

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

Registered charity number 262865
Registered charity
in Scotland SC037841

Estate regeneration comes to terms with challenges across many fronts

Project researchers tasked with identifying estate regeneration lessons to shape future communities have had to deal with changing sector trends, a housing market collapse and the recession, *Jon Morris* reports

We live in interesting times. Almost two years ago, when I was asked to join a project led by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) to learn from recent estate regeneration practice, there was an accepted paradigm on its overall approach.

Nearly topping the list of “musts” was the need to encourage private developers to invest in new houses for sale, use the uplift in land values to create a tenure mix and help fund wider local investments. Any successful partnership was expected to involve a wider range of delivery agencies and get residents to produce a delivery plan to tackle social and economic problems.

Since then, we have seen the credit crunch and collapse of the housing market. There has also been the Policy Exchange report *Cities Unlimited*, which argues that because investment in regenerating poor areas has failed to change the geography of inequality the UK should focus on more successful areas.

Paul Cheshire’s report *Are Mixed Communities the Answer to Segregation and Poverty?* for the Joseph Rowntree Trust points out the lack of evidence to show that mixed communities benefit poorer people and limited evidence suggesting it actually harms their life chances.

Meanwhile, original project funder the Housing Corporation was merged into the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), with a wider remit. There was plenty for the steering group to sink its teeth into. The researchers had chosen a methodology based on a literature review and four detailed case studies that all fitted the paradigm but differed in duration, partnership structures, ratio of public and private money, how they engaged residents, areas’ specific problems and funding sources.



Estate renewal: changing economic climate shows need for flexibility

Perhaps not surprisingly, their report finds that lessons are more about how best to make the current paradigm work rather than what to do if it breaks. Current case studies and literature show that successful projects should be of a sufficient scale with strong, clear delivery plans and strong long-term local leadership to attract both private and public investment.

They need to be flexible enough to cope with changes in the market, public sector structures and funding mechanisms and losing key local leaders, while also being able to tackle specific local problems and deal with issues raised by residents. The success of the long-running Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association project seems to relate to its ability to bite off smaller chunks and deal with them as the opportunity arises without losing its long-term vision.

The most recent North Solihull project was initially intended to

be fully financed privately from increased land values and higher-density building. This has now attracted HCA funding, directed through the local authority, and is likely to change the future dynamics of estate regeneration partnerships.

In all four cases, the public sector role was seen as crucial to the process and increasingly vital during the recession. At the same time, the private sector role was also seen as important, bringing in varied expertise and funding and helping to achieve a wider approach to regeneration.

It was revealing that routes to funding are not always planned and logical. In all the cases, the strategies and objectives go beyond measurable outcomes. It is too early to tell whether current changes in the housing market, wider debate on estate regeneration approaches and the current enthusiasm for cutting public expenditure will bring fundamental changes to how we work.

However, some aspects will not change. One will be the need to have apparent certainty of future action and to achieve measured targets and goals. Another is a more flexible approach that seeks out and uses changing opportunities and also achieves intangible aspects crucial to success on the ground.

The published report will provide valuable insights for network members and others working in the area on how to deliver estate regeneration through interesting times. It will also provide some insights into current HCA thoughts on the topic.

*Jon Morris is an RTPI member representing the RTPI-CIH planning for housing network. **Transforming Estates** was published by the CIH last week. Network members are invited to join in discussions at www.planningforhousing.org.uk*

“The lessons are more about how best to make the current paradigm work rather than what to do if it breaks”

Presidential candidates lock horns

In the run-up to next month's election to decide who will become the institute's next junior vice-president, *Peter Geraghty* and *Colin Haylock* both take the opportunity to set out their essential campaign messages

Peter Geraghty

I want an institute that is strong, responsive to members' needs and respected. Together, we can achieve this. Times are tough and planners face considerable pressures, which is why I supported the freeze on membership subscriptions for 2010. This is a time for a strong institute, delivering good-quality services in a focused way. Vote for me because I want to help bring this about.

I will ensure that the institute promotes the profession's interests by continuing its change agenda to meet future challenges and provide improved member services; continuing to improve the effectiveness of the executive board, general assembly and all parts of the institute, including the regions, nations and networks; fighting for planners' needs; and encouraging and supporting young professionals.

I am proud of the profession and what has been achieved in advancing spatial planning and the place-shaping agenda. The institute has adapted to meet new challenges, such as climate change. The RTPI has changed and I want to contribute to future change. I have the drive and commitment to do so.

