



# RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

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## RTPI UPDATE

April 2008

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## **MEMBERSHIP, EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING DIRECTORATE**

### **DIRECTOR: SUE PERCY**

#### **Election to Chartered Membership through the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC)**

At the recent deadline in January 2008, 128 Licentiatees submitted their APC documentation which was assessed by 20 Assessor pairs. The pass rate for the recent round of submissions is 63%; 81 of the 128 Licentiatees were elected to chartered membership. The remaining Licentiatees were either referred to the next submission for submission of additional information (25 Licentiatees) or were deemed to have failed the assessment (22 Licentiatees). The pass rate is a reflection of the high standard of submission expected and is in line with our expectations.

We are only now beginning to receive applications for chartered membership from substantial numbers of Licentiatees who have completed their period of structured experience, since the introduction of APC in 2005. We have had a relatively large number of Licentiatees apply in time for the two submission deadlines in the past eight months, the most recent on 25 January 2008.

The Assessors have noted considerable variation in the quality of submissions. While the successful candidates have, on the whole, submitted excellent log books and APC reports, patterns are beginning emerge on the competencies that unsuccessful Licentiatees are failing to demonstrate. One such competence is the awareness of the legal framework and ethical challenges of Licentiatees' spatial planning work. These applicants also do not appear to demonstrate sufficient awareness of the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct.

Detailed statistics about the assessments to date will be available in due course which will feed into Assessor and mentor training and further guidance to Licentiatees.

#### **RTPI Learning Partners**

- We are pleased to announce that Carter Jonas, City of Edinburgh Council and the London Borough of Merton are our most recently elected RTPI Learning Partners.

#### **Education & Lifelong Learning**

- RTPI & CEBE (Centre for Education in the Built Environment) Planning Education to Planning Practice Workshop, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

This workshop was a great success in bringing together the academic and practice communities to discuss current challenges for planning education. The event was also very well attended by some of the RTPI's Learning Partner employers. The feedback from the event is being used to inform the ongoing education review.

- Education Review Group

In the last quarter, the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee has considered papers from the Education Review Group. Guidance for planning schools and Partnership Boards on delivering intensity in one year Masters degrees, and a position paper on the Bologna Process by the RTPI, are soon to

be published with other papers soon to be issued for consultation setting out the RTPI's priorities for initial planning education.

- CLG Select Committee on skills capacity with local government

Evidence was submitted to the committee which highlighted a number of issues including the need to continuously keep skills up to date; developing skills in urban design, economic development; pressures of time and resources leading to training and development opportunities not being used.

- New RTPI Awards for Planning Education

At the RTPI Awards in February, RTPI President Janet O'Neill announced three new awards for next year covering planning education. The new awards are:

**Award for Excellence in Planning Education** - acknowledging innovation and creativity in teaching and learning by academics individually or collectively in the education of future planners;

**Student Award for Outstanding Achievement in Planning Education** - celebrating educational excellence among students on accredited courses;

**Employer Award for Commitment to Lifelong Learning** – commending RTPI Learning Partners who have demonstrated excellence in professional development policy or practice.

### **Accreditation & Partnership**

- **University College Cork was awarded provisional accreditation on 13 February 2008**

The new Masters in Planning and Sustainable Development (M.Plan) is a combined planning programme delivered over four 12 week teaching seminars based within the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences.

- **Kingston University was awarded full accreditation on 22 January 2008**

The new MA in Planning and Sustainability is a combined intensive one year course and is delivered through the School of Surveying at Kingston who specialises in spatial planning and land development embedded in the issues of sustainability with a particular emphasis on the social well being of communities. The school is closely linked to the activities of the Centre for Sustainable Communities Achieved through Integrated Professional Education (C-SCAIPe) and has strong links with the profession both locally and internationally.

- **University of Birmingham was awarded provisional accreditation in November 2007**

The new MSc in Urban and Regional Planning is a one year combined planning programme focusing on urban regeneration, comparative planning, housing and economic development. The course is based in CURS, the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies.

### **Universities seeking and/or stating an interest in accreditation:**

- University of Ulster (dialogue member appointed)
- University of Botswana (dialogue member appointed)

- University of Lincoln (dialogue member appointed)
- National University of Ireland, Galway (dialogue member being appointed)
- University of Plymouth
- University of Keele
- London Metropolitan University (dialogue member being appointed)
- University of Brighton (dialogue member being appointed)
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- University of Wales, Bangor
- University of Cambridge (dialogue member being appointed)

**PROGRAMMES & SERVICES DIRECTORATE**  
**DIRECTOR: DEBBIE SORKIN**

**Planning Aid**

We were delighted to receive confirmation in March of a greatly increased core funding settlement for Planning Aid in England from *Communities and Local Government* (CLG) for the period 2008-2011.

On the basis that we meet performance targets (as we have done to date), the total budget for the period will be £11.8 million.

This is almost three times the level of core funding (c. £4.7 million) we obtained in the last budget round. The budget for 2008-2009, confirmed by Secretary of State Hazel Blears at an event in March, will be £3.2 million.

The increase shows how far we have come in the last three years in embedding Planning Aid at the heart of the planning system in England and how effective Planning Aid has been, and continues to be, in delivering real community engagement in planning. It recognises the growing demand for the service and allows us to build on our achievements so far.

