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The Royal Town Planning Institute: Wales Branch
Y Sefydliad Cynllunio Trefol Brenhinol: Cangen Cymru

Planning *Wales*

newsletter of RTPI CYMRU

AUGUST/AWST 2006

“Grand designs: in for a Penny in for a Poundbury? What price higher design standards in Wales ?”

Jon Fox of Capita Symonds reports on the RICS Wales seminar on design held in Cardiff on 14th July 2006...

This was the first event I attended in my new capacity as a member of the RTPI Cymru Branch Executive Committee. I have to admit that I wouldn't normally find the time in a busy day at Capita Symonds to attend "discussion" meetings, the sort of events I usually attend are either seminars with lots of lecturing (you know the ones where there are a lot less people in the room in the afternoon) or facilitated workshops where the emphasis is normally on the new buzz word of outcomes and lots of post it note clustering.

The discussion was organised by the RICS with most of the people attending being from housebuilders and developers, although it turned out that many admitted (when pressed) to being town planners as well !

The 07:30am start didn't seem quite so bad after a hearty breakfast and after the third coffee I was keen to listen to the speakers. First of all we heard from Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive of the Design Commission for Wales (DCfW), who was followed by Jane Carpenter from Redrow.

Carole-Ann gave an excellent presentation making the link between the use of design as a essential part of product development no matter what the industry, quoting a figure of 74% of the UK's fastest growing companies successfully employing design. (Think about it, would a poorly designed iPod, or the latest mobile phone handset be as successful and in demand ?)

The DCfW speaker made a robust case for high quality design, centred on whole life costs, environmental, social, civic economic and financial benefits. It was stressed that design was not simply a matter of style, but indicative of the fundamental

approach to development. Some powerful statistics were presented highlighting the need for good design to address the fact that 50% of all Carbon Dioxide emissions come from the



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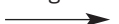
construction, occupation, maintenance of buildings and that the construction industry is responsible for 35% of the UK's total annual waste.

Many new developments were used to illustrate the how design could be employed successfully, and not so successfully. Developments such as Cwm Calon at Penalta in Caerphilly include a variety of housing

INSIDE:

Also, in this edition of the Newsletter:

- Review gives green light for planning research
- Planners in the Workplace
- Local Government Job Evaluation



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Awst 2006

Planning Wales is the newsletter of RTPI Cymru.

If you would like to make a contribution to a future edition please contact the Editor:

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Please remember this newsletter is written for you about you, so please put pen to paper and contribute!

To receive regular updates and reminders of forthcoming events by e-mail send your e-mail address to wales@rtpi.org.uk

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Editorial

Contributions are welcome on a wide range of topics and in a variety of different forms:

- Conference announcements
- Seminar programmes
- Reports on conferences
- Critical thoughtpieces
- Updates on policy in Wales
- Recent project successes
- Humorous items
- Images, photographs

The provisional copy deadlines for the final issue of 2006 is:

- **Friday 27th October 2006 [the AGM issue]**

Additions to the editorial team are also welcome, so if you want to help secure contributions to the newsletter then get in touch – HarrisNR@cardiff.ac.uk, 029 2087 6222

Planning Wales is also reviewing its arrangements for advertising and sponsorship for 2007. Please contact Neil Harris for further information on advertising opportunities in 2007.

ANNUAL DINNER

THE RTPI CYMRU CHAIRMAN'S DINNER

will be held at
ABERDARE HALL, Cardiff University

On
Friday 24th November 2006

Guest speaker: To be confirmed

TICKETS PRICED £35.00
FORMAL DRESS OPTIONAL

Any member wishing to attend should send payment to:

Sue Rice
15 Lark Rise, Brackla,
Bridgend. CF31 2NU

Cheques payable to RTPI CYMRU
Tel: 01656 648721 or 07941 387521
Email: rice_sue@hotmail.com

Members of other Branches wishing to keep in touch with colleagues in Wales are also welcome.

(continued from page 1)

“Grand designs: in for a Penny in for a Poundbury? What price higher design standards in Wales ?”

types, permeability, terracing, although there were still areas for improvement at the back of houses where there were too many poor quality public spaces surrounded with close-boarded fencing.

Carole-Anne recognised the major success in Wales, that even five years ago would not have been thought possible. However there was still reluctance from the Housebuilders to fully address out-of-date presumptions that there are more modest consumer expectations in Wales (a curious argument that does not translate into any other aspect of life in Wales in my experience).

