



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

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10th September 2009

Legislation Committee Secretariat
70 Whitehall
London
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Email response sent to: dlp@commonsleader.x.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

RESPONSE TO: Draft Legislative Programme 2009/10

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is a membership organisation representing over 22,000 spatial planners. It exists to advance the science and art of town planning for the benefit of the public.

The RTPI notes that progress in the legislative programme for the 2009-10 session of Parliament will be subject to the date of the next general election which must be held on or before Thursday 3rd June 2010. It follows that not all of the legislation proposed in the draft programme may necessarily complete its passage through Parliament.

The RTPI considers that government business managers should prioritise those Bills that are capable of receiving assent before the election, and/or those which deliver clear public benefit, help the UK respond to climate change and appear capable of achieving wide cross-party support.

Two measures emerge from the draft programme that are of direct relevance to the policy and practice of spatial planning and meet the criteria outlined above. These are:

- The Energy Bill
- The Flood and Water Management Bill

The RTPI supports the proposed **Energy Bill** establishing a financial incentive framework for financial incentive, funded by electricity suppliers, to support up to four Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) commercial-scale demonstration projects. However, as we have observed in our response to the recent clean coal consultation, the expedition of CCS pilots and the likely development in due course of fully commercial CCS projects suggests a need for a clear development assessment and approval framework for CCS, recognising this new form of infrastructure as a national priority. The RTPI has recommended changes by Secretary of State order to the provisions of the Planning Act 2008 to provide that CCS projects are considered as 'nationally significant infrastructure projects', meaning that policy in respect of them would be set out in a National Policy Statement (NPS) and development approvals would be considered by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC).

The RTPI also supports the proposed **Flood and Water Management Bill** as a necessary response to Sir Michael Pitt's

report: 'Learning Lessons from the 2007 Floods'. The RTPI supports the proposals to clarify and simply roles and responsibilities for flood management and response. We support the proposed duty to co-operate in support of flood risk management and the clarification of powers to deliver sustainable urban drainage.

Finally, the RTPI observes that the long-anticipated **Heritage Bill** has not been included in the draft legislative programme. Our members expressed strong concerns last year, when this bill was not included in the 2008-09 programme, following the examination of a draft bill in 2007-08. On balance however, the RTPI does not propose that this bill, which is essentially a technical measure, should be included the legislative programme for a year in which Parliamentary time is likely to be tightly constrained.

If you require any further assistance, please contact Rebecca Coates, Planning Policy Officer on 0207 929 9466 or email rebecca.coates@rtpi.org.uk.

Yours sincerely



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Rynd Smith
Director Policy and Partnerships