It also honours the tremendous hard work and commitment of all the volunteers in the RTPI Regions in England and the Planning Aid Steering Groups, and all the Planning Aid staff at the Institute. In relation to the staff, particular tribute should be paid to Dave Chetwyn, Head of Planning Aid England; Tino Hernandez, Planning Aid Communications Manager; Chris Nicholls, Planning Aid Finance Manager; and Sheena Terrace, the Planning Aid Manager. However, everyone connected with Planning Aid has played a part in getting us to this point.

The new funding will allow us to place Planning Aid on a stronger footing both nationally and regionally so that we can expand the service to support the new planning system, and raise public awareness of the service so that Planning Aid can be accessed and used by even more of the people who really need it.

Over the next few months, we will be looking to strengthen the staffing resource available for Planning Aid, for example through bringing all the Caseworker posts up to full-time positions, introducing 'National Planner' posts to provide additional professional guidance and advice, and obtaining more administrative and infrastructure support. At the same time, we have been charged by CLG with extending Planning Aid's already extensive partnership working, and this will be another priority. We already have arrangements in place with the Environmental

Law Foundation, and, as examples of other developing relationships in this area, we will be looking to work with the Development Trusts Association on asset transfer issues, and with the Eco-towns team in CLG to help support consultation events in this area.

In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about what the different Planning Aid services around the UK are doing, please come to the **Planning Aid Annual Conference, on 14 – 15 April at King’s College, Cambridge**. The theme of the conference will be ‘Regional places, local spaces: homes, health and happiness’, and the programme will address how communities can, together with regional and local authorities and developers, get involved in an effective way with planning at national and regional levels. Alongside plenary sessions, the programme will include good practice examples from Planning Aid nationwide. We already have over 100 people booked to attend this event from around the UK. For more details and to download a booking form, please go to [www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk).

### **The Planning Convention 2008: 9 – 11 July, QE II Centre, London**

Preparations for this year’s Convention are now well advanced. To find a copy of the Convention brochure or to book online, please go to [www.theplanningconvention.co.uk](http://www.theplanningconvention.co.uk).

The overall theme of this year’s event will be ‘Changing Places: Changing World’, reflecting the role of planning in a world that is not only changing but changing at an increasing rate. Planning no longer works in isolation, and planners need skills to address broad societal issues including crime reduction, community empowerment, improving health outcomes and providing environmentally sustainable communities.

Hence there are key issues around:

- the pace of change;
- the changing policy context;
- changing demands on planners and planning from different stakeholders.

The Convention sessions will reflect this world of change: in places and place-shaping; in practice; and in politics and societal issues.

We feel we have a very strong programme again at this year’s event, with confirmed speakers including Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US and also a Harvard-trained planner who was an inspirational speaker at last year’s American Planning Association Conference; Professor Phil Harrison, Executive Director of Development, Planning and Urban Management for the City of Johannesburg; Sir Terry Farrell; Bernadette Kelly, Executive Director for Planning at CLG; Professor Janice Morphet and Keith Thomas, Director of Research and Practice at DTZ speaking on changing planning practice; Baroness Susan Greenfield, Director of the Royal Institution; Sunand Prasad, President of RIBA; Michael Parkinson, Director of the European Institute for Urban Affairs at Liverpool John Moores University; and Bob Hunter, President of the American Planning Association.

Associated workshops will include topics such as climate change; planning and health; countering the skills gap; planning and public safety; community empowerment; and urban design. Other confirmed workshop leads include ASC;

CABE; the Home Office and the Department of Health; the Housing Corporation; and the Environment Agency.

We will be repeating the plenary debate on the Friday afternoon, which was such a success last year. This time, the focus will be on *Changing Planning in a Changing World – Where will we be in 2018?* Kevin Murray has agreed to moderate the debate.

We are starting to receive suggestions for the Exhibition of Good Practice from around the UK, that will also feature strongly at the Convention. This will link with workshop on good practice led by Mike Ash, former Chief Planner at CLG and Chair of the 2007 RTPI Awards Judges' Panel.

As always, we would welcome hearing from GA members who are interested in playing a part – please contact [Debbie.sorkin@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:Debbie.sorkin@rtpi.org.uk). We also hope to see many of you there.

### **Other Events**

A research conference on *Improving Sustainability Appraisal; putting research into practice* kicked off the national events programme in 2008. It was highly successful with fifty researchers attending to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the Sustainability Appraisal process and identify priorities for research.

This was followed by a lively evening last month, when Simon Jenkins, noted author and columnist with *The Guardian*, gave the **2008 RTPI Annual Lecture** to an audience of over 120 on *Politics and the death of planning*. Amongst his thoughts, he saw politics as being at the core of planning, but also – more provocatively – that there was nothing wrong with 'nimbyism' if it meant local people having a real say in how the area they lived in was developed. He even went so far as to say that nimbyism was the new democracy! A transcript of the lecture is available on the RTPI website. Meantime, all feedback from any General Assembly members would be welcome. We are starting to think about speakers for next year, and about developing the event further, and would appreciate the views and suggestions of General Assembly members.

The RTPI/Programmes and Services Directorate is delighted to be an Associate Sponsor of this year's **POS Presidential Event**, taking place in Hambleton, Yorkshire on **17 – 18 April**. Professor Janice Morphet will be the RTPI's nominated speaker at the event. Janice will be talking on spatial planning issues, and her presentation will relate to the implementation of the *Effective Practice in Spatial Planning* project.

The first **RTPI Networks Conference** will be taking place in Birmingham on **23 April**. Further details are available from [trish.cookson@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:trish.cookson@rtpi.org.uk).

