



The President's View: Barker 2: An Opportunity not a Threat

Question: Who said this in 2002/ 2003?
"Planning plays a vital role in business. It underpins our national economic performance. Indeed for too long planning has been undervalued. Without an effective planning system we risk constraining the economy, damaging the environment and creating social problems at a cost to everyone in the UK."


It was the same person who said this in 2005:
"A planning system created in 1947 had a makeover in 2004 which has so far failed to deliver.... it is wasteful, slow, holds back wealth creation... The system has become overloaded with bureaucracy and lost its focus."

Answer: Sir Digby Jones, Director General, CBI

The relevance of this is of course the 2nd Barker Review which is currently examining the planning system in the context of economic growth. The business community through the CBI welcomed the planning reforms that began in 2001, and at the time pointed out the critical role of planning in securing a successful economy. But since then the CBI has had a complete *volte face*. It has been pressure from the CBI and others that prompted the Government to commission Kate Barker to 'conduct an independent review of land use planning in England'. Many are seeing Barker 2 as a major threat and that a business dominant focus will lead to an erosion of planning. My message on this is simple – DON'T PANIC! We must not let short term thinking detract us from what we are trying to achieve – we are in the middle of working through the most fundamental changes to planning for over 50 years – success will not come overnight.

A closer look at the terms of reference for the Barker 2 reveals that the review will consider how planning can better deliver prosperity alongside other sustainable development goals. We just need to keep our nerve and make the case for planning – in many ways Sir Digby Jones did this for us in 2001 as shown above. We need to say that it is much too early to judge the effectiveness of the new plan system – we have not completed one plan making cycle yet so how can we properly judge it? Having said that, we need to be open minded, and if there are improvements that can help, then fine – but don't let's change the system before it has been properly tested. I have been asked to give evidence to the Barker Review and I will reflect these views my comments.

Royal Patronage – Another 5 years

I hope it hasn't passed you by, but the Institute's patron is HRH Prince of Wales. The Prince has just renewed his patronage for another 5 years. Although the Institute has little direct contact with the Prince personally, we do have close links with the Princes Foundation for the Built Environment which I strongly support. The Foundation promotes those principles of traditional urban design and architecture which put people and communities at the centre of the design process. I believe we could be making much more of the Royal Patronage and I will be looking at ways we can achieve this through the Princes Foundation. 

Clive Harridge
President, RTPI
Director, Entec UK Ltd

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Chair's remarks

A SOCIAL RAMBLE!

As a true professional, always interested in feedback, I asked someone recently what they thought of the Chair's Remarks in *Tripwire*. 'Sure', she replied, 'it's just a ramble.'

I'd never thought of it that way but, of course, she's right. The saddest amongst you may remember my first such ramble: it was in the January 2005 *Tripwire*, and I used the slogan, 'Midlands Members Matter'. Whilst I have undoubtedly rambled around between then and now, the main feature of this edition of *Tripwire*, as you'll have spotted, is a Members' survey. If the RTPI in the West Midlands is to have any real legitimacy it is to here to serve you, the member. If we don't know what your views are, we will be less effective in serving you. Please take 10 minutes or so to complete the survey and return it to us. It's all about your new Institute Region working for you. Make your views matter.

Your new Regional Activities Committee has been busy arranging a social calendar on your behalf. The first of two major 'set piece' events will be our Summer Reception on 4th July, probably at Compton Verney in Stratford-on-Avon District. Last year, you may recall, we went to Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire, for our Summer Reception. It was a very successful event, so we decided to continue the stately home theme, this time in the south of the region. The BBC last year described Compton Verney as 'jaw-droppingly beautiful' when covering the opening of the art gallery there following its £64m restoration. Pevsner, however, described part of Robert Adam's design of the house as 'dull'. Make up your own mind by joining us on 4th July. I have not yet visited Compton Verney, so am looking forward to it.

Our second 'set piece' event is planned to be a dinner-debate in the autumn. Details will follow.

The Young Planners in the Region are organising a Planning University Challenge. We're on the lookout for a planners' version of Jeremy Paxman to take the chair.

In addition, we plan to have a number of mainly social events throughout the year. The first is our AGM on 24th April. You may wonder what is 'mainly social' about an AGM. We are following the model of December's successful EGM, which took place in a Chinese restaurant in Oldbury. This time, we've booked The Bank restaurant, Brindley Place, Birmingham. A modern setting for a modern Region! Or something like that. Anyway, it should be good craic, so look forward to seeing you there on the 24th.



We will continue to organise many regional CPD events, the next ones being listed on the back of *Tripwire* as always. These are kept as low-cost as possible to encourage maximum participation (our recent Planning Basics conference had 115 delegates). But you need to tell us what you want by way of CPD and other services – so please complete the Members' survey.

