

RTPI NEWS

The RTPI News pages are edited by Nancy Hammonds at the RTPI, 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL

Editorial fax
Email

020 7929 8199
rtpinews@rtpi.org.uk

RTPI (switchboard)
Fax

020 7929 9494
020 7929 9490

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Planners evolve to meet emerging challenges looming on the horizon

Now halfway through his 12-month stint as RTPI president, *Martin Willey* takes stock of his targets and the progress made against them while looking ahead at what lies in store for planning professionals in all areas

Six months into my presidential year, steady progress is being made against my targets concerning profile, status, influence, member engagement and chartered membership. But what will the profession face in 12 months' time? A new government, a new RTPI president, a new secretary-general, a new junior vice-president and a new board and chair. What opportunities and challenges will they face?

The profession's profile is evolving — younger, more female and more diverse. Interestingly, the 50–50 public–private split is changing. Possible increases in privatisation might change substantially, reversing the recent 70–30 proportions.

Whatever the composition of the membership, the RTPI's professional standards will remain high. But we may need to invite private sector colleagues to lead the charge for more sustainable, well-designed, climate change-proof development by persuading their clients to drive forward improved standards.

In the public sector, the process will be streamlined but will not lose the essential characteristic of engaging local communities. Progress on local development frameworks is improving and the RTPI is setting up a commission to work with the government and its agencies to collect evidence of best practice and put forward proposals to coincide with its response to the Killian–Pretty report in the autumn.

On my travels, I have met a former regional assembly team in Yorkshire and a Northwest Regional Development Agency team who reiterated the case for strategic planning. This includes providing a low-risk framework for investment, clarity for local authorities and resolving conflict. Surely any government seeking efficiency in public service delivery



Development: private sector clients can lead push for better standards

and democratic accountability cannot resist the rationale of a strategic planning approach.

The education and lifelong learning committee is working hard on new membership classes to embrace all those with responsibility for planning. Of particular interest is its work with international planning bodies to see where reciprocal membership might open up a global network of top-quality professionals.

Planning schools will introduce courses and modules to ensure that we are properly equipped to tackle contemporary challenges. Sheffield Hallam University and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have already launched the UK's first foundation degree in sustainable communities.

RTPI junior vice-president Richard Summers and director of policy and partnerships Rynd Smith coordinated the excellent Planning to Live with Climate Change initiative. We may have moved towards a more

all-embracing approach to developing communications skills to play more of a lead role across all of the communities we seek to serve.

Robert Upton, now elevated to deputy chair of the infrastructure planning commission, has been an exceptional servant to the RTPI. He delivered the education commission, New Vision, executive board–general assembly structure and improved management structure. We are extremely grateful to Robert and wish him well.

The economic climate and state of public finances mean that we will continue to face difficult conditions. Nonetheless, in a recent presentation I gave to the Association of European Planning Schools at the University of Liverpool, I was able to offer career opportunities for planners. On the international front are the UN, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the EU.

Among national government and agencies are the DCLG, the DBERR, the DfT, the Department of Health, DEFRA, the Environment Agency, the HCA, the Planning Inspectorate, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Irish Executive. Local government, academia and the voluntary sector such as Friends of the Earth, Amnesty International, Shelter and Planning Aid are offered along with private sector opportunities in consultancy, development, investment and utilities.

So will we rise to these challenges? My presidential theme of planning — delivering solutions has been richly resourced in my international, national and regional visits so I am very confident that we will, with your help.

Martin Willey is RTPI president.

“Any government seeking efficiency in public service delivery cannot resist the rationale of strategic planning”

Delivering joined-up public services

The Total Place initiative announced in the budget earlier this year makes spatial planning key to joined-up public services, reports *Janice Morphet*

Total Place is the next step in delivering joined-up approaches to public services and investment. The initiative will focus on better access to public services for citizens and tackling the culture of joined-up service delivery. These are expected to achieve local transformation.

The objective is to improve public service delivery while making services more efficient for users and providers. Local development frameworks (LDFs) are contributors to Total Place and beneficiaries of the approaches it will promote. So what is it and how does it relate to spatial planning and LDFs?