In May, the Institute will be taking part in the Annual Conference of **The National Association of Local Councils**, being held in Eastbourne. GA members Mike Haslam and Ron Tate have kindly agreed to run a planning surgery/workshop at the conference, and there will be a joint RTPI/Planning Aid presence, particularly apt given that Planning Aid is often called upon to help at District or Parish Council level.

RTPI in Scotland will be hosting the Annual **Sir Patrick Geddes Memorial Lecture** on **4 June** in Edinburgh. Dr Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Scotland, will talk on *'The Biological Consequences of Living in Adverse Circumstances'*, reflecting the growing links between spatial planning and health

that are also featuring at this year's Planning Convention. For more details, please contact [veronica.burbridge@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:veronica.burbridge@rtpi.org.uk).

Also this summer (date TBC), we will be looking to hold the next in our series of **Overseas Planners' Receptions** for planners from overseas working in the UK. These have proven highly popular, selling out on places within a few days of being advertised and commonly attracting some 100 planners from eight countries across the world working in the UK in both the public and – increasingly – the private sectors. This time, we will develop the event by including a CPD session tailored to their needs. General Assembly members should note that this is no longer just a London/South-East phenomenon: we have had attendees recently from the South West and the West Midlands, so the practice is becoming more geographically widespread.

In the autumn, the **National Regeneration Convention** will be taking place on **15 – 17 September** in Glasgow, with the theme of **Building Successful Communities**, and the **Annual Young Planners' Network Conference** will take place in Brighton on **10 – 11 October**. The theme for the Young Planners' Conference will be **Brighton: The Great Divide**. Again, we would welcome involvement of General Assembly members with these events and/or views on them and would be happy to discuss them further.

On a sadder note, we will be saying farewell in April to Mary Murphy and Emma Tozer from the Institute's In-House Events team. Mary is leaving because she wants to pursue her own projects and Emma because she wants to fulfill a long-held ambition to retrain as a florist, something that – with the best will in the world – we can't quite fit into our aims as a planning organisation!

The Institute owes Mary and Emma a huge debt of gratitude for their – often unsung – role in making such a success of key events like the Planning Aid Conferences, the National Regeneration Conventions and the Young Planners' Conferences, alongside a host of other conferences, seminars and workshops. Events are one of the few Institute activities where we get very fast and direct feedback on how we've performed, and it's to Mary and Emma's great credit that such feedback has been consistently positive and complimentary about the level of efficiency, care and attention to detail. Their work has been strongly valued by all of us in the Institute and we will miss them.

## **Awards**

The presentations took place at City Hall on 15 January for the **2007 London Planning Awards**, with the King's Cross Development taking the Mayor's Award. Richard Lemon, Honorary Secretary of RTPI London, was amongst the judges, and has been invited to continue as a judge for the 2008 awards. The overall Mayor's Award for Planning Excellence went to Argent's King's Cross Central Development, and other winners include the Brent Cross Cricklewood scheme, which won Best Conceptual Project for a 100ha development of previously neglected land, and Rubicon in Greenwich/Deptford, which took the Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing Delivery. For more details and a copy of the awards brochure, please go to the RTPI website or contact [judy.woollett@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:judy.woollett@rtpi.org.uk).

Sitting alongside the thriving RTPI regional award schemes, 613 guests – a record – attended the **RTPI National Planning Awards** ceremony at the Hilton Hotel, London on 7 February. 87 entries were received from all around the UK and Ireland and 32 were shortlisted, of which 22 received awards or

commendations. Baroness Andrews, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in the House of Lords, presented the highest award, the Silver Jubilee Cup, to the entry *Newark and Sherwood Energy Village*, a ground-breaking regeneration project in the East Midlands on the site of an old colliery pit. This mixed-use scheme was spearheaded by the community and planners working together. As a result, a derelict site has been transformed, with more than half the site now occupied by commercial development in modern buildings incorporating sustainable building techniques and energy efficiency measures. Baroness Andrews was highly complimentary about both the project and about planners in general, describing those involved as 'true local heroes'.

Other winners included a Masterplan and design guides for the Scottish island of Gigha, Sheffield's public realm gold route, the Neighbourhoods Initiatives Foundation for *Planning for Real* and Terence O'Rourke for their work in Marine Spatial Planning. Arup won **Consultancy of the Year** and the award for **Young Planner of the Year** went to Susannah Guest, a Senior Planning Officer at the Planning Inspectorate. As outgoing President, Jim Claydon gave his **President's Special Award** to the UK's accredited planning schools in recognition of their outstanding work and commitment over the past decade.

Full details on the award-winners were given in a special supplement of *Planning* included with the 8 February 2008 issue (please contact [judy.woollett@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:judy.woollett@rtpi.org.uk) if you would like a copy) or are available on the RTPI website.

The ceremony for the **Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning** took place in Edinburgh on 13 March 2008. There were 39 entries across categories of Development Management, Development Planning, Development on the Ground and Community Involvement. John Swinney, MSP and Cabinet Secretary in the Scottish Government for Finance and Sustainable Growth, presented the overall award to the Kilmarnock Conservation Area Maintenance Guide, with other award winners including Baxter Park in Dundee, the Fife Masterplans Handbook, Planning Aid for Scotland's *Planning to Act* and the Blacklaw Renewable Energy Fund. Full details are published by the Executive on its website at [www.scotland.gov.uk/planning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning).