The DCfW presentation ended with a summary of the main issues, including:

- the absolute need to invest in good design addressing site and context;
- the importance of environmental design for low carbon emissions;
- employ good design as a selling tool;
- greater variety of house types;
- more contemporary design – although Carole was at pains to stress that this was not what “good quality design” was solely about for the DCfW.

The second speaker Jane Carpenter from Redrow homes took the opportunity to defend her company’s current developments, in terms of quality of design. Jane highlighted the practical reality of her industry, i.e the use of standardised house types is a fact of life and there is only limited scope to amend these standard types to take account of local character.

Jane also made the point that, for Redrow, there was a need to increase sales prices hand in hand with sustainable better designed housing that retained “kerb appeal” to the market. Although this is common in the current market hopefully this will change in the future and affordable sustainable and good quality design will become the norm.

It was also clear that Redrow and the other housebuilders were keen to take their schemes to a DCfW review, but that planning reports can sometime use extracts from DCfW reviews out of context. There was some discussion on the need

for greater clarity on DCfW reports to ensure that large positives were not undermined by small negatives.

In a day which could easily have turned to “planner-bashing” it was refreshing to hear both Jane and Carole-Anne make reference to excellent work done by Caerphilly CBC planners led by Pat Mears, where a working party was established with direct access to key staff and a real team effort to achieve the development.

The planning system did not totally escape criticism, with many delegates raising concerns about the politicisation of

...there was a need to increase sales prices hand in hand with sustainable better designed housing that retained “kerb appeal” to the market. Although this is common in the current market hopefully this will change in the future and affordable sustainable and good quality...

decision-making by planning committees (part and parcel of a democracy !), delays in the system, lack of training, cultural shift etc. Although an interesting debate ensued, it was disappointing (as is always the way with these sorts of events) that the delegates can always find a scapegoat in another profession (eg how long would it take for a conference of planners to start criticising highway engineers...?).

All in all, it was a very successful event with a real discussion that was both interesting and informative. However, even though the housing market is in a period of transition, in spite of increasing consumer expectations, environmental awareness, and wealth, for some time yet it seems for those of average income, there will still be very real parallels between the range and choice of new housing developments in Wales and the range and choice of motor vehicles available to east Berliners pre 1989.

Celebrate World Town Planning Day –

8th November 2006.

Why not promote a public, community group or schools event to celebrate World Town Planning Day....?

The international organisation for World Town Planning Day (WTPD) was founded in 1949 by Professor Carlos Maria della Paolera of the University of Buenos Aires to advance public and professional interest in planning, both locally and overseas. The Day will be celebrated in 30 countries on four continents this year. Celebrated in about 30 countries on four continents to draw attention to the aims, objectives and progress of urban, regional and environmental planning, to highlight the contribution that good town planning can make to the quality of our environment, and give special recognition to the ideals of community planning which bring professional planners and the general public together.

Further information will be available nearer the to the day. The UK contact is Judith Eversley, International Affairs Officer, (RTPI), tel. 01225 789 295.

Nodyn Cyngor Technegol 15 Polisi Cynllunio Cymru

NCT 15 – AR ÔL DWY FLYNEDD

Terry Stevens yn adrodd ar y seminar a gynhaliwyd yng ngogledd Cymru i adolygu'r NCT a'i effaith.

Cyhoeddwyd Datblygu a Pherygl Llifogydd yng Ngorffennaf 2004 ac wrth i'w ail ben-blwydd nesáu, cynhaliwyd seminar ar y cyd rhwng RTPI/RICS/ICE yn Llanelwyr ar 22 Mehefin 2006 i adolygu rôl ac effaith y NCT yn ystod dwy flynedd gyntaf ei weithrediad.

Y siaradwyr yn y seminar, a fynychwyd gan tua 90 o gynrychiolwyr, oedd Joanne Smith o Adran yr Amgylchedd, Cynllunio a Chefn Gwlad Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru a Meryl Read a Neil Taunt o Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd Cymru (Gogledd).

Roedd Joanne wedi chwarae ran flaenllaw yn y gwaith o lunio a chyhoeddi NCT 15, a rhoddodd fraslun cryno o amcanion y NCT a'r cefndir i'w lunio yn 2004, gan gydnabod fod yr arweiniad a geir yn y NCT yn wahanol i'r hyn a geir yng nghanllawiau Lloegr at Berygl Llifogydd, sef PPG 25.

Cyfeiriodd Joanne at bwyslais Rheolaeth Perygl Llifogydd NCT 15 ac eglurodd fod Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru wir yn ystyried y NCT yn broses esblygol. Byddai'n rhaid pwysu a mesur ei lwyddiant o'i allu i addasu i effeithiau newid hinsawdd.

