



# RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

## THE PIPA NETWORK MONITORING REPORT 2008

After PIPA was relaunched in 2007 with a major Conference in Birmingham, in 2008 the Network definitely came of age with a ringing endorsement from Secretary of State Hazel Blears who, speaking at the 2008 PIPA Conference in Manchester, said: 'how glad I am PIPA exists.... you need the coming together of professionalism and politics. That's why this Network so important, helping planners understand politicians and vice versa'.

The year also saw our first PIPA Conference in Scotland. It had been clear from the 2007 UK Conference that the new planning regime in Scotland demanded a separate Conference built exclusively around Scottish experience. Therefore in June 2008 a most successful first Scottish Conference 'Places Need Vision' was held in Glasgow, with Duncan McNeil MSP, Convener of the Local Government and Communities Committee of the Scottish Government launching the event. National events in Northern Ireland and Wales will follow in due course.

The PIPA Conferences in 2008 were only possible thanks to financial support from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) for the Manchester Conference and the Scottish Government for the Glasgow Conference.

A particular commitment has been made to build engagement with other organisation with shared interests by inviting their participation in providing speakers for the PIPA Conferences. The programmes for the Scottish and the Manchester Conferences show engagement across a wide range of related and influential bodies from the Scottish Sustainability Network to the new English Homes & Communities Agency. Since the Conferences shared the theme of 'Vision' it was particularly inspiring to have contributions from award-winning practitioners such as Karen Anderson (Anderson, Bell & Christie) in Glasgow and Tom Bloxham (Urban Splash) in Manchester.

Through efforts throughout the year to raise the profile and awareness of PIPA and its potential, membership has grown steadily from 232 to, at the year end, 363. Through the Member survey 2008 it was revealed that nearly 15% of respondents had an interest in Associate Membership of the RTPI; there is obvious potential for continuing to build on the good reputation of the Institute through the Network. As the Network has not yet achieved at least one member from each local authority across the UK this remains an ambition for 2009.

An abiding topic of interest with members, shared with members of the Planning with Communities Network, has been the role of Parish Councils in planning. PIPA has a substantial number of parish and town Councillors amongst its membership. One Network member carried out some research on this tier of governance and, in return for sharing his survey findings, a number of contacts were made for him to 'ground' his research in the real experience of those involved day-to-day. Also the Network Manager, alongside Planning Aid, attended the National Association of Local Government (NALC) Conference in Eastbourne and, as well as publicising PIPA, two Networks members led a surgery session addressing Councillor planning concerns and issues.

There was a member survey in 2008 which revealed that the most popular overall 'rating' for PIPA was 7/10 and roughly 80% of respondents gave a rating of 5/10 or above. Some 84% of those responding felt that the present fortnightly circulation of the Member Bulletin was 'just

about right' and a similar proportion felt the same about the content of the Member Bulletins. The most popular section of the Bulletin was the topical news and updates, and the least popular was the section on Awards – so the latter is retained as website content only. Approximately 70% of respondents felt that useful additional website content would be 'summaries of relevant publications' – and so a link to RTPI publications of relevance has been made and a broader list of useful publications begun. The webpages have also been improved with a listing of links useful to PIPA Members.

During the year a new Quarterly Bulletin has been introduced to meet the particular needs of MPs, MSPs, Northern Ireland and Welsh Assembly Members to be kept well informed about current planning developments and issues. This appears to have been well received and sits helpfully alongside the RTPI's Policy Team offering of specific briefings on matters of most consequence.

PIPA led the organisation of a RTPI Networks' event on the Planning Bill which was well attended and made positive contributions to the RTPI Policy positions. Specific content for the RTPI submission to the Killian & Pretty Review of Planning Procedures was also derived from PIPA Members and, in her speech to the Manchester Conference audience, Hazel Blears offered a particular thank-you for this input.