There has also been a recipient of the RTPI **Outstanding Service Award**. Andy Meenagh, a long-standing member of the RTPI Irish Branch Northern Section, was given the award at the Branch's Annual Dinner in Belfast on 21 February, in recognition of his enormous contribution both to the branch and to the planning profession in Northern Ireland over more than 30 years.

Entries are now being received for the **2008 UK National Awards**. The judges will be Chris Shepley (Chair), Mike Ash and Kay Powell, and the awards presentation lunch will take place at the London Hilton Hotel on **Thursday 5 February 2009**.

For 2008, we will be introducing three **Planning Education Awards** – one for a planning school, one for a student, and one for a Learning Partner – as part of the overall awards scheme. The closing date will be the same as for the Young Planner and the Consultancy of the Year Awards.

Finally, the **George Pepler International Award** will be taking place this year with a closing date of 31 March. The judges will be RTPI President Janet O'Neill, Vincent Goodstadt and Matthew Carmona from the Bartlett School of Planning. The RTPI Past Presidents will be having their annual lunch and meeting at the Royal Overseas League on Thursday 17 July.

## **Planners in the Workplace**

*PIWP* continues to develop, with the number of enquiries increasing across a broad range of issues and monthly features in *Planning*. Last year, the number of enquiries hit a new high, with 220 calls to Chris Sheridan, PIWP Manager, alone, and an increasing number of calls to the employment law/HR hotline.

This is partly related to public sector job evaluations coming back into the news, with reports in *Planning* citing some resulting pay cuts of £5,000. An RTPI member at Bromsgrove District Council, concerned that Council was imposing facing similar cuts contacted Chris. In this particular case it was not just about salary, the proposed cuts threatened the professional career structure that helped the planning service develop and retain skilled staff. Chris encouraged members to appeal against the proposal, and has provided members with information and guidance on how to best build a case. The evaluation process at the Council has now been put on hold following a ballot by Unison.

In *Planning* magazine's 28 March issue, a letter from Chris was printed in which he called attention to the problem and its effect on staff recruitment and retention, and asked for members to contact him with their experiences. The theme of Chris' letter was also picked up by Huw Morris in his editorial. If General Assembly members have strong views on the issue, or direct experience one way or the other, please get in touch with Chris at [chris.sheridan@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:chris.sheridan@rtpi.org.uk).

The **Collaborative Working Groups Guidance Note** is available from the website, and supporting information will be added to encourage members and their employers to use Groups to assist with professional development. On related issues, Chris is working with RTPI North West and the Construction Knowledge Exchange to set up a pilot Collaborative Working Group in Manchester. We have also discussed with CABA the value such groups could bring to their 'Building For Life' awareness raising workshops in the West Midlands. This idea is being taken forward with RTPI West Midlands and the Urban Design Network.

At the same time, Chris is leading the development of a draft web-based framework of skills needed for '*Effective Practice in Spatial Planning*', as detailed in the Effective Practice in Spatial Planning Report. Working with Will French and Rhian Brimble, the Development Planning and Development Management Network Manager, we hope to have a useful information tool in place, starting this summer, that can be regularly updated, offering further information on the skills needed and sources of further information.

To find out more, please contact Chris Sheridan at the Institute on 020 7929 9483, or via [chris.sheridan@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:chris.sheridan@rtpi.org.uk).

## **Member Services**

RTPI Branches, Regions and Nations continue to develop programmes of affordable and well-attended professional development events. To take just a few examples: over the next few months, planning and housing will be considered in Scotland and the North East; Strategic Environmental Assessments will come under the spotlight in London; planning and climate change issues will be addressed in Wales and the East of England; RTPI North West will look at the Regional Spatial Strategy and RTPI South West will look at planning and transport. Throughout the country numbers of attendees continue to rise at Regional events, placing the RTPI at the centre of providing continuing

professional development for planners. For information, please contact [charles.veal@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:charles.veal@rtpi.org.uk).

At the same time, we have been out and about engaging with members and promoting the Institute on a face-to-face (and sometimes even one-to-one) basis. With Roadshows in Northern Ireland, we have been visiting planners in their workplace to explain the work of the Institute and how membership can benefit them. Roadshows also provide a valuable opportunity for planners and members to feed back to the Institute on what they think of the RTPI. We will be looking to do more of these roadshows, and/or support Branches, Regions and Nations wishing to do their own, in 2008. For example, RTPI North East is considering ways of getting out there to talk membership to find out what they want from the RTPI and to promote the benefits of RTPI membership. At the same time, we are currently identifying suitable dates for repeat Roadshows with the Northern Section of the RTPI Irish Branch.

Socially the Branches, Regions and Nations are also very active. The Annual Dinner of the Northern Section of the Irish Branch took place in February, selling all the tickets available and attracting well over 100 people. RTPI West Midlands' Annual Ball was also a sold-out success, and an increasing number of other Regions are planning to hold similar events. But the Regions are not just about wining and dining. The football season is back amongst us with five-a-side football matches being played the length and breadth of the country.

On a more serious note, RTPI Regions in England are looking to find new ways to engage more effectively with local planning agendas. RTPI South West is recruiting a part-time Policy and Media Officer and other Regions are considering a similar approach. Regional Awards continue to go from strength to strength. Branches, Regions and Nations have also been busy reaching out to the "not yet members" at careers fairs for schools and universities and with improved RTPI stands and flyers meaning that we no longer feel so much like poor relations compared to the other built environment professions.

