newsletter.

CORPORATE PLANNING & RESOURCES DIRECTORATE

DIRECTOR: KEITH MITCHELL

The summer season is historically less busy – although this year there has not been any noticeable decrease in activity – with staff and members taking annual leave. This is important for all staff and we have been proactive in encouraging leave – some are still finding it difficult. Again in general terms we are gearing up to the autumn increased levels of activity, start of new academic years and the lead up to year end and subscription renewal season.

Specifics, by section within the Directorate:

Subscriptions

- ◇ Generating the material for inclusion with the subscription renewal packs; we do carefully consider what is being included to ensure we give information to members about the benefits and services they receive.

- ◇ Final quarter's direct debit collection due 1 October; we are still experiencing some problems with older mandates.

Finance

- ◇ H M Customs & Revenue undertook a PAYE audit, taking all of half a day and payroll and expenses procedures were not only satisfactory but referred to as exemplary.
- ◇ Bank accounts for Scottish Chapters have been consolidated into one Scotland account; saving reconciliations.
- ◇ BACS payments have become more efficient, saving time and money by efficient transfers of sums due.

Management Accounts

- ◇ Monthly accounts are regularly issued and reviewed by budget holders.
- ◇ Year end position and 2008 budgets are being collated.

Facilities

- ◇ Services are being provided, despite a recent spate of post strikes.
- ◇ New cleaning and security arrangements are working well.
- ◇ Noise and dust from redevelopment of 39-40 Botolph Lane have reduced dramatically as their works has moved on to fitting out.

Projects

- ◇ We continue to develop the website and have recently held a high level meeting with the suppliers over the parts that appear to be failing. Actions are now being followed up.
- ◇ We continue to work with Westwood Forster on the membership/subscriptions database that is being developed based on our systems.
- ◇ A number of exciting new opportunities have arisen over Global Planners Network, European Spatial Planning Observation Network, new research projects, and further projects within Planning Aid – all of which need careful scrutiny to proceed.

Human Resources

- ◇ The busy period of staff recruitment has moved on to a busy period of induction sessions. As we approach the review date for the Planning Aid grant, creativity in filling vacant posts has been needed and this has largely been successful.
- ◇ We are starting a formal job share of the post of Human Resources Manager in September, bringing yet more skilled resource to bear in this fundamental area.
- ◇ The training of managers on “managing staff at RTPI” is now being rolled out to ensure that all managers are covered.

Governance

- ◇ A second additional Executive Board was held on 19 September.

- ◇ Nominations for elections of Junior Vice-President, members of the Executive Board and General Assembly opened on 1 September, with elections in November.
- ◇ The Executive Board elected Mike Holmes, Alastair Hackston, Neal Jillings, Bill Lindsay and Ruth Richards as members of the Town and Country Planning Summer School in contested elections in July.

POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE
DIRECTOR: RYND SMITH

Policy work has focussed most strongly on the development of RTPI responses to the Planning White Paper and to the range of consultation documents that have emerged from it. This work has been pursued across a broad front.

Initial RTPI responses to a range of white paper issues were placed on our website in March 2007, in a format with email links back to the policy team, encouraging members to respond with views. Feedback using this process, the Policy and Practice Committee, Networks, Nations and Regions was reflected in web coverage that became more developed through June, July and August, finally becoming draft response to the white paper and to the associated consultations. Throughout this period, over 17,000 people visited the RTPI's white paper web coverage. Meetings with senior civil servants proceed to develop the RTPI's policy position and our contribution to white paper implementation.

Policy work has also developed substantial responses to the Heritage and Marine White Papers. Our response to the Heritage White Paper was valuably formed in close partnership with Heritage practitioners in related professions, leading to a joint response being prepared between RTPI, RICS and the Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation.