Finally, on exactly mid-summer, 21st June, a social ramble is planned in the south of the region. So dust down your old walking boots and test your map-reading skills (or even hop-tasting skills) on a walk between various country pubs in the south of the region. Details to follow in *Tripwire*.

So there you are, I'm ending this edition's ramble with another ramble. 🏠

Hector Pearson
Chair, RTPI West Midlands

Household projections point to big rises in the region

Over 400,000 new households are projected to form in the West Midlands region between 2003 and 2026 according to new official projections of growth published last month.

The household projections show that there will be almost 18,000 new households per year in the region, a rise of 18.6% over the period, slightly below the national average of 23%. In common with other regions, the cause of the sharp rise is a combination of growing in-migration from abroad, falling household size and people living longer.

But the growth of households in the West Midlands in these 2003-based projections is much greater compared with the last set of figures issued in 1999.

A direct comparison of the 20 year rise from 2001-2021 in the two set of figures shows that the new projections are some 75% higher. This will have major implications for the review of Regional Spatial Strategy and create a real challenge for the region.

Once assumptions for vacancies, overcrowding, concealed households and demolition are added in to the figures, the targets will need to be even greater. Many of these homes will need to be for the growing number of single households and couples forming in the region.

The West Midlands it seems is in for a period of major change. 🏠

Planning Vs Prejudice – The Problem of Gypsy Site Provision

Earlier this month, Stephen Bate, from the Robert Doughty Consultancy, delivered a thought-provoking talk at a very popular RTPI West Midlands Region seminar on the issue of planning for gypsies. The event was held in Nuneaton & Bedworth, scene of a recent well-publicised appeal case involving an illegal gypsy site at Bulkington in the green belt. New advice has just been published in Circular 1/06. This article considers the background and issues surrounding the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers.

Introduction

Michael Howard, the Tory leader, at the last General Election, was reported as saying that “if you want to build a new home, you have to get planning permission first. But if you are a traveller, you can bend planning law – building where you like thanks to the Human Rights Act. It’s not fair that there’s one rule for travellers and another for everyone else”. It is this prejudice from the public and politicians which clouds the issue of planning for gypsies.

Background

The 1960 Caravans and Control of Development Act gave local authorities discretionary powers to provide Gypsy Sites within their areas. This was followed by the 1968 Caravan Sites Act, where Councils were given the statutory duty to provide gypsy caravan sites. This requirement was repealed in 1994, (with advice in Circular 1/94, “Gypsy Sites and Planning”) when it was expected that an influx of applications for private sites would occur. In practice however, due to the difficulty of obtaining consent for private sites there has been a proliferation of unauthorised sites.

Research by Birmingham University in 1998 addressed the growth in unauthorised sites. It concluded that Councils were faced with trying to balance the conflicting needs of both gypsies and settled community and often satisfying no-one. As soon as Councils were relinquished of their statutory duty to provide sites then they simply didn’t provide any.

The situation on the ground

The idealistic view of a Romany with a painted cart and horse tethered at the side of a country lane is long gone. Gypsy travellers now have state of the art mobile homes, pick-up trucks and expensive cars. They have gone from selling clothes pegs to trading in scrap metal and other commodities. Gypsies and travellers often choose to live in a semi-permanent lifestyle, albeit in a caravan, for reasons of health, education or employment. They have modernized along with the rest of society. But whilst there are now fewer sites there are more travellers. There has been a steady influx of additional gypsy families, initially from Ireland but (with reduced border controls due to the enlarged EU) increasingly from Eastern Europe.

This has resulted in increased needs for permanent sites. Most Councils have Local Plan policies paying

lip service to the provision of sites, but rarely actually provide any. Policies are rarely site-specific. Usually they are criteria based. Some Councils have gone through the process of assessing possible sites but rarely find any which are acceptable.

This has led to two specific problems; firstly, illegal transit camps and secondly, gypsy travellers purchasing land for their own use. Illegal encampments are usually dealt with by land owners who can evict occupiers, trespassing on private land. The establishment of private sites is an altogether different prospect. Gypsy families will often approach a Council to seek advice on the planning merits of a specific site. But the process then runs up against public prejudice with the full force of neighbourhood groups, Parish Councils and Councillors. Not in my back yard they all say!



Instead Councils try to use normal housing policies to allocate land for gypsy sites. But frequently they consider the worst possible urban sites; next to motorways, railways, scrap yards and power stations. Anywhere away from potential Nimbys! If gypsies choose leafy lanes or rural idylls they fall foul of countryside or green belt policies in Local Plans. New sites it would appear are very hard to come by.