### **RTPI in Scotland**

The RTPI in Scotland hosted a seminar on Scottish Planning Research Priorities. The seminar was attended by members of the Policy Sub-Committee; the Scottish Planning Schools and the Scottish Government. Jenny Crawford, Head of Research also attended and gave a presentation on RTPI priorities.

The RTPI is currently responding to a number of consultations on proposed secondary legislation. These include: The National Planning Framework; Draft Regulations on Development Plan Examinations; Modernising Planning appeals; draft Regulations on the Planning Hierarchy; Development Planning Procedures

Other consultations from Government include Consultation on the future of flood risk management; a Scottish Climate Change Bill; Permitted Development Rights for domestic microgeneration equipment; the revision of SPP3 on Housing; and the revision of SPP23 on Planning and the Historic Environment.

The RPI in Scotland has given evidence to Scottish Parliamentary Committees including the Local Government and Communities Committee on the Balmedie application; the Petitions Committee on policy matters surrounding call in procedures, planning for sport activities and housing; and the Environment and Rural Affairs Committee on flooding.

A **Scottish Young Planners Conference** on 'The Scottish Housing Challenge: can planners deliver?' took place in Glasgow on 3 April 2008.

### **RTPI Cymru**

RTPI Cymru's Policy and Research forum has recently focused its attention on considering the Planning Bill from a Welsh position and is pleased to see that at the Committee stages, Assembly law making powers (Measures) have been introduced for land use plans, including Local Development Plans and the Wales Spatial Plan.

The Forum has also responded to the Competition Commission's proposals to the groceries market with respect to whether the planning system should be responsible for making decisions on whether a large operator should be granted planning permission in a particular locality.

During February and March, RTPI Cymru organised four two-day courses, run by Trevor Roberts Associates, on negotiation skills for planning agreements, with funding support from the Welsh Assembly Government. A principal aim of the courses is to equip local authorities with skills needed to negotiate planning agreements with a particular emphasis on delivering the Assembly Government's affordable housing commitments, as set out in *One Wales*. The courses, run in Abergavenny, St Asaph, the Vale of Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire, were fully subscribed and all 25 local planning authorities in Wales were represented. The courses have been very successful with positive feedback from all attendees. A particular strength was highlighted as the mixing of planning and housing staff and the opportunity to discuss ways of working between different departments as well as authorities.

The Wales Spatial Plan Update for 2008 is currently in a consultation process. As part of this RTPI Cymru in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government has organised two events to discuss the role of the Wales Spatial Plan in relation to the planning system. The Spatial Plan is not comparable with English Regional Spatial Strategies but instead acts more as a focus for implementing wider Government policy within a spatial framework. The events will be held in Cardiff and Bangor in April.

RTPI Cymru will be holding the first Wales Planning Conference – ***Positive Planning for Wales*** – on **3 July 2008** at the Parc Thistle Hotel in Cardiff. Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners are the Conference sponsors. The conference will be chaired by Kelvin MacDonald, former Head of Policy at the RTPI. Jane Davidson, Assembly Government Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing will address the Conference, setting out the latest position and progress against *One Wales*, the Assembly Government's commitments for this term of Government. Jim Claydon, Immediate Past President of the RTPI, will provide a wider UK contextual view for the conference.

The conference will look at the issues around a number of important Welsh policy areas including delivering the right housing in the right places, planning for climate change, the particular needs of the rural communities in Wales, and considering the planning issues around the retail sector and its role in place making. The conference will also consider how policy is delivered. There are increasing pressures on local authority planning roles to deliver not just planning policy but a whole range of other policy areas. Whilst this offers opportunities for joined up policy, is the system equipped to deliver? How can the system be delivered effectively and give the opportunity for planning professionals to fulfil an

important part in place making and developing vision for Wales and our communities.

For more details, please contact [roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk).

### **Networks and Associations**

Membership numbers for the Institute's 14 Networks and Associations have continued to rise. There are now over 5,500 members across the RTPI Networks and Associations (over 1,000 of these are in the Young Planners' Network alone), up from 4,000 a year ago.

All the Networks have prepared action plans for 2008. Key proposals include producing a Good Practice Guide for local groups to exchange experience and good practice on implementing the new planning system, and (particularly for the Development Planning and Development Management Networks) working alongside the *Planners in the Workplace* initiative to provide a means for spatial planners and sustainable community strategy managers to network.

**The Politicians in Planning Network** will be organising two conferences, one in Glasgow on 21 June and one in Manchester in October, at which Hazel Blears will be speaking. The **Rural Planning Network** will be producing a Rural Planning Good Practice Guide – 'Developing the evidence base' and producing an information database to help users of the planning system find their way through developing in the countryside. **The Transport Planning Network** is setting up Regional Transport Planning Groups and strengthening their links with the Transport Planning Society as well as developing materials to promote transport planning as a career in schools. **The Urban Design Network** provides e-bulletins to Design Champions in the South East and is looking to setting up regional Urban Design discussion groups.

Plans are underway to provide a portal for Planning Administrators, providing a wealth of resources and information. Most of the Networks have undertaken membership surveys and the results will feed into new Action Plans for 2008/09 which will in turn influence the Planning Policy & Practice Committee's policy agenda for 2009. The response rate to the surveys was relatively poor, averaging 13%, although Room for All – the RTPI Housing Network managed a response rate of 20%.

