



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

THE PIPA NETWORK MONITORING REPORT 2007

PIPA made two major steps forward in 2007. Firstly the Network was relaunched with a major Conference in Birmingham in June with over 100 delegates attending. Secondly, no doubt largely related to the relaunch initiative, membership has nearly quadrupled across the year. PIPA has thus successfully raised the profile of the RTPI with elected Councillors involved with planning across the UK and has also supported these Councillors in their endeavours to achieve the best planning outcomes for their locality.

PIPA members have engaged with members of the Planning with Communities Network to develop a strand of debate, via the Network Bulletin and website, on the role of Parish Councils in planning. PIPA has a substantial number of parish and town Councillors amongst its membership. And jointly with other RTPI Networks PIPA members added a particular perspective and contributed to developing the RTPI's response to the Planning White Paper.

There was no member survey in 2007 but, in conjunction with 'Regenerate' magazine a survey did try to gauge the mood of planning Councillors in a time of major changes, both actual and forecast. In future years a full member survey will be brought forward to allow it contribute directly to the preparation of annual Action Plans and policy consultation programmes for future years.

The challenge for 2008 will be to build steadily on the interest that the relaunch of PIPA has generated, building a real sense that only Councillors and officers together can deliver the place-making commitments that the democratic system requires of them. In these endeavours we will have the added assistance of the Planning Officers Society who have agreed to assist in raising awareness of the benefits of PIPA membership. A particular effort will be made in 2008 to raise the PIPA profile in the nations beyond England, starting with a planned Conference event in Scotland.

Membership profile

Figures current at 26.11.07

Total members: 232

(Members 2006 for comparison: 61)

RTPI members on register: roughly 10% (membership data has been accumulated in such a way that this figure is difficult to derive more accurately at present)

Core Group

The Group is chaired by Councillor Mike Roberts of Rushmore DC and Councillor Maryse Iles (Castle Point BC) was welcomed to the Group during the year. The Core Group is (attendance figures shown in brackets):

Ashis Choudhury (3 of 4)
Cllr Maryse Iles (2 of 3)
Cllr Brian O'Hare (3 of 4)
Cllr Mike Roberts (4 of 4)

Consultant
Councillor for Castle Point
Councillor for Knowsley
Councillor for Rushmoor

The Core Group aims to meet 4 times a year. Meetings were held in March, June, September and December.

SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapidly growing membership since offered a free 'trial' membership • Will be free to join in 2007/08 • Cross-sectoral – providing forum for all sectors within democratic planning to engage with each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-sectoral – resentment of central interference by those engaged in local government • Parochial attitudes • Annual elections – changing membership
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to develop new ideas and input to RTPI research programmes • New Planning White Paper • Website – can provide topical information • Discussion Forum – can engage with others involved in democratic planning process • Annual conference • Elected Members' Summer School – can target for new members • Facilitate better relationships between professional planners and politicians • Overcoming parochialism • Strong support from Robert Upton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplication with / 'treading on toes' of LGA and NALC

Publicity & Promotion

Network member Sarah Boyack MSP was appointed as the Scottish Deputy Minister of Environment and Rural Affairs early in 2007 only to lose the position when the elections for the Scottish Parliament had taken place.

Under the title 'How does it feel to be a Planning Councillor in 2007?' a partial survey of the growing membership was undertaken and highlights of the results were published in the new publication 'Regenerate'. Their report in particular highlighted that a good proportion of Councillors feel well informed on planning issues – but then of course the survey participants were PIPA members!

The first national PIPA Conference in June provided a major focus for publicity and new memberships. Every local authority in the UK received an invitation to send delegates. Places were free thanks to sponsorship from PAS and IDeA. In order to maintain the momentum provided by the relaunch, modest advertising space in Councillor magazine has brought some additional interest in membership.

As in 2006, there was a PIPA presence at the Summer School for Elected Members and every delegates pack included a PIPA leaflet. Additionally PIPA sponsored the evening

Reception on the opening evening of the School – helping to prompt thoughts and questions about how PIPA might help.

As 2007 ends the Planning Officers Society is undertaking a further promotion via its Members to ensure that as many as possible Councillors and others engaged in planning gain the benefits of PIPA membership

E-bulletins

Bulletins have been issued fortnightly, with special editions for any topics of urgency.