So where does that leave the gypsy family who want to establish a private site, particularly those who have already bought a piece of land, typically within the countryside at agricultural land values? They either get stuck in the planning system of negotiations, applications, Committees, refusals, appeals and inquiries or they take the pragmatic approach and move onto the land. Most gypsy families are aware of the delays in the process and know that the more established they become, the harder it is for the Council to shift them! This process has been reinforced by the application of Human Rights legislation and European rulings, typically going in favour of the traveller. On the other hand the general public tend to feel that all gypsies and travellers are living tax-free benefiting from all the loopholes in legislation and typically think “what about our human rights?”

A summary of the prize winning presentation by Stephen Bate

Recent changes

In 2004 the Government introduced a consultation paper on Gypsies and planning. A new gypsy and traveller unit was established to help authorities improve the use of enforcement powers as well as addressing the location of sites. £8m was made available to fund 42 gypsy and traveller schemes across England and Wales and new obligations were imposed on Local Authorities to identify appropriate locations within their Local Plans. Under the 2004 Housing Act, Councils must now include gypsies in their Local Housing Needs Assessment process and have a strategy in place that sets out how any identified need will be met. The Government also intends to allow the Housing Corporation to provide funding to RSL's to establish gypsy/traveller sites.



Greater enforcement powers are also being advocated by the Government, who are concentrating their efforts on ensuring that Local Authorities and the Police tackle illegal and anti-social behaviour among the gypsy and traveller community, particularly fly-tipping. Planning enforcement powers have been expanded through the introduction of Temporary Stop Notices (TSNs) in February 2005. These have so far been used sparingly by Councils, although North West Leicestershire DC has been successful in preventing additional caravans moving onto unauthorised sites through the service of TSNs.

Circular 01/06

On 2 February 2006, Circular 01/06, "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites" was published alongside new guidance on enforcement to address the shortage of sites and to introduce better enforcement to deal with problem sites. The Circular aims to:-

- Facilitate the traditional travelling way of life.
- Assess the need for sites and develop strategies for the provision of sites addressing the shortfall within 5 years.
- Promote private gypsy sites in appropriate locations and create sustainable, respectful and inclusive gypsy/traveller communities.
- Reduce unauthorised encampments.
- Avoid gypsy evictions and resultant homelessness.

Circular 01/06 provides for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) which will feed into the Regional Spatial Strategy process, specifying pitch numbers for each local planning authority. Councils will then need to identify specific sites in their Development Plan Documents (DPDs) to match these numbers. The Government also expects Councils to

engage with gypsy/traveller groups, as part of the implementation of their Statement of Community Involvement - a key to achieving greater understanding. The Circular suggests several ways in which sites can be identified:-

- Using powers from Circular 06/03, whereby Councils can dispose of land for less than best consideration,
- Identifying sites through Council registers of unused and under-used land.
- Utilising CPO powers.
- Overcoming strict planning constraints across a wider area by co-operating with neighbouring authorities.


The Circular gives powers to Government and Inspectors to force Councils to identify gypsy sites within DPDs. For example, in March 2005, the Government directed Brentwood Borough Council to allocate more land for gypsies and travellers.

It also addresses issues of gypsy sites within rural areas and the countryside, advocating exception sites specifically for gypsies and travellers, although it upholds the principle of restraint in the Green Belt. In other designated areas, such as SSSIs, AONBs and Conservation Areas, gypsy sites may be permitted as long as the objectives of the designation are not compromised. Paragraph 54 for example suggests that "rural settings, not subject to special planning constraints, are acceptable in principle". So gypsies now appear to be a special case.

Conclusion

In short, the Circular represents a major shift in the way the planning system engages with gypsies and travellers. It maintains the need for constructive engagement on all sides but has a strong message in respect of imposing pitch numbers, binding DPD Inspector's powers and removing planning constraints, albeit with firm enforcement against breaches of planning control.



But local Councils, including Parish Councils, must all recognise that they have a duty towards finding a solution. Public prejudices need to be addressed and overcome. Councils must carry out a realistic land analysis, to identify suitable traveller sites. Better a decision taken at local level, following proper consultation, than having pitches imposed by an Inspector or the Secretary of State. All parties should be aware that the benefits gained from working together will be backed up by robust enforcement action should any travellers choose to ignore the proper planning processes. 

RTPI West Midlands Region: Members' Survey



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place



At the end of 2005, the Institute undertook a major change as part of its 'New Institute' reforms that resulted in the replacement of 'Branches' with 'Regions'.

Whilst the boundary and functions of the new 'Region' remain broadly the same, the governance of the new 'region' and the approach towards the membership is intended to be different. From now on, a more compact *Regional Management Board* will make the key decisions on behalf of members, whilst a broader and more open *Regional Activities Committee* will oversee and organise activities and services for the membership.

This is clearly an important time to gauge the priorities and preferences of the Members in the West Midlands and to try and tailor our efforts accordingly. It has been about 5 years now since the last Membership Survey was done. It is timely that the recent change in structure and approach of the Institute offers the opportunity to re-evaluate whether we are all going in the same direction.