New network Task Groups have been set up; the ***Spatial Plans and Transport Planning Task Group*** (to share information, experience and good practice on spatial plans and transport planning); the ***Planning Delivery and Strategic Policy Task Group*** (to share information, experience and good practice on planning delivery and strategic policy and the relationship between them); the ***Rural Planning Policy Sub-Group*** (to influence UK and European policy for rural areas and communities and to raise awareness of planning issues affecting rural areas through responding to policy consultations). The Urban Design Network is in the process of setting up 3 new task groups: on ***conservation***, ***urban design education*** and ***quality & density***.

The next Development Planning Network meeting will be taking place in Scotland and will focus on the commonalities and divergences between development planning systems.

The Networks are contributing to the General Assembly meetings in 2008. On 23 January presentations were given by PIPA and by the Development Management and Development Planning Networks. On 9 April, the International

Development Network and the Young Planners' Network will be presenting and on 2 July presentations will be given by the **Transport Planning Network and the Urban Design Network**.

John Callcutt is meeting with members of **Room for All – the RTPI Housing Network** on 18 April. He will outline the findings of his Report and discuss the role that planners and others must play in improving the delivery of housebuilding. A joint Network event was held on 27 February for Rynd Smith to brief network members on the content of the Planning Bill, progress with amendments as it passes through the various levels of Parliamentary approval, and RTPI views on some of the more controversial aspects of the Bill. **The Transport Planning Network** held an all-access tour of East Midlands Airport on 11 March. The event was over-subscribed and included presentations on the airport, planning legislative background and Masterplan, and on Airport Surface Access. It culminated in a visit to the Air Traffic Control Tower and the airside. This year's annual **Young Planners' Conference** will be held on 10/11 October in Brighton.

### **International**

The Institute's involvement in the Global Planners Network has entered a new phase with the setting up of the research project to assess the world's capacity for planning using an on-line self-diagnostic tool. A full-time researcher, Lucy Natarajan, has been appointed on a 6-month contract under the supervision of Will French and a small Steering Group. She has used her considerable expertise in survey work and bench-marking to produce the on-line tool. All members are invited to visit the website and answer the questions: your views are most welcome.

There has been uncertainty about the date of World Urban Forum 4 in Nanjing this autumn, affecting in turn the date of the Global Planners Congress in Zhenjiang and the proposed RTPI China Study Tour to be offered to members interested in one or both of the meetings. We now know that WUF4 will run from Monday 3 to Friday 7 November, so the GPN event will be from Friday 31 October to Sunday 2 November; the study tour offering participants the chance to visit Shanghai and Dongtan en route for the planning conferences will leave the UK on Monday 27 October.

The International Committee met on 12 March, welcoming two key visitors: the new Secretary General of the International Federation for Housing and Planning, Derek Martin, and the President of the Commonwealth Association of Planners, Christine Platt MRTPI. The Committee and the International Development Network plan to run a fringe meeting at the Planning Convention on Planning in Divided Cities, drawing on experience in Nicosia and Belfast.

RTPI and ECTP jointly organised a successful and well-attended conference on 8 February 2008 at CLG on implementation of the EU Action Plan for Territorial Cohesion. The results of the conference, entitled ***The EU wants territorial cohesion – can spatial planners make it happen?*** are written up on the ECTP website <http://www.ceu-ectp.org/e/disdocs.html> with the slide presentations given by Andreas Faludi, Jan Vogelij and Virna Bussadori, and papers circulated in advance.

The chair of the Judging Panel for the 2007 RTPI Awards has made a selection of recent winners to go forward as UK entries in the 7<sup>th</sup> European Urban &

Regional Planning Awards (closing date was 27 March). It is hoped that “the Merton Rule” and the Stonebridge estate in Brent will enter.

## **CORPORATE PLANNING & RESOURCES DIRECTORATE**

### **DIRECTOR: KEITH MITCHELL**

This is the calendar quarter of looking back at last year, starting our new financial year and anticipating both the new tax year and the new funding year for Planning Aid and other activities.

#### **Human Resources**

- Preparation for new pay scales following increments in April
- Information to staff over changes to the West Sussex Pension Scheme from April, including conversion to a sixtieth (1/60) scheme and contribution rates (per table) based on FTE pay
- Employer contributions rate has fallen following the actuarial valuation – this also impacts on the contribution for staff who transferred from the old Scottish Equitable scheme to the new RTPPI Group Personal Pension Plan
- New (interim) Human Resources Manager appointed – started 31 March. Team to be HRM, HR Officer, HR administrator (part time) plus two days per week from HR consultant (on payroll) to cover expansion of Planning Aid services and introduction of a Computerised Personnel Information System

#### **Facilities**

- Continued improvements to Botolph Lane including new carpets at Reception and even more security devices on office doors
- Revised arrangements for fire escape through the building for residents of the flats next door – we hold reciprocal rights to access their building also. Hopefully noise of refurbishment will abate shortly
- System support at Botolph Lane being covered by Facilities, using the contractor appointed across the Institute

#### **Governance**

- New trustees and members of General Assembly were announced to the membership via *Planning* magazine and the Institute’s website
- The bi-monthly random sample of 200 chartered members being requested to provide evidence of professional indemnity insurance continues

#### **Finance**

- Payroll is gearing up for tax year end returns and the changes to tax codes, rates of tax, pension contributions etc that April brings
- Staff team is now permanent, with recruitment of the part time finance assistant

- The auditors have come and gone and the accounts for RTPI, RSL, RTPI Trust, Planning Aid Trust, Town and Country Planning Summer School and TCPSS Services are being finalised
- VAT quarter ended 31 March and return along with the annual adjustment for our partial exemption recovery rate is due at the end of April!