Unsolicited Feedback received in 2007

“Very useful as ever”

“Thank you so much again for your assistance with [the Planning Portal Note for MPs]”

“I read with interest the advice given in the [linked] article on Gypsy and Traveller site provision.”

“Well done – speedy indeed.”

“I would like to thank you for all the information and advice”.

“I just wanted to let you know how very useful I find these bulletins. For the first time I feel reasonably well informed.”

“Brilliant!” (re Special Planning White Paper Bulletin edition)

“I have always been keen to keep my knowledge as up to date as possible - sometimes difficult in a small rural authority. Therefore I would like to join PIPA.”

“I do value these [Bulletins]”

Policy consultations

Network members have been invited to contribute to consultations on the following during 2007:

Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 – CLG

Planning Gain Supplement Implementation Consultation - CLG

Building a Greener Future – CLG

Mandating Water Efficiency in New Buildings – CLG

Communities Scotland Draft Sustainable Development Policy – Communities Scotland

Demonstrating sustainability - The Welsh Assembly

Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites - The Welsh Assembly

Implementing the Commons Act 2006 - Defra

Amendments to the Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members - CLG

Revised planning guidance in relation to Travelling Showpeople - CLG

Guidance on tall buildings – CABE

Can rural Councillors make a difference? - The Commission for Rural Communities

Planning for climate change in Wales – The Welsh Assembly

Draft Practice Guide Companion to Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25): Development and Flood Risk – CLG

Amendments to the Temporary Stop Notice Regulations – CLG

Simpler consultation? - GLA

Proposals for future unitary structures – CLG

Assessing and Improving Planning Authority Performance in Scotland – Scottish Executive
Statutory Guidance on Planning and Sustainable Development – Scottish Executive
Energy Efficiency and Microgeneration Strategy for Scotland – Scottish Executive
Tax incentives for development of brownfield land - The Treasury
The Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations – Scottish Executive
Changes to Permitted Development – CLG
Public service regulation - The Audit Commission
Working Together – The Environment Agency
Community Assets Fund – Cabinet Office
Renewable energy-generation technologies - The Parliamentary Science and Technology Committee
Planning White Paper – CLG
The Energy White Paper and Consultation on the Future of Nuclear Energy – DTI
Proposals for Future Unitary Structures: Means of Prioritising Proposals – CLG
Draft Guidance on the Design of Sites for Gypsies and Travellers – CLG
Right to apply for orders to extinguish and divert public rights of way – Defra
Discrimination Law Review - CLG
Communities England – CLG
Consultation on Consultations – Cabinet Office
Implementation of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) - DTI
Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: A framework for implementing geological disposal – Defra
Working Towards a Wildlife Health Strategy for England – Defra
Overriding Easement and other rights – CLG
A Sustainable Construction Strategy - BERR
Transfer of Planning Appeals to Inspectors – CLG
Proposals for Unitary Local Government: An Approach to Implementation – CLG
Cycling Infrastructure Design - The Department of Transport
Affordable Rural Housing - The Housing Corporation
Local Vision, Preparing Community Strategies - The Welsh Assembly
A Shared Community - The Welsh Assembly
The Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations – Scottish Executive
TAN 17: Planning and Managing Development - The Welsh Assembly
Building better incentives for local economic growth - HM Treasury & CLG
Brownfield Skills Strategy - ASC
Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England - NALC
Housing and Planning Delivery Grant Allocation Mechanism – CLG
Draft Regulations on Development Planning (Scotland) – Scottish Executive
Planning Enforcement Regulations (Scotland) – Scottish Executive
Principles of Representation - CLG
Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance – CLG
Streamlining Local Development Frameworks - CLG
Tree Preservation Orders: Improving Procedures - CLG

Awards

Network members have been informed of and/or invited to participate in the following during 2007:

Academy of Urbanism Awards <http://www.academyofurbanism.org.uk/awards.htm>
 ASC Awards for Sustainable Communities <http://ascskills.org.uk/pages/awards>
 ASC Future Vision Awards <http://www.ascskills.org.uk/pages/careers/futurevision>
 Beacon Council Awards <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=719259>
 BURA Awards for Best Practice in Regeneration <http://firsthand.bura.org.uk/Default.aspx>
 BURA Awards for Community Inspired Regeneration <http://firsthand.bura.org.uk/Default.aspx>
 Community Empowerment Awards
http://www.nalc.gov.uk/Conferences_and_Events/Awards/Awards_for_Local_Councils.aspx
 Excellence Wales Status <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/content.php?nID=340;IID=1>
 LGN Street Design Awards <http://www.lgnnet.co.uk/street>
 Neighbourhood Awards <http://www.neighbourhoodawards.org.uk/>

Public:Private Finance Awards http://www.centaur.co.uk/communities/public_sector/ppfa/
Regeneration and Renewal Awards
<http://www.haymarketevents.com/awards/?fuseaction=eventIntro&eventID=2817>
RIBA Awards http://www.architecture.com/go/Architecture/Also/Awards_5894.html
Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning (administered by RTPI Scotland)
<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/556/23/5/3>
Scottish Excellence in Community Regeneration Award <http://www.cih.org/scotland/regeneration-award.htm>
SURF Awards for Best Practice - Urban Regeneration
<http://www.scotregen.co.uk/knowledge/good.asp?p=fc>
The Guardian Public Service Awards <http://society.guardian.co.uk/>
The Guardian Social Entrepreneurship Awards <http://society.guardian.co.uk/>
Water Efficiency Awards <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waterres/286587/1716390/>
Woman of the Year Awards www.dods.co.uk/womansawards
World Habitat Awards <http://www.bshf.org/en/?topselected=World%20Habitat%20Awards>

Task Groups

There have been no task groups as such but the Core Group core members have in particular been helped by Prof Alan Townsend from Durham University to examine and consider the democratic aspects of regionalism with the aim of assisting with the development of RTPI policy here.

Core Group member Trevor Roberts shared with members his submission to the review of the Code of Conduct for Councillors as a means to stimulate awareness, debate and maximize participation.

Core Group member Ashis Choudhury has continued to keep the Group informed on 'capturing land value' from his membership of a pressure group for reform.

The Group also responded to the call for case studies requested by Peter Hetherington of the Guardian for his piece on the 40th anniversary of the introduction of planning legislation.

Requests to/from Members

Attention was drawn to the **Sustainable Communities Bill**, a Private Member's Bill that eventually gained an approval during 2007.

In conjunction with 'Regenerate' magazine, a **survey of Members** was undertaken and although the response was not overwhelming the responses did provide a good litmus test of how it felt to be a Planning Councillor in 2007. Responses were fairly equally divided on whether the decision making process for planning committees has improved over the last five years; the 'nos' generally quote restraints on local decision-taking whilst the 'yeses', in the majority only because of a "very slightly", say decisions are now better informed.

PIPA members were encouraged to take part in the **Commission for Racial Equality's** general formal investigation into regeneration in the UK.

A particular effort was made to obtain PIPA member input into the preparation and planning for the major RTPI **Gypsy & Traveller Conference**

The University of Bath requested participation in a research project that required 'objective observer' access to several different case studies (over the next 6 months) where the public are being given an opportunity to **participate in the design process**.

Networks member LG Holt commented that it is pleasing "that the Housing Green Paper proposes no fundamental change in the **Green Belt**" thereby opening up a line of debate on a topic which the RTPI had been exploring alternatives.

A postgraduate student requested case studies for a **dissertation** on "Climate Change - Where Does Planning Fit In?"

Members have been invited to take part in an event examining the **Planning Reform Bill**

Events

Date: 24th January 2007
Event: Community-led Plans: integrating with the planning system
The Network held a Reception during this important event
Venue: London
Participants: 30

Date: 5th March 2007
Event: ROOMatRTPI London event
Venue: The House of Lords
Subject: Networking for Planning
Participants: 50

Date: 16th March 2007
Event: Planning and Climate Change
The Network assisted with speakers for this event
Venue: London

Date: 23rd June 2007
Event: 1st National PIPA Conference
Venue: Birmingham
Subject: New Horizons for Democratic Planning
Participants: 100+

The Presentations made at the Conference are available to members on the PIPA webpages

Date: 6th December 2007
Event: House of Commons Reception
Venue: London
Subject: The RTPI & Planning Aid