There are about 1500 RTPI members in the West Midlands region and we want to ensure that we reach out to as many of you as possible, helping you get more from your profession and a better service from the RTPI.

The Region has a key role in bidding for RTPI resources based on the scale and range of our programme of activities. To ensure that we are delivering the services you want we therefore need to know what your interests and objectives are. As members you pay a substantial annual subscription to the RTPI, it is important that you get value for money and the services and facilities you want!

The results of this survey will be used to improve the services and facilities we offer the membership in the West Midlands. Each survey form will be treated as confidential and the information collected will be aggregated before being published.

We have structured the survey in 4 parts;

- *About you,*
- *Your Profession,*
- *Your Institute, and*
- *Your Region.*

Please return the form to Sue Griffith Jones, (Branch Co-ordinator), at: 147 Hampton Lane, Catherine de Barnes, Solihull, West Midlands, or email rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com by the end of April 2006 if possible.

There will be a prize draw for those Members who are prepared to include their name/Email address on the form. The winner will receive a £30 book/record token. 📖



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Plan your career with Judd Farris

RTPI Planners

••• BIRMINGHAM - Up to £25k + Bens

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

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

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••• WARWICKSHIRE - Up to £36k + Bens

A client side opportunity exists within a national organization for an experienced Policy planner. This varied role will include advising on Planning Policy issues whilst promoting the organization and their guidelines to external agents. You will be RTPI qualified with at least 5 years experience and possess strong communication skills. Any Utilities experience would prove advantageous. An impressive benefits package along with competitive salary are available for the right individual who wishes to move from a LA or consultancy background.

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TEMPORARY OPPORTUNITIES

email steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk

••• TOWN PLANNER - up to £18 per hour

••• BIRMINGHAM REGION - Ref/19987

Experienced Town Planner required to work within the Development Control as a Senior /Principal Planner. Ideal candidate will have at least 2 years Local Authority experience.

••• POLICY PLANNER - up to £18 per hour

••• WARWICKS - Ref/14279

Policy Planner required for busy Local Authority department. Ideal candidate will have at least 2 years of Policy experience with Local Authority environment.

••••• The above are just a small example of the number of opportunities we have available and we are happy to discuss alternative opportunities with any planners interested for new employment. Please contact Steve Simmonds on 0121 200 0800 or email steve.simmonds@juddfarris.co.uk

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

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00612 9232 8188

••• HONG KONG - ASIA

00852 2802 8062

Survey 2006

Mar / Apr 5

About you (Please indicate or highlight as necessary)

1. Your name (optional)
2. Your Email Address (optional)
3. Are you: Male/Female: M/F
4. Your age group: 18-25
26-35
36-45
46-55
56-65
65+
5. Are you a member of the RTPI? Yes/No
- 5a. If so, what is your class of membership? Student/Licentiate/
Technical/Corporate/Fellow
6. If not, would you like to become a member of the Institute? Yes/No
7. Do you work/study? Work Full time
Work Part time
Work-share
Full-time study
Part-time study
Retired
Not currently employed/Other
8. If working, who do you work for? Public sector (Government/agency)
Public sector (Local authority)
Other public agency
Private consultancy/self employed
Private developer/house-builder
Voluntary Agency/NGO
Educational body
Utility/other
9. What is your job title/role in the authority/organisation/company?
10. If studying, where do you study? University of Central England
Birmingham University/CURS
Coventry University
Other: Please state.....
11. Have you been through job evaluation? Yes/No
12. How did the review affect your job/salary?
13. What are your qualifications?
14. What is your Income level? (optional) Up to £15K
£15-£25K
£26-35K
£36-45K
+45K
15. Where do you live? (Local Authority area)
16. Where do you work? (Local Authority area)
17. How do you get to work & normal journey time?
18. Do you work from home? Yes/No
- 18a. If not, could you work from home? Yes/No

Your profession

19. How many planners are there in your office/consultancy? How many are RTPI members..... non RTPI?....

20. How long have you worked in the planning profession? Less than 1 year
1-5 years,
5-10 years,
10-25 years,
More than 25 years

21. What elements of your job do you enjoy?.....

21a. What aspects do you not enjoy?