## **ICT**

- We are seeking to employ a website editor to assist the trusted publishers on content of our website
- We continue to progress structural changes – recently adding ESPON and GPN
- Remote back ups are being set up
- Equipment in Planning Aid is being upgraded as a result of additional funding from CLG for this purpose, received in 2007/08

## **Management Accounts and Subscriptions**

- Annual collection of subscriptions continues, alongside those from the elections of new members and Licentiate Members
- Late reminder notices will be issued in April to those members with unpaid 2008 subscriptions that were due 31 December 2007 and a charge is levied in all such cases to reflect our additional administration and delay in receiving the sum due
- Budgets for 2008 have been phased across the year and uploaded into the monthly reporting mechanism
- Region financial reports have been revised, on request of the Regional Treasurers, to reflect their budget format and first editions issued to the budget holders

## **POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE**

### **DIRECTOR: RYND SMITH**

**Policy** work continues to be driven by the ongoing but thankfully less frenetic parliamentary timetable for the Planning Bill.

The last RTPI update identified the key areas of RTPI engagement in the **Planning Bill**. Until the end of February, the Bill was passing through its committee stage and RTPI policy team efforts were focussed on briefing MPs, particularly committee members, to ensure that issues raised by members were considered in the committee proceedings.

Debates in the RTPI Executive Board in December and February identified clauses of the Bill as targets for RTPI action to clarify application and where necessary to seek amendments. Concerns were also expressed that the Bill as introduced was insufficiently clear about its application to nations other than England, particularly in respect of cross-border major infrastructures. This was a particular concern for Wales as the absence of relevant measure making powers and the presence of substantial un-devolved powers over major infrastructures in Westminster meant that the Bill could have significant consequences for Wales.

RTPI analysis deemed the potential effects of the Bill in Scotland and Northern Ireland as being minor to inconsequential.

Actions since January have included an ongoing series of meetings with CLG civil servants with responsibility for the Bill, the provision of oral RTPI evidence to the Public Bill Committee and meetings with MPs from all parties serving the committee. Engagements have also included the progression of RTPI agendas through linkages with professional institutions, (RICS and RIBA) and through interest groups (largely CBI, HBF, BPF, CLA although contacts have been maintained with a wide range of relevant bodies). We have also worked closely with Planning Aid colleagues who have briefed MPs on the Bill.

Target clauses for RTPI amendments and related policy development work have included:

- **Clause 7**, where the RTPI objectives are to ensure an unambiguous statutory commitment to publicity and consultation on all draft national policy statements for infrastructures and to seek the inclusion of policy options in national policy statements under preparation.

*These objectives are broadly supported by CLG who maintain however that regulations and guidance will be sufficient to achieve the objective. An RTPI amendment was tabled in the committee stage but was not adopted.*

RTPI has also sought to ensure measures of parliamentary or equivalent accountability for and scrutiny of the development and content of policy statements

*Elfyn Llwyd MP introduced and Clive Betts MP supported an amendment which would have had an effect seen as desirable by RTPI: an issue that was discussed both with Mr Betts and with Jacqui Lait MP, who made specific mention in committee of our support. Debate secured a commitment from John Healy MP to form a special Select Committee to lead draft policy scrutiny in Parliament.*

- **Clauses 47 and 83**, where the RTPI objective is to ensure that a major infrastructure applicant must consider the reasonable mitigation of proposals and produce a statement of impact and mitigation, to be considered by the infrastructure planning commission in due course

*CLG again see this as an objective that can be responded to in regulation and/or guidance. An RTPI amendment was tabled at the committee stage but not adopted. Clive Betts MP spoke strongly for our amendments which were also supported by Jacqui Lait MP. Clive Betts accepted a Ministerial assurance that guidance will ensure that mitigation measures should emerge from initial community consultation and travel with an application to the examination process. On division, our amendment remained supported by opposition members of the committee but did not succeed.*

- **Clauses 97 and 98**, where the RTPI had a number of objectives:
  - To require Planning Policy Statements to be relevant considerations before the infrastructure planning commission when it is making planning decisions
  - To require the development plan to be a relevant consideration before the commission (accepting that the national policy statement will remain as the prime consideration)
  -

- To import the concept of 'other material considerations' as understood in existing planning legislation for use by the infrastructure planning commission as decision makers
- To broaden the requirement for decisions to be 'in accordance' with policy to 'generally in accordance'
- To broaden the range of circumstances in which the commission is statutorily entitled to decide other than indicated by policy; and specifically
- To include a requirement that proposals must meet a reasonable mitigation test.

*RTPI amendments to address these objectives were moved by Clive Betts MP and again supported by Jacqui Lait MP and Dan Rogerson MP.*

*There was a vigorous debate around the virtues of maintaining existing understandings of 'materials considerations', making the development plan one such express consideration and ensuring that impact mitigation measures were expressly considered by the commission.*

*The Minister took the view that consultation with local government would address the issue of the relationship between the development plan and the proposals before the commission. The government did not accept the amendment and it was withdrawn without division, despite strong cross party support.*

- **Clauses 155 to 159**, where the RTPI objective is to secure the removal of the proposal to establish local member review bodies for Town and Country Planning Act appeals on delegated decisions, a change that would severely limit the rights of many applicants to access an independent expert appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.