The institute has been reviewing its organisational structure and refreshing the New Vision. As an executive board member, I have been able to contribute to that important work. While I was chairman of the membership and ethics committee, I worked with institute staff to develop a programme to thoroughly review membership categories and associated benefits, the



Geraghty: proud of the profession

career strategy and member services. I want to see this agenda through as junior vice-president.

My commitment to the institute and profession is long standing. I first became involved with the RTPI by joining the North West branch executive and later served as Planning Aid representative in London. In 2000, I was elected to the general assembly and subsequently to the executive board.

After beginning my career in the private sector, I worked for several local authorities and I know the issues and pressures planners face. My public and private sector experience will be valuable in the role of junior vice-president. I want to represent the interests of the whole profession and ensure that the excellent work being done by planners, such as Planning Aid, is recognised.

I believe that I can help to build a strong and respected institute and I ask for your support to achieve this key objective.

Colin Haylock

Whoever you elect now as junior vice-president will become president and the institute's public face in 2012, when the world will be watching London and a regeneration and legacy-based Olympics delivered through a recession.

I am a design and regeneration-based planner and architect. I have more than 20 years' regional, national and network service with the institute, 35 years of public and private sector experience and strong connections with government agencies. I hope this equips me particularly well to act as our public face in 2012. This is a great opportunity to showcase what planners can offer to the vision, development and delivery of major projects and to help more people "get" planning.

But for most people, planning is measured not by exceptional activity but by its performance in more day-to-day environments through



Haylock: community engagement

our operation of development control and management and our generally lumbering local development framework (LDF) preparation. All the political parties and most senior politicians claim to respect and value planning and planners, but this is more for the potential rather than current practice. Building from the Killian–Pretty review, we need to secure a system that is truly sensitive and proportionate.

Working with the government and other agencies, we need to refine LDF processes to quickly and economically conclude documents that seriously tackle climate change, are visionary, robust and deliverable and blessed with extensive community ownership. Potential may be limited in current core strategies but it is considerable in area action plans and other documents. Our ever-strengthening Planning Aid services offer ways into this.

Reaching the more local and physical ends of the process presents opportunities to involve more sister professionals to enrich our community engagement. As a virtuous circle, this can increasingly unlock planners' rich expertise, allowing rediscovery of the often suppressed care for community and passion for place that prompted most of us to choose planning as a profession.

Demonstrating exceptional everyday performance is a timely and tough Olympic challenge, but one in which the institute's improving political influence and growing member engagement through Planning Aid, the regions, nations, networks and associations can help us succeed.

Database offers helping hand to companies

Consultancies small and large can take advantage of the institute's online directory to raise their profile across all sectors, maintains *Simon Owen*

The *RTPI Online Directory of Planning Consultants* is a web-based and printed listing of more than 500 firms providing professional services. It is the official site for consultancies that operate in the UK and

internationally and provides users with up-to-date information about companies that can provide the service and experience they require.

Your company can benefit from a greater UK and global audience, more traffic being driven to your website, a web presence for consultancies that do not yet have their own company website, a listing in the only RTPI-endorsed directory, more than 600,000 page views in a year with 40,000 unique visits from more than 130 countries — 65 per cent of visitors in 2009 were new — and inclusion in the printed

directory and regional leaflets distributed free across the industry.

The online service allows a consultancy to decide on the level of company information it wishes to add to the site. Entry in the online directory guarantees firms to be listed in the printed directory and the relevant regional leaflet, to be published in January next year. The directory and regional leaflets are distributed free to all local authorities, libraries, citizen advice bureaux and Planning Aid and RTPI regional offices. The online directory is also important for the end user.

This service offers the knowledge that firms listed provide the services of RTPI members. The comprehensive database gives easy access and enables users to search for consultants at many levels. Most importantly, this service is free to users and the site is continually updated all year by firms, giving access to the most up-to-date consultancy information available.

Simon Owen is directory manager. If you wish to list or renew your entry, you can benefit from an early booking offer. For more details, please call 020 7960 5663 or email simon.owen@rtpiconsultants.co.uk or visit www.rtpiconsultants.com/register

Options for growth explored by Planning Summer School

Experts gathered in Exeter to debate planning's role in growth at a turbulent time, says *David Waterhouse*



Summer school: speakers offered experience of development delivery

We are operating in a perfect storm — political and economic uncertainty, a change of government and an ever tighter fiscal climate. It has never been more important to keep up to date with emerging thinking, something at the heart of all that Planning Summer School offers.