Total Place was announced in this year's budget by Sir Michael Bichard in a report on operational efficiency published on the same day. It has been backed by a £5 million fund to support 13 pilots, each of which will take an individual policy theme.

Two are specific to spatial planning. Durham is focusing its pilot on how housing and regeneration can



Total Place: initiative seeks to make services more efficient for users

be brought together to work more effectively and efficiently. Kent's will focus on a group of place-based initiatives, multi-channel access for services, a single asset management strategy for public bodies and Mending Margate. These pilots will produce interim reports in October and a combined report next March.

Total Place is also likely to be developed before waiting for the results of the pilots to be published. The DCLG has directed regional improvement and efficiency partnerships (RIEPs) to reprioritise their

spending to support Total Place by using 20 per cent of their £67.3 million budget to support work on the use of capital funding. London's RIEP Capital Ambition has already announced a London-wide approach to Total Place.

The initial focus of the initiative is likely to be on better use of public sector assets. This is also one of the key requirements for LDFs in PPS12, which states that they need to review the locations of public services to see whether they can be co-located and assets released.

PPS12 also states that LDFs should review and co-ordinate land release to provide for facilities. There will need to be reviews of where services are now. Local authority chief executives were alerted to LDFs' role in Total Place in a weekly circular from Solace last month.

The development of a local public sector asset base is likely to help the development of Total Place initiatives and the LDF process. Many property services have already started to map organisational property ownership for asset management planning. This is a good start.

Another source of information is national indicator NI175 on access to services, which is held on a geographic information system database by highways departments. If there is little available information, then other partners and the Land Registry may be able to help.

Total Place may be a useful initiative that can bolster work on LDFs by engaging others in the process, particularly the corporate centre and local public bodies. This might also generate more resources in the process — important at times when all expenditure is under review.

Janice Morphet is a director of RMJM Consulting and visiting professor at University College London's Bartlett School of Planning.

Conference lands at Newcastle-Gateshead

See how planners have transformed bustling Newcastle-Gateshead at the Young Planners Conference in October, suggests *Andrew Dorrian*

The Young Planners Conference 2009, Participation in Planning, will be held in the vibrant setting of Newcastle-Gateshead on 2 to 3 October. The twinning of Newcastle and Gateshead has created a successful tourist destination.

The North East was forced to diversify following the collapse of its industrial base. The change in many areas is phenomenal. But there is scope for further development, with many vacant sites where traditional industries were once situated.

Planning has a major role in securing the longer-term success of these sites. Regeneration is happening on a large scale in the two commercial



Newcastle-Gateshead: profile raised by award-winning developments

business districts, with Gateshead town centre currently undergoing a major transformation. This masterplan included consultation to investigate local people's desires.

There is so much to see and do in the North East, all accessible from Newcastle, that it is easy to plan an extended break around the summit. The conference website provides details of local attractions and will be regularly updated as the event draws closer.

This year, the conference organisers are working with destination marketing agency Newcastle Gateshead Initiative to provide accommodation, which can be booked through our website. The venue, the Castlegate Centre, is very accessible to the wider city.

The conference theme of community participation is evident in many North East developments, including Gateshead Quayside, Newcastle's Eldon Square masterplan and the

housing market renewal pathfinder scheme at Walker Riverside. The conference will allow time for delegates to explore and reflect on some of these schemes in workshops and study tours.

This year's cost has been kept as low as possible and there is an early bird discount — book before 4 September and you only pay £99 + VAT. The standard rate after this date is £150 + VAT. There are limited student places at £45 + VAT.

An optional conference dinner has been organised at the Centre for Life, an exciting science centre, on the Friday evening for £25 + VAT. Delegates can book by email, fax, post or telephone.

Andrew Dorrian is on the young planners North East steering group and a student volunteer at Planning Aid North. To book, please download the booking form from www.rtpi.org.uk/download/6646/Final-Booking-form.pdf. For more information, visit www.youngplannersconference.info or email enquiry@youngplannersconference.info

Planning law seminar ready to rock distinguished venue

Inspiration for the Joint Planning Law Conference has come from an unusual source, explains *Mike Hayes*

Planning in 2009 – The Show Must Go On, inspired by the rock band Queen, is the theme of the Joint Planning Law Conference (JPLC) organised by the Law Society, RICS, the Planning and Environmental Bar Association (PEBA) and the RTPI.