The RTPI Marine Spatial Planning Task Group continued to engage with UK-wide marine planning proposals, forming a major response to the Marine White Paper. The team has continued to work with DEFRA on the identification of the likely education and training needs of marine spatial planners and will shortly commence meetings with existing entities that perform functions which are likely to be migrated into the marine spatial planning in due course, seeking new policy agendas and promoting the values of professionalism in spatial planning. Recent correspondence to Taskgroup Chair Jed Griffiths from Environment Minister Hilary Benn acknowledges the strong contribution that the RTPI has made to the development of government marine policy and commits to publishing a draft Marine Bill in the coming session of parliament.

In the wake of devolution to the power sharing administration in Northern Ireland, we have reviewed our delivery of Northern Irish policy work, a process that included a substantial engagement of members and prospective members during the recent Presidential Visit. A dedicated policy officer for Northern Ireland has now been appointed. Brian Sore is a longstanding member who has had a valuable senior career, including a period as Deputy Chief Executive of an NHS Trust in Northern Ireland.

Practice development work is currently drawing strongly on the outputs of research. The Effective Practice in Spatial Planning research team is now delivering training based on the results of that work. Research undertaken with the Department of Health into housing and support needs for an ageing population have led to the development of a new Good Practice Note examining the planning policy and practice implications of extra care housing. Outputs have been disseminated in a paper to Planning Summer School and the final practice note (GPN 8) will be published in October.

There has been much positive feedback on the RTPI's Good Practice Note 4: Planning for Gypsies and Travellers, including debates at a National Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group Conference in London in October, and participation in a partnership policy project co-ordinated by the Building and Social Housing Foundation, the report from which will shortly be published.

Preliminary research to support our investigation of practice in rural diversification continues, with evidence being sought to underpin the drafting of new practice guidance in 2008.

RTPI positions continue to be strongly promoted through various media and participation in a wide range of conferences, seminars and public debates. There have been two appearances on BBC2 'Newsnight' by Kelvin Macdonald and Rynd Smith, with various radio presentations including BBC Radio 4 'You and Yours' and the World Service. Rynd Smith appeared on 'The One Show' with Myleene Klass and Adrian Chiles. Issues debated have ranged from major infrastructure projects and the Government's independent planning commission proposals, via sustainable responses to flood risk, housing numbers to mixed uses in rural pubs. Taking planning and the benefits of planning to a popular peak time audience remains a key objective of the team against which we are beginning to perform strongly.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE

HEAD OF RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE: JENNY CRAWFORD

A joint research project undertaken with Communities and Local Government to investigate the availability of national outcome indicators for spatial planning is due to report by the end of the year. The research team is lead by Professor Cecilia Wong and brings together researchers from the Universities of Manchester and Sheffield. The project includes a review of the core output indicators used in annual monitoring reports and will analyse links between local, regional and national planning policy and delivery. It is designed to inform the ongoing development and refinement of monitoring programmes for plan-making in England.

RTPI, in partnership with Land Use Consultants and the Policy Studies Institute of the University of Westminster, has been commissioned by Defra to deliver a "Research into Practice: Spatial Planning" workstream as part of the work programme for the Sustainable Development Research Network (SDRN). The Network is recognised by Defra and the research councils as a key mechanism for bringing the sustainable development research and policy-making communities together. The aim of the workstream is to raise awareness and activity levels of research focused on the role of spatial planning in achieving

sustainability objectives. A review of the role of sustainability appraisal of development frameworks will be undertaken by Land Use Consultants, in consultation with RTPI members and is due to report in early 2008.

Following the completion of a research project on professional knowledge development commissioned from Oxford Brookes last year, a number of knowledge development projects are being explored with the Academy for Sustainable Communities and other potential partners. The Oxford Brookes report is due to be published on the RTPI website shortly. RTPI is a member of the Academy of Social Sciences and is taking part in an ESRC-funded project on Knowledge Transfer and Public Engagement , due to report in early 2008.

The online catalogue is a key resource for the website and forms part of the overall development of the Library and Information Service (LIS), which deals with around 200 enquiries a month. The LIS manager is developing and adding research, academic and planning practice articles and publications to the catalogue on a weekly basis.