Cafwyd crynodeb o'r NCT gan swyddogion Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd Cymru o safbwynt gweithredu, o ystyried rôl yr Asiantaeth yn cynghori Awdurdodau Cynllunio lleol ar faterion perygl llifogydd mewn perthynas â cheisiadau cynllunio ar gyfer datblygu. Unwaith eto, pwysleisiwyd agwedd ragofalus y

NCT, sy'n seiliedig ar ba mor agored i fygythiad yw datblygiad arfaethedig a dull cylchfaol at berygl llifogydd sy'n defnyddio'r Mapiau Cyngor Datblygu sy'n cyd-fynd â'r NCT. Tra fo'r Mapiau wedi eu seilio ar yr wybodaeth orau sydd ar gael (yn cynnwys amlinell llifogydd eithafol Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd) roedd cydnabyddiaeth bod amheuan wedi eu mynegi'n achlysurol mewn perthynas â'u cywirdeb.

Yn dilyn y cyflwyniadau, cafwyd nifer o gwestiynau a sylwadau o'r llawr. Roedd sawl un ohonynt yn ymwneud â dehongli'r NCT a derbyniwyd fod dehongli cynnwys y NCT wedi ei adael i raddau helaeth i AAC ac (yn achos apeliadau cynllunio), yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio. Codwyd hefyd faterion yn ymwneud â gofynion profion cyfiawnhau datblygu yn yr ardaloedd o berygl llifogydd dan baragraff 6 y NCT a'r eglurhad a ddarperir, ond pwysleisiwyd y dylai ymgeisyddion fynd at yr Awdurdodau Cynllunio lleol yn y lle cyntaf am gyngor ar gyfiawnhau datblygiad.

Roedd nifer o'r ymgynghorwyr yn y cyfarfod a oedd yn ymwneud â datblygu yng Nghymru a Lloegr o'r farn fod cyfarwyddyd PPG25 Lloegr yn gweithio'n well na chyfarwyddyd NCT 15 Cymru.

Cadarnhaodd Joanne Smith yn byddai'r Gweinidog yn ymwybodol o'r sylwadau ar y NCT ond yn y lle cyntaf, dylid anfon unrhyw sylwadau at Rosemary Thomas, Pennaeth Cynllunio Llywodraeth y Cynulliad.

Disgwylir y bydd digwyddiad tebyg yn cael ei gynnal yn ne Cymru. - Mwy o wybodaeth maes o law!

Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 15

TAN 15 – TWO YEARS ON

Terry Stevens reports on a North Wales seminar which reviewed the TAN and its impact.

Development and Flood Risk was published in July 2004 and as its second anniversary approached a joint RTPI/RICS/ICE seminar was held in St Asaph on 22 June 2006 to review the role and impact of the TAN over the first two years of its operation.

Speakers at the seminar, which was attended by some 90 delegates, were Joanne Smith from the Welsh Assembly Government, Environment Planning & Countryside Development and Meryl Read and Neil Taunt from the Environment Agency Wales (North Wales).

Joanne played a leading role in the production and publication of TAN 15 and gave a brief overview of the aims of the TAN and the background to its production in 2004, acknowledging that the guidance contained in the TAN differed from that contained in the English guidance on Flood Risk, PPG 25.

Joanne referenced the Flood Risk Management emphasis of TAN 15 and explained that the Welsh Assembly Government saw the TAN very much as an evolving process and would need to evaluate its success in adapting to the impacts of climate change.

The Environment Agency Wales officers provided a summary of the TAN from the implementation viewpoint, given the Agency's role in advising Local Planning Authorities on flood

risk issues associated with planning applications for development. Again the precautionary approach of the TAN was emphasised, which is based on the category of vulnerability of a proposed development and a zonal approach to flood risk using Development Advice Maps (DAM's) which accompany the TAN. While the DAM's are based on the best available information (including the Environment Agency's extreme flood outlines) it was acknowledged that there have been occasions when their accuracy has been questioned.

Following the presentations a number of questions and comments were received from the floor. Many were related to issues of interpretation of the TAN and it was accepted that the interpretation of the TAN's content was largely left to the EAW and (in cases of planning appeals) the Planning Inspectorate. The justification tests for development in flood risk area required under paragraph 6 of the TAN were also raised and clarification provided though it was emphasised that applicants should approach Local Planning Authorities in the first instance for advice on justifying development.

A number of consultants present involved in development in England and Wales felt that the PPG25 guidance in England was working better than the TAN 15 Welsh guidance.

