



Today's and Tomorrow's Leaders achieve awards

Congratulations to Annette Roberts and Joanne Hooper who have been voted the West Midlands regional 'leaders' of Today and Tomorrow, respectively, in a competition promoted by the RTPI President.

In an awards ceremony in Shrewsbury timed to coincide with the President's visit to the West Midlands, Martin Willey, who launched the Awards scheme earlier this year, presented the awards to Annette and Joanne, the successful nominees, together with bottles of champers for them both.

Annette Roberts, Planning Policy Manager at Dudley Council, who won the 'Today's Leader' Award, was described as 'leading by example and inspiring others to follow with her vision of planning and "Building a Better Dudley" for the future'. Evidently, Annette has transformed her team, sharing her breadth of experience to develop individuals and the team as a whole. She is dedicated and driven, always professional and operates with an enthusiasm that is infectious.

Joanne Hooper who won the 'Tomorrow's Leader' Award works for Drivers Jonas in Birmingham. Jo displays enthusiasm and diligence and sets an example for others to follow through her quality of work and commitment to her clients. She has shown great enthusiasm, dedication and leadership both in her current professional consultancy role and also as Chair of the Young Planners' Group, where she has helped organise a very full and successful programme of events for younger planners. A great future is predicted for Jo in the planning world.

The President enthused: "Annette and Joanne are very worthy winners of the awards for their outstanding contributions in their respective fields. It is exciting to see a new generation of talented young planners coming through and to see how planning professionals are positively changing the culture of planning within local authorities, as well as in the private sector." Well done both. 🍷



Martin Willey presents awards to Annette Roberts and Joanne Hooper.

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Chairman's report

Welcome to my first Chairman's report, which I must admit has proven to be a surprisingly daunting prospect to compose. As you may be aware, Sue Manns had to step down early from her role as Chairman of the RTPI West Midlands Region due to her appointment as National Planning Aid Co-ordinator. This is a fantastic move for Sue and an excellent acquisition for Planning Aid – if Sue's enthusiasm, energy and drive as Chairman of this Branch is anything to go by, then Planning Aid is indeed in very good hands. Whilst we will all miss Sue's leadership and influence (particularly in her last 18 months as Chairman), we wish her well in her new post and look forward to Sue's future presence at West Midlands RTPI events.



As Vice Chairman I was asked to step into the breach as 'Acting Chairman' until the official appointment of a new Chairman in the New Year. This left me in the hot seat for the visit of Martin Willey, RTPI President, to our region at the end of September. Martin was treated to a whirlwind tour of the Region. (See article on page 3). Personally I felt Martin came across as a very positive character, who is determined to see through a 'modernisation agenda' within the RTPI. He is clearly someone who believes in strengthening the role of the RTPI in the Regions and is passionate about the key role planning can play in the future of the nation, as we ultimately turn the corner out of recession.

It was this last point in particular that struck a chord with me. Being just about old enough to remember the last significant recession of the 1980's (!), I can still painfully recall starting out on my planning career at a time when planning, as a profession, seemed to be constantly under fire for seemingly holding back the economic recovery. It wasn't long before there was a clear 'presumption in favour of development' and

planners were banned from interfering in such trivial matters as the quality of design!

In my opinion, it took planners over 10 years to recover from this diminution of our role and it is only recently that we have once again begun to feel confident in the part we can play in creating quality places to benefit all elements of our community. I accept that this has been far from plain sailing. We are now in a world in which planning has become ever more complicated (some would say overly-complicated). But at least the value of good, sound planning appears to be recognised in most quarters as a benefit to our society. As the President proclaimed, we must not allow the understandable short term desire for economic recovery to overshadow and potentially undo the good work that has taken place to date.

It is clear that our planning system still requires improvement, not least around the overly cumbersome and expensive LDF process, but now is the time to re-state our view that it is good planning that will help not hinder our prospects of future economic prosperity and quality of life. It is with this in mind that I have set a theme for my forthcoming year as Chairman – promoting good planning and quality development within our region. I have a number of ideas on how we can pursue this theme over the next 12 months and I will outline this further in the next edition of Tripwire. For now, I urge you to consider what 'good planning' means to you and how we can jointly promote its place in our society as we continue to move through what are very challenging times. 🏠

Steve Hill

RTPI West Midlands, Acting Regional Chairman

A cut above the rest!

After years of promoting and protecting public expenditure, suddenly all the political parties seem to be competing with each other to make ever more savage cuts in the wake of the economic recession.

The RTPI is not immune from these pressures, as those attending the recent Regional meeting in Shrewsbury will know. The Institute is now suffering from falling income from subscriptions, advertising, sponsorship and conference income brought about by the downturn.

The President has urged all RTPI regions to cut back on expenditure and our own region has already embarked on a further budget review in order to prepare our Business Plan for 2010.