22. How does the image of planning compare with other professions? Well/poorly/equal

23. What should be done to improve the image of planning?

24. Is there a shortage of qualified planners in your office/consultancy/company? Yes/No

25. Do you find a difficulty in recruiting qualified planners to your authority/company? Yes/No

26. Do you consider that the new development plan system has/will:

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- speed up the planning process
- improve the efficiency of the system
- improve the quality of development
- assist communities and society
- improve job satisfaction

27. Is the target orientated approach to planning (eg. through Planning Delivery Grant).

Very Helpful/Helpful/No difference/Unhelpful/Very Unhelpful

Your Institute

28. What do you feel the RTPI can do to promote the profession?

29. Are you aware of the following services provided at National level? Do you use those services?

Aware of service Use service

- Member Advice
- RTPI Networks
- Library
- Summer School
- Planning Resource on line
- Planning Theory and Practice Journal
- Planning Matters
- Planners in the workplace
- Conference programme/Annual Convention

30. Are you aware of the work done by the Institute and is there room for improvement in the following areas:

Aware of service Scope for improvement

- Influencing Government policy
- Commissioning research
- International relations
- Publishing advice notes

31. Have you noticed any improvement in services since the 'New Institute' changes? Yes/No

31a. If so, what changes have you noticed?

32. What additional services would you like to see provided at the national level?

Your Region

33. Are you aware of the following services for planners? Do you use them? Are they valuable? (Please tick)

- | | Aware of service | Use service | Valuable |
|---|------------------|-------------|----------|
| • Summer Reception and AGM | | | |
| • Meetings | | | |
| • Social events | | | |
| • CPD and low cost CPD programme | | | |
| • Specialist groups; eg. Young planners, Urban Design | | | |
| • Bi-monthly magazine, <i>Tripwire</i> | | | |
| • Planning Aid service | | | |
| • Information and advice | | | |
| • Promoting other services eg. mentoring | | | |

34. What additional services would you like to see provided at the regional level?

35. Would you like to join a new Email network covering any of the following topics?

- | | Already joined | Yes | No |
|----------------|----------------|-----|----|
| • Urban Design | | | |
| • Housing | | | |
| • Rural issues | | | |
| • Other | | | |

Meetings and CPD events

36. Would you like to take part in future events? Yes/No

37. What is the best time of day for you to attend CPD events?

38. Where would you like CPD events to be held?

39. What topic areas would you like to see covered?.....

40. Would you like to see more social events? If so, what sort?

Specialist Groups

41. Do you take part in any of the specialist groups? If you do are they helpful?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| • Members' Services | Yes/No | Yes/No | |
| • European & International | Yes/No | Yes/No | |
| • Environmental Education | Yes/No | Yes/No | |
| • Young Planners | Yes/No | Yes/No | |
| • Planning Aid | Yes/No | Yes/No | |

42. If not, what would persuade you to get involved?

43. Are there any other Specialist groups you feel might be worthwhile?.....

Tripwire

44. Do you read Tripwire? Yes/No

45. Do you find it interesting/worthwhile? Yes/No

46. Do you prefer the themed issues or not? Yes/No

47. What additional features would interest you?.....

48. Would you welcome more feedback within Tripwire? eg..letters/email exchange Yes/No

49. How would you prefer to receive Tripwire? By Email/post/both

50. Would your company be interested in advertising/sponsorship in Tripwire? Yes/No

An 'insider's view' of the Parish Plan process

I have been working on our Parish Plan in Napton in Stratford on Avon District in Warwickshire (as Chairman of the Steering Group!) for approximately 3 years now, and we are close to the point where we actually have something to show for all of the work put into the process to-date.

So, what have we learnt (from the process point of view) – foremost in my mind is that we are a disparate group of volunteers who are not necessarily representative of the Community that we live in. 'Volunteers', in general, are likely to be from the usual 5% of the Community who are genuinely trying to make a difference (or whom might have a particular agenda to achieve.....). They inevitably have a significant range of differing skills which, in many cases, can be a real problem to manage if a democracy is controlling the methodology. Their commitment can be variable and their time available can cause real frustration (particularly over the 3 years) and, of course, any 'direction' usually goes out of the window unless you find that a large majority agree with any one particular proposal on the table. Many meetings achieve little progress, and yet, occasionally we have moved forward by leaps and bounds (why?). We seem to run shy of using the *vision* word because it is too radical.

When we presented the draft *action list* to the Parish Council, it was received with shock & horror. "You mean

you want us to take on all of this ourselves?" was the initial cry [*heavens to murgatroid*, I hear you say!]

What should we be doing in an ideal world, is the question. Unless you are very lucky and your community has the right spread of professional skills, with a large amount of time on their hands and who work together as a team with no prior agendas, it is difficult to see how the circle could be squared. No doubt, if we paid consultants to do the exercise, it would be done quicker, better and would be agnostic from any particular imbalance in the Group undertaking the task. However, it would not have the local knowledge and, more importantly, it would lack the ultimate ownership of the community being addressed.