The Planning Bill (original clauses 150-154) proposed to remove the right to an independent review for many applicants whose planning application is refused through the creation of Local Member Review Bodies. Via the PIPA Network the RTPI has direct access to local Planning Councillors and Members were invited to take part in a vote on these proposals and to add their views, both to inform the membership and the RTPI Policy Team. The overwhelming PIPA Member response was *against* this proposed change - and thanks to the strength of feeling that the RTPI was able to evidence, these clauses were dropped from the Bill before it was given the Royal Assent.

The challenge for 2009 will be to further consolidate on the interest that PIPA activities and events have generated, continuing to build 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 the recommendations from the Killian & Pretty Review have been very supportive.

### **Membership profile:**

Figures current at 31.12.08

### **Total members: 363**

(For comparison: Members 2006 - 61; 2007 - 232)

**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)

### **Advisory Group**

The Group was chaired by Councillor Mike Roberts of Rushmore DC and Councillor Bill Sharp (Castle Point BC) was welcomed to the Group during the year. The Group aimed to meet 4 times during the year. Meetings were held in March, June, September and November. The Advisory Group was (attendance figures shown in brackets):

Ashis Choudhury (4 of 4)  
Cllr Maryse Iles (1 of 2)  
Cllr Bill Sharp (1 of 3)

Consultant  
Councillor for Castle Point (resigned June 2008)  
Councillor for Castle Point (joined June 2008)

Cllr Brian O'Hare (3 of 4)  
Cllr Mike Roberts (4 of 4)  
Trevor Roberts (3 of 4)

ex-Councillor for Knowsley  
Councillor for Rushmoor  
TRA Ltd

The Advisory Group made input to the annual Business Plan for the Network, received quarterly reports on progress with this, advised on the content & speakers for PIPA events, and with other Members, made contributions to the development of RTPI Policy, most notably in 2008 the Planning Bill and the Killian & Pretty Review.

### **Publicity & Promotion**

At the beginning of the year the IDeA supported 'Councillor' magazine carried a promotion for PIPA and this produced the benefit not only of additional members but also wider awareness of PIPA's role amongst Councillors who may be taking up planning responsibilities later in the year.

The first PIPA Conference in Scotland in June provided a major focus for publicity and new memberships immediately after some major changes in planning – with new Scottish legislation – and in political representation across Scotland. Every local authority in Scotland received an invitation to send delegates. Similar high level of interest was generated in the UK Conference held in 2008 in Manchester (following on from Birmingham in 2007) at which the Secretary of State Hazel Blears was the keynote speaker. Attendance at 100+ was notably higher than the 2007 event.

PIPA led an initiative to give the RTPI a presence in the exhibitions attached to the Labour and Conservative Party Spring Conferences (the latter being their local government Conference). Our stand attracted a lot of interest from Cabinet Ministers and Shadow Ministers and from this the Quarterly Bulletin mailing was developed – not to mention the commitment from the Secretary of State to speak at the PIPA Conference. PIPA's raised profile was also featured prominently in the RTPI President's Report for 2008.

The Network has contributed articles to editions of 'Planning' or its equivalent across the UK. As in 2007, there was a PIPA presence at the Summer School for Elected Members and every delegates pack included a PIPA leaflet. Additionally PIPA offered a fringe session – and from one of the main sessions came away with a remit to develop awareness raising events for local Councillors on successes with site provision for gypsies & travellers.

As 2008 ends we are contemplating a mailing and/or event to encourage every local Cabinet-level Councillor responsible for planning issues to take up PIPA membership.

### **E-bulletins**

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

### **Unsolicited Feedback received in 2008**

"Updating on recent legislation & items such as climate change, transport and other environmental issues has been much appreciated"

"As a non-professional member, the news and updates element is invaluable. As I do not have access to the same communications channels as those in the business, it is very easy to miss some vital change of policy, guidance or new government initiative"

“[The PIPA Bulletin] is really useful in alerting Members to a wider range of perspectives. Other networks emphasise official documents. Reflections on planning issues from a variety of sources make this valuable”

“News and updates have been extremely useful”

“Obviously every [Bulletin] item is not of interest in every issue but the extensive coverage gives members a great deal of choice to cover their particular interest and to widen their knowledge on other issues”

“Could I thank you for a very interesting and informative Conference on Saturday. We all enjoyed it”

“This was a wonderful [Conference] to attend and hear politicians & others about ‘Places & Vision’. The case study of Salford Quays was an excellent example.”