Joanne Smith confirmed that the Minister was made aware of comments on the TAN but in the first instance any comments should be sent to Rosemary Thomas, Head of Planning at the Welsh Assembly Government.

It is anticipated that a similar event will be held in South Wales. - Watch this space !

Review gives green light for planning research

The Assembly has recently published research on the review of the Wales Planning Research Programme. *Roisin Willmott* outlines the report's findings...



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Since 2000 the Assembly's Planning Division has run the Wales Planning Research Programme (WPRP), which provides the evidence base and support for planning policy development. In 2005, the Division took the decision to carry out a quinquennial review of the Programme in view of the changes that had taken place in Wales over the previous five years. This was the first evaluation of this type by the Assembly and in many ways a plucky decision to be opened up for scrutiny, particularly as there was no requirement for such a review.

But how much could change in the world of planning policy in Wales since the Assembly came into existence in 1999? Not much you might think, but then again...

Perhaps the most significant change over the past five years has been the extensive Welsh policy base developed by the Assembly, not just related to land use planning, but also the corporate strategies and other policy specific plans, many of which have close linkages with planning. All of these are underpinned by core values – social justice, sustainable development and equality of opportunity – in turn all important to planning as well. The diagram demonstrates the Assembly's policy base now in place – with a sample of policies to illustrate the structure. It was suggested during the review's consultations that Wales is developing distinctive Welsh planning policy and that in many cases it was 'greener' than that found in England.

The aim of the review was "to evaluate the Wales WPRP in the light of the Assembly's strategic policies to provide draft objectives and themes for the 2005-2011 period." A key message that came out of the review was the need to increase partnership working on research – the joint working that has been done for example with Environment Agency Wales and the Countryside Council for Wales were seen as positive and valuable. Linkages with the DCLG were however found to be weak, and both sides of the border saw difficulties in how the WPRP could work more closely with the English orientated DCLG because of the way DCLG is structured, without a specific focus on planning, instead organised through broader remits such as communities.

Within the Assembly there is a growing emphasis on evidenced based policy and the encouragement of cross-departmental working on research and the Office of the Chief Social Research Officer (OCSRO) will help to take this forward.

A further change since the early days of the WPRP relates to spatial planning. The origins of the Wales Spatial Plan are found in the WPRP, but responsibility for the Plan has now moved to the Assembly's Strategic Policy Unit, to emphasise the cross-Assembly relevance of its application.

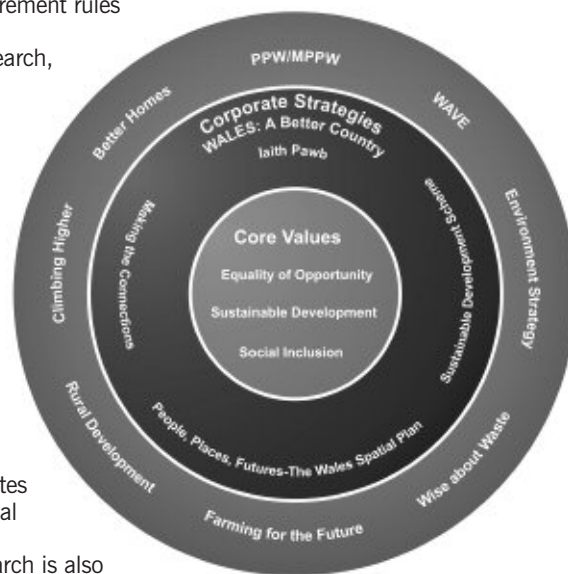
Since 1999 some £2.3 million has been spent on research and other activities by the WPRP - not an insignificant amount. However this was not the maximum budget available, and some issues were identified which prevented the full use of the budget, including the changing and complex procurement rules leading to delays in commissioning research,

the old adage of unforeseen circumstances in carrying out research – for example in one project, insufficient boreholes were available in the Severn Estuary for carrying out a survey of aggregate supplies and it took time to drill at additional sites – the level of internal staff available for managing the research is also restricted and this has led to difficulties in taking forward contracts. In terms of the types of projects and whether they met the WPRP objectives and research themes, the research commissioned was found to meet these.

In summary the review found that the WPRP to be an important resource to support the planning policy cycle in Wales. Recommendations are made to maximise the benefits accruing from the Programme, with a particular focus on collaborative working across Assembly Departments and other agencies.

The full report can be found on the Assembly's Planning Division web site.

Roisin Willmott is a Senior Consultant in ECOTEC's Cardiff Office.