*This proposal initially enjoyed very wide cross party support. During the committee stage of the Bill, the RTPI could not secure a political sponsor for amendments seeking to strike this proposal from the Bill. Subsequently however, the combined effects of an RTPI correspondence campaign, (where individual members have written to their constituency MPs, explaining our concerns and seeking support), and joint work with POS and a wide range of professional, industrial and trade bodies, have continued to demonstrate to government that this is not a soundly developed proposal. CLG have committed to a further round of consultation that is likely to take place to inform the government's position when the Bill enters the House of Lords.*

- **Clauses 174 to 183**, where RTPI objectives are to support the Community Infrastructure Levy proposals, whilst continuing to work with CLG to secure detailed regulations that provide for sound implementation.

Turning to broader issues of the effects of the Bill in Wales, committee stage amendments have included a new Part 10 of the Bill. This provides the Welsh Assembly with measure making powers to regulate plan making with respect to Welsh Ministers' own plans (including the Wales Spatial Plan) and local development plans – a welcome development. However, the Bill has not further clarified any major infrastructure matters.

All RTPI amendments and nine supporting parliamentary briefing papers can be accessed from: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/1424/23/5/3>

The RTPI continues broadly to support the **Housing and Regeneration Bill**, which received its Commons third reading on 31 March 2008. This Bill proposes to establish a new housing and regeneration agency, merging the delivery functions of CLG with the functions of English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation. Its planning proposals include powers to enable the new agency to act as local planning authority in respect of all or some LPA powers, over particular areas or sites. The assumption of these powers has been supported by the RTPI to date, noting that they are no different in principle to the nature and scale of powers necessary to deliver new towns and hence are likely to be necessary for effective delivery of the large scale housing programme committed to in the Housing Green Paper last autumn.

Rynd Smith gave oral evidence at the **Parliamentary EFRA Committee Flooding Investigation**, supporting the proposition in the Pitt Report (interim) into the summer 2007 floods, that measures to control the hard surfacing of garden land and to promote more effective deployment of SUDS should be supported.

The RTPI has responded to the **Housing and Planning Delivery Grant** consultation, welcoming significant devotion of funds to the grant, but raising concerns that reflect our initial response to the proposal, to the extent that housing is not the sole objective of the planning system and that reasonable rewards for good and innovative practice and incentives particularly for sound plan-making need to extend beyond the housing sphere.

The RTPI has responded to draft **PPS4: Sustainable Economic Development**, largely supporting the proposed draft. Issues arising include the degree to which the planning system should support mixed uses in appropriate locations, including live-work uses. In tandem with ongoing policy development in this field, RTPI continues to advocate for the development of new principles for the regulation of impacts between adjacent uses that seek to enhance flexible opportunities to use and re-use new and existing buildings for a wide variety of uses, on the basis that undue adverse amenity impacts can be properly identified and managed.

The RTPI has responded to draft **PPS12: Streamlining Local Development Frameworks**, again largely supporting the proposed draft. This follows positions adopted in CLG working parties on the development of revisions to development plan procedure in 2007, again consistent with approaches taken in respect of the Barker 2 review and our response to the Planning White Paper. The only significant concern arising from this consultation relates to the degree to which a local planning authority should be required to consult affected persons before the preparation of a local development document, in circumstances where that document might adversely affect that person's interests.

The **Policy and Communications Team** welcomes Sarah Lewis back to her role as Practice Officer, following the birth of Laura. Louise Waring (Community Planning Project Officer) has been seconded to CLG for a further period of three years, further cementing good relationships between the RTPI and that Department. Finally, working closely with the RTPI South West Region, a fractional regional policy officer post has been created for the south west, enabling regional policy development work to proceed with a new vigour.

## **RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE**

### **HEAD OF RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE: JENNY CRAWFORD**

The ESPON Contact Point team, Cliff Hague and Jenny Crawford, held meetings with a broad range of potential participants in the new ESPON programme. These included representatives from Communities and Local Government, BERR, the Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish and Irish Governments, Regional and City Development Agencies and universities. Three ESPON UK bulletins have been circulated since late January and there has been considerable interest in the programme from local and regional government. It was also discussed at the European Council of Spatial Planners' Seminar, hosted by CLG on 8 February. The ESPON UK Network was officially launched at the Planning Research Conference in Belfast on 18 March. The Steering Group for the Network will be chaired by Jo Talbot, member of the RTPi International Committee and Senior Associate at Roger Tym and Partners.

The Outcome Indicators research by the Universities of Manchester and Sheffield, led by Cecilia Wong, has been progressing well. A workshop held on 22 February tested the emerging framework of indicators. A final report has been received and will be published subject to agreement with CLG as the main funders.

We are continuing to work with the Foresight enquiry on Sustainable Energy Management in the Built Environment and participated in a stakeholders workshop in February. Rynd Smith and Jenny Crawford have also met with the secretariat to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution to input to the scoping of a new study on Adapting the UK to Climate Change.

The Planning Research Conference hosted by Queen's University Belfast was very successful, with over 200 international delegates. Keynote addresses were given by Julian Agyeman, Jonathan Porritt and Susan Owens. RTPi will also be co-sponsoring next year's conference which will be hosted by the University of Newcastle.

Jenny Crawford met with planners in both Hokkaido and Tokyo in March and gave a paper on governance for sustainability in the UK to a symposium organised by the University of Hokkaido, Sapporo, Japan on 27 March.