“Thank you very much for your prompt reply. The information you have given me is excellent and I have downloaded the literature from the links”

“I look forward to coming to the Conference in October. I'm keen to get out and about and learn new things. Sounds very good.”

“This is an excellent example of how PIPA members can make a real contribution to policy and practice, through their leverage on the RTPi

“Many thanks for this [Bulletin] - very useful for a now out-of-touch planner!”

## **Policy consultations**

Network members have been invited to contribute to consultations – either directly and/or via the RTPi response - on the following during 2008:

**The New Place Survey** - CLG

**Orders and Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Local Authority Members in England** - CLG

**Streamlining Local Development Frameworks** - CLG

**Review on rural economy and affordable housing** - Taylor Review

**PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development** - CLG

**Petition Power** - CLG

**Draft Regulations on the Planning Hierarchy - Scotland** – Scottish Government

**The Pitt Review** – Cabinet Office

**Draft Scottish Planning Policy 3 – Planning for Housing** – Scottish Government

**Local Authority Property Search Services: Charges for Property Search Services** - CLG

**Skills Capacity to Deliver Sustainable Communities** - CLG Parliamentary Committee

**Sustainable Communities Act 2007: draft regulations and statutory guidance** - CLG

**Improving surface water drainage** - DEFRA

**Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's landscape** – DOE NI

**The future of flood risk management in Scotland** – Scottish Government

**Discussion paper on tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation in Scotland** – Scottish Gmt

**Modernising planning appeals** – Scottish Government

**SPP 23: planning and the historic environment** – Scottish Government

**Wales Spatial Plan** – Welsh Assembly Government

**Renewable energy route map for Wales** - Welsh Assembly Government

**Brownfield Skills** - English Partnerships

**River Basin Planning** - Environment Agency

**Environmental Damage** - Environment Agency

**Permitted Development Rights for Domestic Microgeneration Equipment** – Scottish Gmt

**The Future of Building Control** - CLG

**Implementing the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003: Promoting an Integrated Approach** – Scottish Government  
**Communities Next** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**Participatory Budgeting Strategy** - CLG  
**Prosperous Places: Taking forward the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration** - CLG & Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)  
**SPP 23 Planning and the Historic Environment** – Scottish Government  
**Single Equality Scheme** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**Draft Marine Bill** - DEFRA  
**Eco-towns: Living a greener future** - CLG  
**Housing (Scotland) Act 2006: Consultation on Draft Guidance and Regulations** – Scottish Gmt  
**English Consultations**  
**Lifting the burdens from local economic development and regeneration** - The Lifting the Burdens Task Force (LBTF)  
**Seeing the history in the view: assessing heritage significance within views** - English Heritage  
**Guidance on the preparation of port master plans** - CLG  
**Model Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils and Code of Conduct for Community Councillors** - Scottish Government  
**RTPI Education Review** – RTPI  
**The Growth Fund 2008-2011** - CLG  
**English Partnerships' sites** – English Partnerships  
**Belfast City Centre Northside Urban Village Draft Regeneration Framework** – DSD NI  
**Heart of Neolithic Orkney** - Historic Scotland  
**Fair Play** – DCSF  
**Protection of World Heritage Sites** - CLG  
**TAN 12 - Design** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**Part L of the Building Regulations, Proposed New Editions of the Approved Documents** - CLG  
**Gypsy & Traveller Draft Site Design Guidance** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**UK Renewable Energy Strategy** - BERR  
**Consultation on A Practice Guide Companion to PPS25** - CLG  
**Belfast City Centre Westside Regeneration District Draft Regeneration Masterplan** – DSD NI  
**Affordable housing delivery plans: consultation on draft guidance** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**RTPI Survey on Job Evaluation and Public Sector Performance** - RTPI  
**RTPI Good Practice Advice** - RTPI  
**The future of the Local Area Agreement reward scheme** - CLG  
**The Empowerment Fund: Consultation** - CLG  
**Proposed Changes to Planning Policy Statement 6 - Planning for Town Centres** - CLG  
**The Future of Stonehenge** - English Heritage  
**South-East Regional Plan** - CLG  
**A Marine Bill for Scotland** – Scottish Government  
**Adapting our Ways: Managing Scotland's Climate Risk** – Scottish Government  
**Proposed Second Environment Strategy for Wales Action Plan** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**Proposals for Resourcing for Planning Service** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**Further Consultation on Planning for Climate Change** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**Meeting Housing Needs in Rural Areas** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**Siting assessment process and criteria for nuclear power stations** - BERR  
**East Midlands Regional Plan** - CLG  
**South West Regional Plan** - CLG  
**Enforcement policy** - Natural England  
**The Scottish Soil Framework** - Scottish Government  
**Woodlands for Wales: Strategy for Trees and Woodlands** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**Improving Local Accountability** - CLG  
**Local Petitions and Call for Action Consultation: Government Response** - CLG  
**A Renewed Strategic Framework for Scottish Aquaculture** - Scottish Government  
**Community Infrastructure Levy** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**A Refocused Post Office Development Fund** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**The making and enforcement of certain byelaws in England** - CLG  
**Reforming the Local Authority Business Growth Incentives Scheme** - CLG  
**Action on Climate Change: Proposals for improving the energy performance of existing non-domestic buildings** - Scottish Government