Regeneration Skills Collective goes from strength to strength!

Richard Essex writes on the further development of the Regeneration Skills Collective and its planned activities

The Regeneration Skills Collective in Wales, an informal partnership of six professional institutions (RTPI, RICS Wales, ICE, CIH Cymru, RSAW and LIW) has now been existence for over three years. Previous reports on the activities of the organisation have been given in previous editions of Planning Wales Newsletter.

In March of this year, representatives of the Collective had their first meeting with the Welsh Assembly Government Cabinet's Sustainable Development

Sub Committee. Discussions were held on ways in which specific proposals within the Collective's five years Action Plan might be taken forward. The focus was on four key issues; a skills audit; establishing current & future training needs; the procurement process in relation to regeneration; and the establishment of a Welsh Centre of Regeneration Excellence.

The partner professional institutions all have events programmes that contribute towards taking forward the urban and community regeneration agenda within Wales. The keynote event is the "Delivering Regeneration 3" event, the third annual Regeneration Conference in Wales, which is being held at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea on Thursday 28th September.

...The focus was on four key issues; a skills audit; establishing current & future training needs; the procurement process in relation to regeneration; and the establishment of a Welsh Centre of Regeneration Excellence...

The first session, dealing with the framework for regeneration In Wales, will feature a keynote address by the Minister of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks, Andrew Davies, followed by presentations by Chris Hughes of the Department of Education & Lifelong Learning; and Dave Gilbert, Chief Executive of Carmarthenshire County Council representing the WLGA.

The second session focuses on the Skills Agenda, with presentations by Annie Hall, Head of Sustainability Construction Skills; Sue Innes, Director of Sustainable Construction, Constructing Excellence; Dr Pauline Peregrine, Head of Asset Skills Cymru; and Chris Baxter, Director of Learning & Research, Academy for Sustainable Development. This will be followed by a Panel Discussion.

The third and final session will deal with practice, with presentations by Patrick Lewis, Chief Executive of the Heads of the Valleys Initiative, Steve Piper, Head of the SA 1 Project in Swansea, Andrew Donald, Chair of the Gorseinon Development Trust, Melvin Gray, Trust Manager, Cwmni Clydach

Development Trust and Richard Wilson, Director of Capital and Value, Value Wales.

This event promises to be the major Regeneration Conference in Wales for 2006 and will seek to address how to take forward effective policy and implementation measures that are appropriate to the needs and opportunities in Wales over the next five to ten years. Contact details - The Institution of Civil Engineers, Suite 2 Bay Chambers, West Bute Street, Cardiff, CF10 5BB. Tel: 029 20630561; Fax: 029 20630666

Richard Essex MRTPI: Independent Consultant and Policy Advisor to RICS Wales.

Planning Students' Rugby Strip Sponsorship

Cardiff University students Steffan Harries and Alastair Evanson, of the City and Regional Planning School, are looking to secure a sponsor to provide kit for a departmental rugby team, beginning in October.

The team wish to compete in Cardiff University's Inter Mural Games (IMG) rugby league, commencing in the academic year 2006/07 and continuing for hopefully many years beyond, making this an opportunity with long-term benefits for a sponsor. The IMG leagues, over a range of different sports, have proven to be immensely popular for a number of years.

There has been a lot of interest from planning students since the idea was initially proposed in early March, with a collection of some 20 individuals interested in playing for the side, with further recruitments planned in September. Any companies keen to sponsor the team would be rewarded by

having their name across the shirt and possibly on other team clothing which would be worn around the University and the city.

The team is looking for a negotiable sum of money to pay for, or to put towards a team kit and in return, sponsors would be provided with exposure to a large pool of students and possible future employees within the rugby club, the Planning and Geography department and the University as a whole. Furthermore, in order to further increase publicity for the sponsor's company, the team would be very willing to incorporate the sponsor's name into the team name, generating invaluable interest through a variety of mediums, including weekly exposure in *Y Gair Rhydd* newspaper, which publishes all results and often includes full match reports.

If your company would be interested in this very proactive and lucrative opportunity, or would like further information, please contact Steffan Harries at harriess2@cf.ac.uk or 07875 648 391.

Young Planners Network – Wales Update

Shelley Blackaby of the Institute's Young Planners Network provides an update on the new representative for Wales...

The Young Planners Network (YPN) is a virtual community of young planners throughout the UK and Ireland. Its purpose is to act as a voice for all young planners within the RTPI, help members exchange ideas and information, provide a forum for expressing views and ideas and co-ordinate opinion to help influence the governance of the RTPI.