Hind-sight tells me that, if we had spent more time at the outset forming the team and, by implication, trying to balance the range of interests, the skills available, the time aspects, etc and provided some coaching/training on the process, we might have been quicker and bolder in our aspirations. Who knows, we may be starting on the process all over again in a few year's time at this rate and at least then we will be able to introduce the concept of continuous improvement..... Any Volunteers? 🏠

Jim Sleight

Jim Sleight is the Chairman of the Napton Parish Plan Steering Group

Editor's thoughts on Localism

Whenever I hear people say 'We need more housing for "local" people rather than for migrants from elsewhere', I cannot help thinking about the 'League of Gentlemen'. Local people, it seems, are always more deserving than those 'strangers' or incomers who are able to outbid the locals.

It is perhaps inevitable in a planning system which is run by local authorities governed by local councillors, that policies will be tailored to meet the needs of the local electorate – after all, it is the people who already live in a community who vote the councillors in each time.

But in a world which is increasingly global (if that is not a tautological statement) where contact can be made between other countries, let alone counties, at the touch of a button, through the internet, and where people go off for weekends to Lisbon rather than London, it seems strange that we should view our housing markets in such a parochial way.

But now we all have the job of defining those housing markets through Housing Market Assessments, ready for a new wave of Local Development Frameworks planned in the context of an updated West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which will need to take on board much higher projections of housing need and demand in the region. After 7 years of famine, with 'maxima' and 'moratoria' holding back the delivery of homes, we must now look to 7 years (at least) of growth if the West Midlands to meet the much higher level of need which has been identified.

David Milliband, in what looked like a clear bid for the future leadership, spoke recently about the need to

refocus politics on 'localism'. Decision making should be devolved from Government down to regions, and from counties down to local authorities and from Councils down to parishes and local communities. A popular message maybe, but most of us have heard all this before?

However the difference between the previous regime and the new planning system is that community consultation and local devolution is now an integral part of the process, so that imposing housing from above is not as easy as it once was. Parish Plans are a positive expression of this process, where local people come together with a co-ordinated approach and hopefully reach decisions based on local consensus. (We have included an example in this edition of Tripwire). But Nimbyism and parochialism are the negative expression of 'local choice' where people, for understandable reasons of self-interest, resist any change that is not directly linked to their (or possibly their own communities) immediate benefit.

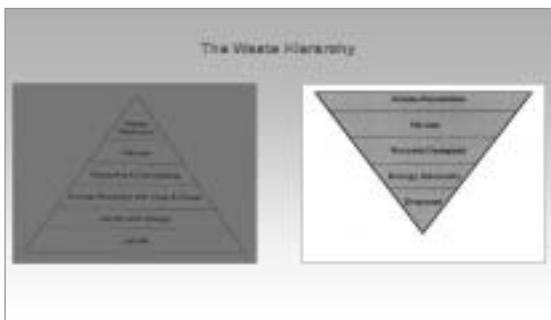
The problem is perhaps most prevalent in rural communities, where insular attitudes are more common rather than in urban areas where peoples' lives are more anonymous and independent. Yet those same folk who jealously guard their rural idylls will naturally expect their youngsters to go to college or work in the towns and cities and for them to find suitable accommodation they can afford.

'Local choice' it seems must come with local responsibility. 🏠

John Acres Editor

West Midlands Waste Matters

We generate over 10 million tonnes of municipal, commercial and industrial waste in the West Midlands each year. This generates a huge potential environmental impact, but it also creates a tremendous economic opportunity for recycling. Bruce Braithwaite explores some of the key issues in the context of the National Draft Waste Strategy which is currently out for consultation.



On 14th February the Government published its draft review of the National Waste Strategy first adopted in 2000. The government has turned the familiar pyramid of the waste hierarchy upside down to convey the importance of waste minimisation and the role of landfill at the bottom of the options as a destination for waste residues for which there is no other economic outlet.

Waste is a major contributor to climate change and this is the main driver behind Europe and the UK's initiatives to change the culture of throwing all our waste in a black bag and tipping it in holes in the ground. The methane given off by biodegrading waste in landfills is 22 times more damaging than the CO₂ from car exhausts hence the need to take drastic action.

In the last few years we have slowed down the rate of growth of waste – but we need to do even more to change our lifestyle and treat waste as a resource. The review estimates that over the next 15 years we will need another 700 facilities to manage waste at a cost of £10bn.

The idea of recycling is catching on in the home with recycling rates up to 50%. Lichfield DC has led the field achieving top marks over the whole country for waste recycling. But the same enthusiasm needs to be translated to the workplace. Whilst waste from our declining manufacturing sector is estimated to be static, waste from the expanding commercial sector is growing fast. It is estimated that 93% of production materials are never used in the final product and that it takes 1.5 kg of material to produce a toothbrush and 1 tonne of material to produce a computer.