The JPLC, at University of Oxford New College and the Oxford Union on 18 to 20 September, is an opportunity for practitioners from a range of backgrounds to network and meet cutting-edge thinkers to discuss issues relating to the law and spatial planning in a special environment.

This year's event will cover how planning and development can help keep the show on the road in difficult economic times and will focus on new decision-making mechanisms. Infrastructure delivery will also be covered and there will be a watching brief on policies emerging from the Conservative opposition as we head towards a general election.

The exceptional value of the JPLC is not just in the quality of the venues or the splendour of the company and hospitality but in the quality of the programme, put together by a committee comprising representatives of the organising professions working with the invited speakers.

The result is a well-planned event with strong themes and a focus on ensuring that participants make up-to-the-minute contributions that get to the heart of the challenges faced daily by delegates.

Friday evening begins with an after dinner speech by shadow minister for local government and planning Bob Neill MP. On Saturday, key talks will be given by DCLG chief planner Steve Quartermain on the new regional spatial planning regime



Oxford: quality conference venue

and Robert McCracken QC on the infrastructure planning commission – challenge or opportunity?

Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution director Andy Grossman will discuss progress in mediation in planning and PEBA vice-chairman Morag Ellis QC will give a valuable legal update. Former London mayor Ken Livingstone will speak after dinner on Saturday.

On Sunday, Burges Salmon LLP partner Patrick Robinson will discuss energy planning while current issues for local planning authorities will be explored by Pinsent Masons LLP partner Bob Pritchard.

So, tie your mother down, spread your wings, (I want to) break free and come to JPLC 2009, where you will discover a kind of magic and that we are the champions.

For more information and to book visit www.jplc.org. Mike Hayes is the RTPI trustee and representative on the JPLC organising committee.

RTPI Bulletin Board

Patsy Healey awarded an ordinary fellowship of British Academy
 Congratulations to Patsy Healey, professor emeritus in the school of architecture, planning and landscape at Newcastle University, for being awarded an ordinary fellowship from the British Academy. Ordinary fellowships are given to only a few outstanding UK-based scholars who have achieved distinction in any discipline of humanities and social sciences. Healey's election demonstrates her outstanding achievements in planning theory.

She said: "I am very pleased and honoured that my work as a planning scholar should be recognised by the British Academy in this way. Such recognition underlines the fact that the planning field has a significant intellectual contribution to make not just in the development of planning thought and practice but in the social sciences and humanities generally."

Healey, a specialist in planning theory and the practice of planning and urban regeneration policies, has carried out research on how planning strategies work in practice and on partnership forms of governance at the neighbourhood, city and city-region scales. She has recently been developing approaches to co-operative planning practices, linked to an institutionalist analysis of urban socio-spatial dynamics and urban governance, and has done empirical work in the UK, Europe and Latin America.

She was until this year senior editor of *Planning Theory and Practice* and recent books include *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies* and *Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies*. Healey was awarded an OBE in 1999, became an honorary fellow of the Association of European Planners in 2004 and was awarded the RTPI Gold Medal in 2006.

Internships and voluntary work experience

The RTPI is monitoring the impact of the recession and the support that we offer members. Options for graduates looking to start their careers, and those who have been out of work for a number of months, is one area of interest. We would like to hear from any employers offering internships or voluntary work experience and from any RTPI members who are currently carrying out such work.

Please contact chris.sheridan@rtpi.org.uk in confidence.

Events

UK Spatial Development Evidence Base and the ESPON Programme

23 September. Hilton Hotel, Leeds.
 The European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) research programme is analysing spatial data on a broad range of development indicators. This workshop, hosted by the ESPON UK Network, the DCLG and the RTPI development planning network, will explore the potential for using data generated by the ESPON research programme.

Cost: Free to members but limited numbers – registration is essential. Download the registration form at www.rtpi.org.uk/download/6802/workshop_registration_form.pdf and return it by email to research@rtpi.org.uk or fax it to 0131 226 1909.



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Tel: 0845 082 1171

e-mail: services@rtpiconferences.co.uk

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