The YPN was set up in April 2005 and is currently the fastest growing RTPI Network. It is led by a steering group who continue to raise the profile of young planners within the Institute.

Hannah Budnitz is the Young Planners' Network representative for Wales. After completing an MSc in City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University 3 years ago, she joined Arup in Cardiff as a transport planner. She intends to organise an event in Wales in the Autumn and hopes that it will be an

opportunity to bring together local young planners, as a community interested in the future development of Wales' cities and regions.

Planning students and young planners (under 35) are all very welcome to join the YPN and take advantage of the opportunity to meet with other young planners, socialise at events and share ideas and information. The YPN is free to join, and you don't have to be an RTPI member.

Network members receive a weekly email bulletin containing the latest information about events, Network meetings, RTPI news, members' requests for advice and useful resources. The YPN also has a website at <http://youngplanners.rtpi.org.uk>, which contains more information about the Network, its Steering Group, Network papers and links to regional and international young planners' groups. This site and the available information will continue to grow as the network develops further.

Joining the YPN is quick and easy. If you're an RTPI member, you can join the Network online at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/cgi-bin/memsys/network-signup.php> (you'll need your RTPI membership number). If you're not an RTPI member, you can download a one-page application form at <http://youngplanners.rtpi.org.uk/application.doc>.

If you would like to know more about the YPN, please visit the website or contact Catherine Middleton, the Network manager on catherine.middleton@rtpi.org.uk or 020 7515 1913.

Shelley Blackaby is a Development Plans Officer with Tending District Council.

From North to South - President's Visit to RTPI Cymru

Clive Harridge, President of the Royal Town Planning Institute visited Wales in early June and explored a variety of projects and initiatives across Wales on the theme of sustainable development. Here, he is pictured (left to right) with Carwyn Jones AM, Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside, and Owain Wyn who hosted the President as Chairman of RTPI Cymru. The two-day visit included visiting the SA1 development in Swansea, the Senedd in Cardiff Bay, the Eco Dyfi Park and the Centre for Alternative Technology in north Wales, as well as being able to meet with students at Bangor University.



Planners in the Workplace

Chris Sheridan of the Royal Town Planning Institute outlines its Planners in the Workplace services.

*Planners in the Workplace is a new service from the RTPI designed to support planners in their roles and to help them develop as **planners**, as **managers** and as **leaders** in the workplace. *Planners in the Workplace**

planning profession. The RTPI is a knowledge sharing – knowledge generating organisation, placing members at the heart of its activities. PIWP will provide RTPI members with a competitive edge by helping them find real solutions to workplace issues by;

- tapping into the wealth of experience within the membership who work in the public, private and community sectors, from the perspectives of middle and senior management, and the self employed consultant. PIWP will also link with RTPI Networks and other sources of experience and knowledge.
- working in partnership with leading national management information providers so that RTPI members have free access to a variety of high quality management advice and guidance notes.

Member directory

The directory will be online and available to members only

Advice on employment law

Free hotline service providing accurate employment advice for those members who need it.

Guidance on professional conduct

Professional integrity is an issue close to the heart of all professionals yet conflicts do arise in the workplace. Members can seek information and guidance from PIWP whenever they feel their professional obligations are compromised.

Action learning sets

PIWP will work with RTPI Regions and Nations to help develop and facilitate

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is a co-ordinated and continuous source of easily accessible advice, guidance, training and professional support on workplace, career development and professional issues.

The service will develop over time to provide a comprehensive service for members offering:

Professional and workplace advice

PIWP aims to help meet the evolving needs of planners and support them as they embrace culture change within the

Training opportunities on leadership and management issues

Working with the RTPI's Membership, Education and Life Long learning team, RTPI conferences, Planning Matters and other training providers, PIWP will sign post members to training that will help them become better planners, managers and leaders. Please refer to the latest RTPI conferences season ticket brochure for further information or visit www.hawksmereltd.co.uk/rtpi/t.

practical professional learning Sets, both interdisciplinary and planner orientated, where relevant issues and topics are discussed and worked through to create positive solutions.

A cross-disciplinary Action Learning Set is being piloted in partnership with the Yorkshire Region, with more to follow at the initiative develops.

For further information please email piwp@rtpi.org.uk or visit www.rtpi.org.uk

Planners in the Workplace - helping RTPI members get more from their profession.

north or south? **cdn** can show you the way

cdn planning are the only dedicated planning consultancy with offices in both north and south Wales. Whether it's housing, retail, wind energy or commercial and mixed use schemes, **cdn** planning are the right choice for a truly national coverage.