**Draft London Climate Change Adaptation Strategy** - London Assembly  
**Design Pact** - CABE  
**Skills to Grow: Seven priorities to improve urban green space skills** - CABE  
**Standing for Office: Time-Off Entitlements** - CLG  
**Implementing the Mobile Homes Act 1983 on local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites** - CLG  
**Community Land Trusts** - CLG  
**Codes of conduct for local authority members and employees** - CLG  
**Framework for the development and deployment of renewable energy in Scotland** – Scottish Gmt  
**A Review of Land Management Actions under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 - 2013** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**The Working Neighbourhoods Fund 2009-2011: Revising the Third Criterion** – the CLG  
**Eco-Standards** - CLG  
**Scottish Climate Change Bill - Forestry proposal** - Scottish Government  
**National Parks Review Consultation** - Scottish Government  
**Community Asset Transfer Fund** - Welsh Assembly Government  
**World Heritage** - DCMS  
**Delivering a Sustainable Transport System: Planning for 2014 and Beyond** - DfT  
**PPS21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside** – DOE NI  
**Householder Permitted Development Rights** - CLG  
**Investing in Affordable Housing** – CLG  
**One Wales: One Planet: a new sustainable development scheme** - Welsh Assembly Government

## Task Groups

There have been no task groups as such but the Advisory Group has been able to call on the support of others as required – for instance Member Cllrs Breakell and Zaman stepped forward to make the presentation at the Planning Convention. Also Member participation was invited in the joint meeting with RTPi Policy Team that considered the democratic issues arising from the Killian & Pretty Review.

Advisory Group member Ashis Choudhury has continued to keep the Group informed on ‘capturing land value’ from his membership of a pressure group for reform which during the year held a session in the Houses of Parliament.

Member Prof Alan Townsend from Durham University continued to examine and consider the democratic aspects of regionalism with the aim of assisting with the development of RTPi policy here.

## Requests to/from Members

Members were invited to comment on a **Financial Times article**: ‘A Scottish tale of planners, traitors and lunacy’ – about the Trump application for a golf course development in Scotland.

Members were invited to help the Brendle Group to identify exemplar master planned communities – internationally - which have addressed the **integration of sustainability**.

**Local Member Review Bodies** – members were invited to comment on the proposals and to participate in a PIPA poll on the topic

PIPA members BSHF invited members to consider supporting the **use of the new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant** to address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

RTPi Secretary General invited PIPA members to contribute to the RTPi’s response to the CLG Committee’s **‘Inquiry into the skills capacity within local government to deliver sustainable communities’**.

