

PIPA the RTPI Politicians in Planning Network Core Group Meeting on 4th September 2008	
	Action
Present:	
Cllr Mike Roberts (Chair)	
Ashis Choudhury	
Cllr Brian O'Hare	
Trevor Roberts	
Andrew Matheson (Network Manager)	
Apologies had been received from:	
Cllr Bill Sharp	
1. Minutes of the Meeting on 4th June 2008	
The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record.	
Action points from the Minutes:	
2 Glasgow Conference: <i>feedback from the event included on the Agenda</i>	
2 2009 event in London: <i>see Business Plan content</i>	
3 Action Plan 2009: <i>now renamed Business Plan and included on the Agenda</i>	
5 Networks event on Eco-towns: <i>notes circulated</i>	
2. Killian & Pretty Review	
Rebecca Coates and Rynd Smith from the RTPI Policy Team joined the meeting for this item, which was taken early to allow for their contributions.	
PIPA members, alongside those of the Development Management Network, had been invited to contribute comments to help in the development of a RTPI response and those received had been collated, summarised and circulated prior to the meeting.	
The discussion centred around a number of points felt to be critical to the Elected Member interests in the review:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The balance between delegation and Committee determination of Applications: whatever the merits of streamlining the processes it was felt that accountability required that the Elected Members had a clearly defined limited but active role • Pre-application discussions: it was agreed that member involvement in major applications should end rather than start with the Committee deliberations • Community Character Statements: those present were of the opinion that these would not add materially to the planning guidance already available despite their potential actively to involve elected members in their preparation • Training: the need for more and better training was acknowledged although a formal recognition system appeared to be problematic because there would need to be some reasonably objective assessment system • Important role of Committee Chair: Knowledgeable and confident chairing of Planning Committees could contribute significantly to trust in and the effectiveness of the democratic planning system. 	

<p>Rynd thanked the Group members for their contributions and it was agreed that the response once finalised (on the following day) would be circulated to the Group members for information.</p>	<p>AM</p>
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<p>3. Update on PIPA Conferences 2008</p>	
<p>Manchester Conference: It was ascertained that the Conference would not clash with a football programme on the chosen date. The Group was pleased with the even stronger programme now on offer. It was noted that overnight accommodation was available at the Business School venue.</p>	
<p>Glasgow Conference: The summary of feedback was noted, the venue being most generally appreciated.</p>	
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<p>4. The future of the Core Group</p>	
<p>Andrew explained that a number of factors had led to a significant rethink on the operation of the Networks and the PIPA Network in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget pressures: savings in expenditure were being sought all round • Internal re-organisation: most Networks have moved to the Policy & Practice Directorate; the four role-centred Networks that were unaffected, except the PIPA Network, operate very satisfactorily without a Core Group • Phase of development: the PIPA Network had achieved massive membership growth very quickly, and it was now perhaps necessary to commit more Manager time to building rapport with the wide-ranging Members • Maturity: relationships with and between individual Core Group members had become very solid and this undoubtedly could be built on by means less formal than a strict quarterly schedule of office-centred meetings • Manager time: priorities competing for available Manager resource inevitably change over time and within a limited number of hours per week, hard decisions are inevitable if new PIPA initiatives are to be launched successfully alongside the retention of existing successes such as the annual Conferences <p>Mike expressed his disappointment since he felt that these factors had not been open to more discussion prior to minds being closed to other options. Andrew reassured that this was the opportunity to discuss the issues but many factors were not optional: budget limits and the hours available for the Manager to commit were offered by the RTPI on the basis of what could be afforded. He reassured that there was no adverse reflection on the commitment and contribution of the Group members – to the contrary it was evident that the exceptional rate of progress had allowed for review and reflection rather earlier than might have been expected at the outset. A number of members shared misgivings that the work of the Group was complete. Mike proposed and it was agreed that through his attendance at the Networks' Awayday later in the month he should explore other options that might be workable.</p>	<p>MR</p>
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5. PIPA Action Plan 2008/9	
This item had been circulated and was noted as there was insufficient time remaining for any detailed consideration.	
6. Any issues arising from:	
The Planning Convention 2008	
RTPI East of England Conference for Planning Councillors	
Prospective Further Legislation	
Q2 Progress with 2008 Action Plan	
These items were not considered as there was insufficient time remaining. Andrew however indicated that he would be happy to take individual queries by email or phone.	ALL to note
7. Any other Business	
There was none.	
8. Dates of Next Meetings	
The remaining programme of meetings for 2008 allowed for a meeting on: Thursday 27 th November 2008	ALL to note