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Section 78 appeals and call-ins
Local development plan representations



North Wales

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Benarth Road, Conwy LL32 8UB
Tel: 01492 581800 Fax: 01492 580599

South Wales

77 Herbert Street, Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 4ED
Tel: 01792 830238 Fax: 01792 863895

Offices opening soon in Cardiff Bay

E.mail: info@cdnplanning.com
www.cdnplanning.com

Gogledd neu'r de? Gall **cdn** eich rhoi ar ben y ffordd

cdn planning yw'r unig ymgynghorwyr cynllunio gyda swyddfeydd yng ngogledd a de Cymru. P'un a yw'n ddatblygiad tai, manwerthu, ynni gwynt neu gynlluniau masnachol a defnydd cymysg, **cdn** planning yw'r dewis gorau am ymddiriedolaeth wirioneddol genedlaethol.

Asesiadau manwerthu
Astudiaethau cynhwysedd tai
Datganiadau ac asesiadau Cymraeg
Gwerthusiad o dirwedd
Rheoli datblygiad
Gorfodaeth
Polisi cynllunio
Apeliadau Adran 78 a ceisiadau a alwyd i mewn
Prifgynllunio
Cynrychiolaethau Cynllun Datblygu Lleol



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Local Government Job Evaluation

Chris Sheridan reports on job evaluation and its impacts on planners across the country.

Job Evaluation, as described by the Work Foundation is a "systematic, rational and consistent approach to defining the relative worth of jobs within an organisation". This sounds good in theory, but what about the reality? Some planners have not fared well,

did not want to lose staff to other authorities, preferring to keep what they valued. Career grade ranges were agreed for job groups, often placing the ceiling a few grades above the existing post holders' scale point to ensure medium-term retention. The result? Planners motivated to deliver a quality service.

Bad practice often leads to the inevitable. Employers who rush through the process, introducing a reduction in pay and ability for employees to take control of their own career development, will find they are faced with a higher turn over of staff. Several cases highlight the problem where an authority found they were unable to recruit vacancies at the new lower salary level and, as a result of a further evaluation, reverted to

of the experiences of members who have been through the process, and I am grateful to those members who took the time to discuss their experiences with me.

- Discuss the evaluation process with your HR department to get a feel for what your employer is looking to achieve, and ensure that job descriptions are accurate and reflect current responsibilities. (It is worth noting that some authorities have undertaken job evaluation only to drop it following backlash from Unions and staff).
- Prepare yourself for the fact that the people running the job evaluation process may not have any understanding of planning. You may also find that the person using the

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citing salary cuts and the resulting problems in staff retention as planners move to new employers. We know that Unison broadly supports job evaluation, but some members argue that the process has been handled very badly by their employers. So is criticism of job evaluation really a criticism of Local Authority management? The notion that local government pay grades should be compared across the board, including manual and non manual is a sound one, and perhaps an inevitable consequence of the introduction of flatter structures.

Good practice points to those employers who took their time to introduce job evaluation. They were able to benchmark successfully and learn from the problems and achievements of others. Corporate Management Teams were able to set out their corporate objectives and ensure that the process improved, rather than undermined the organisation. In some authorities the benefits of having a well-resourced planning service were recognised. They

the pre-evaluation salary. The result was an unnecessary loss of valuable planning knowledge and experience as key staff left and disruption to the planning service. Where an inexperienced member of staff is recruited (and it is not unusual to have no applications in response to a job advert), this places an increase in the level of mentoring and management support required from hard pressed team leaders.

A knock-on effect of this inexperience is less time for effective leadership with more challenging planning applications and pressure on the service as developers will not get authoritative answers to queries at the first time of asking.

The RTPI published an article on job evaluation in 2000 which offered helpful hints to assist those members who were about to undergo evaluation. Six years on, what lessons can members learn from these experiences? The following comments represent some

computerised model will not understand how that works either.

- It is important that members meet to discuss their full range of skills and responsibilities, which can vary. It is equally important to get hold of a copy of the computer model and make sure that your answers are presented in a way that the model can accurately reflect within the high point scoring areas. – but remember, you must ensure you can justify the scores! Some authorities will speak to selected staff, rather than each individual planner, so discuss the process with colleagues including those who will be interviewed.
- Budgets are all important - working on strategies and decisions affecting multi million pound schemes count for nothing in this context so claim the whole LDP budget and share it amongst your staff if you have any.
- One example was given where the person responsible for handling a cheque for a multi-million pound

S106 agreement was likely to score higher than the person who negotiated the agreement.