The Review proposes increasing the targets for recycling household and municipal waste from 35% to 50% by 2020 and sets targets for recycling commercial or industrial wastes as well as banning the landfill of certain types of waste. There has been significant publicity on the reported support for Energy from Waste facilities (Incineration) but the

draft Review actually proposes reducing the target for EfW of Municipal waste from 35% to 25% in 2020 reflecting the increased targets for recycling.

It is often argued that recycling and re-use are incompatible with Energy from Waste because of fixed contracts that require authorities to 'feed the beast'. But as the quantity of waste continues to grow most authorities are finding that they can focus on recycling and re-use without prejudicing their EfW contracts.

Businesses will now have an increased incentive to sell their waste instead of throwing it away as Landfill Tax increases by £3 per tonne, year on year, taking the cost of landfill from about £30 per tonne in 2006 to £50 per tonne in 2012.

Planning authorities can expect a major increase in the number of planning applications for waste management facilities in the next few years. So where are these facilities going to be located? Waste is at the top of the 'NIMBY' list for planning applications despite over 90% of planning applications for waste related development being approved. Making balanced decisions in these circumstances perhaps explains why so many decisions take over thirteen weeks to the frustration of the waste industry. The Draft Review suggests that consideration should be given to Resource Recovery Parks where waste can be collected, sorted and used to manufacture new products. This activity would be close to the top of the waste hierarchy and hence would be very sustainable with minimal transport of materials between adjoining industrial units..

It also highlights the problems that SMEs have in recycling their waste. Local Authorities do not want to collect it as it counts towards their municipal performance. Commercial collections rarely want to collect small quantities of segregated waste. In practice it therefore tends to be bulked up into one skip of mixed waste. The Review suggests that local authorities should once again have the responsibility of collecting this waste, provided there is some means of disconnecting it from municipal waste.

The Review also floats the idea of charging households for their waste collection. This could take the form of variable charging for non-segregated material depending on the weight with a flat rate for segregated material. Currently there are tensions in that District Councils collect the waste and County Councils dispose of it. The review highlights this unhelpful arrangement without making a specific recommendation.

For those planners and local authorities wishing to comment on the national Draft Waste Strategy, consultation runs until 9 May. [Link](#)

Bruce Braithwaite

Bruce Braithwaite is Strategic Waste Policy Officer at Staffordshire County Council

Young Planner Careers Event

Date: 22 February 2006


Venue: Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, The University of Birmingham

This event had been organised for two specific groups; 1) those who were in their last year of study and 2) those who had just started their Licentiate route to corporate membership. There had been a good turnout to the presentation about 25 people had attended including three Licentiate's and a mentor. The presentation had been split into two sections; the first hour explaining the different route to gaining qualifications and membership. The presentation focused on the different types of postgraduate degrees that can be taken to get accreditation. Particular emphasis was given on choosing the right degree; as if they were to specialist then they may not have full accreditation, and would mean that further study would have to be taken such as a PG diploma. For example a postgraduate degree in Urban Design may be accredited by the RTPI, but it may not have FULL accreditations, as it is a very specific degree. In this case you may be required to do a postgraduate diploma in Town Planning to make up the full accreditation.

The bursary scheme was also mentioned regarding how to get them and what they give and how they help. It was at this point where I was asked to explain how I had achieved my bursary. It was something, which some attendees were not aware about and so it was a chance for any questions to be answered.

The second session of the presentation looked at the new route to corporate membership of the RTPI, the APC. The process of keeping a logbook, preparing a Personal Development Plan and submitting a final report. Guidance was given on what they all mean, and emphasis was put on the fact that the whole process is fairly flexible in terms of what they require to be submitted. They had no set requirement in how to write the logbook, as long as all the basic requirements listed in the APC guidance book are met. The danger of writing a logbook for two years and then finding out by the assessors that it had been incorrect was also highlighted as an area of concern. As it would be impractical for all licentiate's to submit extracts of their logbook, but if they gave permission for them to

be made available on the website as examples, then maybe something could be arranged.

The event itself was well organised and it was good to see Jackie Ward in person, and putting a face to a name. If there are any queries or concerns regarding the new AOC programme or want further advise regarding university courses, then the RTPI website contains links and information to all the accredited schools in the UK. 

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Young Planners Super-Quick Survey

The West Midlands Young Planners Group are currently gauging the views of their peers, trying to find out what both students and workers may want from the Young Planners. Many of you will have already seen the survey, your super-quick responses would be much appreciated! The next proposed event is a pub quiz, but there are other events in the pipeline (formal and social). If you have not received a copy of the survey, please email rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com for a copy. The official

definition of a Young Planner is anyone under the age of 35, however we are not exclusive and our events are open to all ages, therefore the more surveys we receive the better.

Getting involved

If you would like to be more involved with Young Planners Activities in the region, please email APB376@bham.ac.uk, we're always keen to hear from people with enthusiasm! 

Experienced Planner Seeks Secondment

Experienced Planner seeks secondment for Development Control or Regeneration experience!