Last month, leading practitioners and opinion-makers gathered in Exeter to enjoy a stimulating programme of debates. The result should arm planners with the necessary knowledge to survive the challenging period ahead.

A strong line-up of speakers from two major growth locations — Cambridgeshire and Swindon — together with a Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) angle unpicked challenges and messages for the future. It also celebrated successes that have been achieved through strong local partnership working, good governance and political buy-in.

The common themes of reduced section 106 contributions, delivering infrastructure commensurate with housing and ensuring robust political and governance structures are in place are always the challenge.

Another critical issue is skills and knowledge, particularly as we come out of a downturn.

The HCA brings with it a wealth of experience from English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation. The challenge of delivering sustainable growth and strong investment packages for places is being met through the single conversation process, which is the main tool for delivering a range of outcomes and programmes across sub-regions.

Summer school deputy president Leonora Rozee summed up: “We have heard from leading speakers on a major topic and had an opportunity to find out first hand how different parts of the country are rising to the challenges we face.”

While there are undoubtedly myriad challenges for the future, it is clear that success is achievable. Summer school continues to play a key role in celebrating success and fostering examination and understanding of the challenges.

David Waterhouse is head of planning and renewal for housing and growth programmes at the DCLG.

RTPI Bulletin Board

Consultant found in breach of code of professional conduct

A consultant member was found to be in breach of the professional code of conduct by the conduct and discipline panel in April for failing to exercise due care and diligence in carrying out duties to the client. The member appealed against the decision by way of written representations. The appeal committee has upheld the panel's findings and agreed that the member did misdirect the client to the wrong venue for an appeal hearing and failed to submit material evidence to the Planning Inspectorate in advance of the hearing, both of which amounted to a failure to exercise due care and diligence in breach of clause (c) of the code.

The committee also found that the member was in breach of paragraph 7 by failing to issue written terms of engagement to the client for the additional work to be carried out in respect of the subsequent appeal. Written terms of engagement had been provided to the client in respect of the lodging of the initial application but further notification should have been sent setting out the fee proposal and scope of work to be carried out for the appeal. The committee also raised concern over the details provided in the initial written terms of engagement. These should have provided a clear description of the scope of work on which the fee estimate was based and should have set out clearly who would be dealing with the work, together with their respective charging rates. This is particularly important where a junior member deals with a matter but is overseen by a senior member and different rates are applied. The committee agreed that the member should be reprimanded without being named in the published report. For more information on the code, please email RTPI complaints investigator Sandra Whitehead at sandra.whitehead@rtpi.org.uk

Human settlements report hailed as global manifesto for planning

The 2009 report on human settlements is a global manifesto celebrating planning's crucial role in meeting the international challenges of climate change, urban growth, poverty and informal development. The input of RTPI members and staff is prominently credited. This is a significant event with far-reaching implications in terms of planning education, international policy and research. For more information, please visit www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3008

Planning enforcement members book to attend free conference

More than 100 National Association for Planning Enforcement members have already booked to attend its annual conference at Kelham Hall in Nottinghamshire on 11 November. The conference theme is negotiations. The event, sponsored by Francis Taylor Building, Browne Jacobson and Newark and Sherwood District Council, is offered free as a significant benefit of membership. For more information, please contact nape@rtpi.org.uk

Notice of members' deaths

The institute notes with regret the death of PW Chivers (South East), E.J.L. Griffith (South West), B Horstead (East of England), DM Jukes (South East), HG Littlehales (South East), and DW McIntosh (Scotland). We offer our condolences to their family and friends.



RTPI's Leisure and Tourism Workshop 2009

18 November 2009 • London

- Accommodating eco-tourism in rural areas
- Planning for growth in cultural/heritage tourism
- Planning for major new leisure facilities
- Regenerating our seaside resorts
- Planning for tourism and leisure
- Implementing tourism and leisure regeneration projects

Workshop chair:
Martin Taylor, Director, HLL Humberts Leisure, Chair, RTPI SE Region



UPDATED FOR 2009

Tel: 0845 082 1171

e-mail: services@rtpiconferences.co.uk

www.rtpiconferences.co.uk/28082