- When discussing interpersonal and communication skills planners should score highly as you deal with a wide range of stakeholders, from the communities themselves through to millionaire developers. Planners exercise a considerable degree of influence over the shape of the locality served, and that influence could be considerable when evaluated in strictly monetary terms
- Be prepared for bureaucracy at its finest; when describing the stresses of negotiating with bullying developers, do not be surprised if the evaluators try and gauge the level of

stress by enquiring whether a developer could be described as anything from 'un-cooperative' to 'emotional and crying'

(evidence suggests some LPA planners prefer the latter)

- Value is placed on innovation but you may have to prove that you have established a process or procedure that is not currently used in any local authority (and you may need three examples).
- Local conventions (the rules adopted by a local authority) can make a bad system even worse. These can include questions which limit certain answers to staff above a given pay scale, or defining whole service areas in such a way as to benefit some

services and downgrade others. It makes a great deal of difference whether a service is defined as 'everything that happens in the 'planning department' or "development control function", because it affects your perceived breadth of knowledge.

- The stress of a Public Inquiry counts for nothing - because it is not advocacy. Absurdly you may get more credit for informal hearings.

The Planners in the Workplace initiative is building a picture of the effects of job evaluation, and we would welcome the views and comments from all RTPI members. Please send your experiences in confidence to chris.sheridan@rtpi.org.uk

Finding a solution to future environmental planning issues

Set against a backdrop of environmental change, the need for sustainable development places a huge responsibility on the planning system and its practitioners. Planners need the skills and knowledge to deal with complex planning issues such as waste disposal, energy resources, land reclamation, mineral exploitation and hazard assessment, including the scientific understanding needed for adequate risk assessment. However, a background in the Earth or Environmental Sciences is rarely required for planning degrees, and a knowledge gap exists within industry, business and non-governmental organisations about the purpose, importance and limitations of the land-use planning system.

A new Masters degree in Applied Environmental Planning is starting in September 2006. It is offered by the University of Glamorgan and has been developed in close association with the Environmental Planning Branch of the Welsh Assembly Government. It is aimed specifically at providing planners with the necessary background in the earth sciences and environmental issues; and to provide those in related industries and other organisations with knowledge of how the planning

system relates to the environment. The course will provide practitioners with a clear understanding of issues related to: minerals extraction; alternative forms of energy; flooding; climate change; coastal zone management; waste disposal; land redevelopment; hazards, and; risk assessment. It will also provide applied knowledge of the land-use planning system and associated environmental constraints for industry, business and NGOs.

This coming year, the course will be available for part-time study only (one day per week over two years). Financial support is also available: a number of student bursaries of £1,800 have been provided by the Welsh Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund and will be used to offset the cost of tuition fees. To qualify for one of the bursaries, applicants must either be resident or employed within Wales. Further details on the course and the application form may be found on the University's web-site (<http://www.glam.ac.uk/saps> and <http://www.glam.ac.uk/apply>). **For more information, please contact Dr. Tony Harris via e-mail (ajharri1@glam.ac.uk) or on 01443 482452.**

Events Diary

To publicise your event here, simply email event details and a contact name for further information to HarrisNR@cardiff.ac.uk

September 2006

The Big Question – Making Housing Work in Wales, Llandrindod Wells, Monday 4th September 2006. A conference organised by CIH Cymru in association with the Regeneration Skills Collective. Further details available at <http://www.cih.org/cymru/training/bigquestion/index.html>

Delivering Regeneration in Wales (3), Swansea, Thursday 28th September. A one-day conference organised by the Institute of Civil Engineers on behalf of the Regeneration Skills Collective. Further details from the ICE on tel. 029 2063 0561.

October 2006

RTPI Young Planners' Conference, Manchester, 27th-28th October. Further details to be published at www.rtpi.org.uk

November 2006

World Town Planning Day, Wednesday 8th November 2006.



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*Recognised by the RTPI as a 'specialist' masters for those who have completed at least a three year RTPI recognised undergraduate degree in planning, allowing completion of the RTPI's educational requirements for membership.

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Contact: Dr Sean White, Tel: +44 (0) 29 208 76015, Email: WhiteSD@cardiff.ac.uk

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Contact: Ms Alison Brown, Tel: +44 (0) 29 208 76519, Email: BrownAM@cardiff.ac.uk

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Contact: Dr Andrew Flynn, Tel: +44 (0) 29 208 74851, Email: FlynnAC@cardiff.ac.uk

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