I am a planning lecturer at Harper Adams University College, Shropshire. I also have 19 years previous experience working in local planning authorities, in a variety of roles, including latterly as section head of planning & economic development. I am currently seeking a secondment with a LA or consultancy, with the aim of

getting current working experience in development control or possibly rural or urban regeneration. This could be as a secondment from my employment or as a job swap. I anticipate secondment for about 2 days per week.

Please contact John Bentley on 01952 815347 or e-mail jfbentley@harper-adams.ac.uk 

Events • Events • Events • Events • Events

REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Non-members of RTPI welcome to attend.

MONDAY 24 APRIL

RTPI West Midlands AGM & Dinner

Venue: Bank Restaurant,

Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2JB

Time: From 6.30pm. AGM 6.45pm,

Meal 7pm

Cost: AGM & drink on arrival free of charge, dinner £14

Pre-booking essential contact Sue

Griffith-Jones Tel: 0121 709 1599

Email: westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk

OTHER EVENTS

TUESDAY 25 APRIL

Planning & Regeneration

Venue: **Marston Moretaine, Beds**

Organiser: RTPI East of England

Cost: **£99.87 incl VAT**

Details & booking: Tel 01359 252366

Email: eastofengland@rtpi.org.uk

TUESDAY 25 APRIL

Building Safer Communities through Partnership: Designing Out Crime

Venue: **Westminster**

Time: 10.45am – 2pm

Organiser: Westminster Briefing

Cost: **£195 + VAT**

Details & booking: Tel 020 7091 7685

Email: marc.davis@westminster-briefing.com

Active Planning

WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL – Willfield Centre

Stoke-on-Trent

TUESDAY 13 JUNE – Martineau Centre Birmingham

Day of seminars & workshops (held at Coventry on 8 March & to be repeated at Stoke & Birmingham) organised by Sport England West Midlands to demonstrate tools available to assist planners and others responsible for the provision of sport & recreation facilities. These include:

The Planning Contributions Kitbag -

online resource to help predict sporting needs & secure investment from development contributions

Active Places Power -

online database of sports facilities plus analysis tools to assist with local needs assessment, comparisons with similar areas etc

Sports Facility Calculator -

tool to assist in calculating developer contributions towards sports facilities, recently used to raise approx. £1 million at Thurrock

Supplementary Planning Documents -

Best Practice for open space and facilities. Planning Surgeries during the day to discuss either site specific issues or general issues relating to playing fields / sports related planning applications
Organiser: Sport England West Midlands

Cost: **£10**

Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones

Tel: 0121 705 0136

Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

TUESDAY 23 MAY

Planning & Conservation

Venue: **Ely**

Organiser: RTPI East of England

Cost: **£99.87 incl VAT**

Details & booking: Tel 01359 252366

Email: eastofengland@rtpi.org.uk

THURSDAY 25 MAY

The Future of Rail

Venue: **ICC, Birmingham**

Organiser: McMillan-Scott

Details & bookings: Mike Agnew

Tel 0161 832 6000

Email: mike.agnew@mcmillan-scott.plc.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

Triptease

Once again our 'Triptease artiste' has devised a set of questions for you to solve. But first we have the answers to the last puzzle:

The questions were:

- Who was the architect of St Paul's Cathedral? *Answer:* Sir Christopher **Wren**.
- Which comic started 14th April 1950? *Answer:* The **Eagle**.
- What is the literal meaning of the word "Subbuteo"?
Answer: The (Eurasian) **Hobby**
- In which film did Sidney Greenstreet make his film debut?
Answer: The Maltese **Falcon**.
- Who wrote "The Red Badge of Courage"? *Answer:* Stephen **Crane**.
- What was the name of the character played by Dirk Bogarde in the film "Doctor in the House"? *Answer:* Simon **Sparrow**.

The theme running through the questions was that they were all **names of birds**.

The winner of the last competition was **Maria Dunn** who is a student member of the Institute. Well done, Maria.

So now the questions for this issue's quiz are:

- 12th March 2006 has seen the first Formula One Grand Prix being raced in which country?
- "Corridors of Power" was a phrase coined by whom in 1956, and subsequently used as the title of his 1964 novel?
- 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.?
- What was the name of Edward Heath's yacht?
- Originally the name of a 1971 album containing Lindsfarne's first hit, which song was a No. 2 for them aided by Paul Gascoigne in 1990?
- According to Christopher Isherwood's poem, why does "the common cormorant or shag, lay its eggs inside a paper bag" ?

And finally, what is the theme which links all 6 questions?

The first correct entry to reply by email or letter to the usual Ripon Cottage address will win a copy of the award winning 'Region and Renaissance' book about planning in the West Midlands over the past 50 years. Good luck.

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

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