PIPA members were invited to contribute to the RTPI's response to the Community Empowerment White Paper launch document '**Unlocking the Talent of our Communities**'.

Members were invited to contribute their views via the on-line Member Forum on the Member-raised subject of '**Housing Pressures on the Green Belt**'.

Via 'Rethinking Cities' Members were invited to express opinions on what the **Ramblers Association** could be doing in urban and suburban contexts in the next 3 – 5 years.

Members were invited to give their views to inform the RTPI response to the '**Sub-national Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR)**'.

The RTPI was asked to present a list of twenty ways to improve the planning application process to the **Killian & Pretty Review** and asked PIPA Network Members to come forward with their suggestions.

The RTPI expressed a view that having a **planner at executive level** would improve the quality of planning decisions being made at local government level and Members were invited to share their experience/views on this issue.

Members were asked to contribute from their experience to a student dissertation on '**Planning & Play**'.

The Communities & Local Government Committee published a report '**Planning Matters**' which said that the Government needs to commit more resources to attracting new people into planning; Members were invited to contribute views from a Councillor perspective.

After Council leaders and the LGA called for the Government to enter discussions on **Eco-Towns Policy** following publication of advice by leading lawyers arguing that the Government's approach was open to serious legal challenge, Members were invited to discuss the issues arising.

Members with experience of **Parish Council involvement in planning** were invited to contribute to a Member's dissertation for an LLM.

Members were invited to contribute views to inform the RTPI's response to the consultation '**Towards a Nuclear National Policy Statement**'.

PIPA Member Alan Parkin from South Kesteven Council wondered whether their planning experience of the **Highways Agency** was shared by others and invited comment/input.

When the Government introduced changes to the regulation around **householder consents**, Members were invited to address the question: 'Do *you* think that the changes will help or hinder good local planning? And Members made some strong points.

The RTPI invited Member participation in **World Town Planning Day** by thinking of the *one thing* which you could do or put forward in your day-jobs which would help to alleviate or adapt to climate change.

Members were invited to contribute to good-practice events where Councillor delegates could find out first hand how best practice has made a **success of gypsy site provision** and thereby arm them for debates in their own locality when new applications are being made.

Members were asked: Do you have local initiatives under the new **Sustainable Communities Act** to share with your fellow PIPA members?

Planning Authorities developing measures for **copng with ageing or declining populations** were invited to contribute to Dresden Leibniz Graduate School research.

## Events

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
Event: Taylor Review on the rural economy and affordable housing – Networks consultation  
Venue: London  
Participants: 25 (from across a range of Networks)

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
Event: The Planning Bill – a Networks consultation  
Venue: London  
Participants: 25(from across a range of Networks)

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
Event: Eco-towns - – a Networks consultation  
Venue: London  
Participants: 25(from across a range of Networks)

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008  
Event: NALC Conference  
Venue: Eastbourne  
Subject: Planning Surgery for Parish/Town Councillors  
Participants: 30

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
Event: Sub-national Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) – a Networks consultation  
Venue: London  
Participants: 25(from across a range of Networks)

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2008  
Event: PIPA Conference Scotland  
Venue: Glasgow  
Participants: 55

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

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008  
Event: PIPA Workshop at the Planning Convention  
Venue: London  
Subject: Community engagement – led by two Councillor members  
Participants: 40+

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008  
Event: Elected Members' Summer School  
Venue: St Andrews  
Subject: Briefing session on PIPA  
Participants: 10

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008  
Event: A Networks Consultation  
Venue: London  
Subject: Towards a Nuclear National Policy Statement  
Participants: 16

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> October 2008  
Event: PIPA UK Conference  
Venue: Manchester  
Participants: 110  
The Presentations made at the Conference are available to members on the PIPA webpages

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008  
Event: Current Planning Issues – An East of England Conference for Councillors  
Venue: Colchester  
Subject: PIPA contributed a workshop on its role and potential  
Participants: 50