However, we too have experienced a fall in revenue from our own advertising and sponsorship. In response to a recent letter from the RTPI Senior Vice

President, Ann Skippers, asking Regions to make a 10% cut, we have pointed out that West Midlands have already made sharp cuts, for example reducing the frequency and size of Tripwire and also cutting back on free and lower cost CPD events. Unlike other regions, members of the Regional Committee do not claim travelling expenses to meetings and our running costs are kept to a minimum, bolstered by volunteer support.

We will continue to strive to deliver activities and services within the region as best we can whilst looking for further opportunities to earn and where possible save money in this very tight economic climate.

If you have ideas about raising resources, or you would like to support the Region through sponsorship of conferences or by advertising in the magazine, please contact either the Tripwire editor, John Acres, or our Branch Coordinator, Sue Griffith Jones. 🏠

The President hits Town

For the third time this year, the RTPI President, Martin Willey, has visited the West Midlands. This time he came to Shrewsbury as part of his formal tour of the region at the end of September. As part of a busy programme, Martin met with planners in the newest planning authority in the country, the recently formed Shropshire Council.

Keith Barrow, Leader of the Council expressed his delight that Martin had visited Shropshire to find out more about the work and impact of the new Council, current planning issues in the county and challenges that may lie ahead.

Nick Taylor, Assistant Director Strategy and Development, who heads the planning service at Shropshire, thanked the President for the opportunity to meet with planners. He stressed that he is wanting to ensure that the role of planning is central to achieving the aspirations of the Council (see Nick's article in the previous edition of Tripwire).

During his visit, Martin presented the Today's and Tomorrow's Leaders Awards for the West Midlands. This is a new initiative he has introduced this year to celebrate the achievements of planners in each UK Region and Nation who have shown outstanding leadership qualities or who have already demonstrated the potential for such leadership.

Annette Roberts from Dudley Council and Joanne Hooper from Drivers Jonas, and the Chair of our Young Planners' Group (YpWestmids) were voted the Leader of Today and the Leader of Tomorrow, respectively. (See front page article for more details).

The President addressed planners at the event by expressing his strong support for the regional level within the RTPI and emphasised his desire to see more resources devoted to the region. However, having said that, he pointed out that these are difficult financial times for the RTPI with 5% of its members unemployed and he said the regions and the Institute as a whole need to make drastic cuts in spending.

Martin explained the strong 'reform' agenda within the RTPI with its modernisation objective aimed at making sure that the profession has a strong position to influence the political agenda. He also underlined the vital role of planning in helping us move out of recession. 'It is a challenging time for planners due to political uncertainties' he said. 'This emphasises how critical it is for the profession to restate the case for good planning and demonstrate that we are flexible and able to respond to the circumstances that we face; this is equally relevant at the regional level'.

Martin explained how the RTPI is looking to work with all the main political parties in advance of the election and will be producing a manifesto in the

New Year. He stressed the need for planners to hold their nerve and believe in what we do.

The President announced proposals for the RTPI to establish stronger relations with the Homes and Communities Agency within the region. The idea of holding a planning summit in the West Midlands to promote the 'quality of place' is being explored.


The event at Shropshire Council concluded with a meeting of the Regional Activities Committee that oversees the provision of services to regional RTPI members. It was an opportunity for planners at the event to see the RAC working at first hand.

One of the main items on the agenda was a discussion on the future of regional planning; a particularly pertinent subject due to the Conservative Party's recent announcement that it intends to remove the regional tier of government should they win the forthcoming election.

John Pattinson from the West Midlands Regional Assembly outlined some of the key issues, not least the lack of a National Spatial Plan and the importance of Regional Planning to fill the void. He stressed the role of Regional Strategies in providing a distinctive approach that reflected the character and needs of the particular region. In his view, many key decisions on infrastructure cannot be made effectively at national or local level. John also identified the role of the Regional Strategy in providing a basis for sub-regional planning and the need to consider the purpose of a more decentralised model in order to engage with local communities (see John Pattinson's article on page 5 of this edition).

In the ensuing discussion a number of key points were raised:

- how to improve strategic networks involving a wide range of key delivery agencies
- whether the City Region would be a more appropriate arrangement, albeit not just focused on Birmingham
- that it is unclear how the new Regional Leaders' Board will be set up and there is concern about the level of engagement
- the spurious expectation that a multitude of individual local authority strategies can build up into a coherent whole
- the problem that most people don't understand what regional planning is seeking to achieve
- the fact that the development industry needs to feel it is more heavily involved in the process
- that the RTPI should seek to influence the manifestos of the political parties about the role of regional planning.

This was a first class opportunity for the RTPI West Midlands region to move its activities outside Birmingham once in a while and to enable the President to see more of our region. 

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Panel report issued

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Panel Report on the outcome of the Examination in Public held in the spring at Wolverhampton was published on 29th September – bang on time.

The WMRSS was originally submitted to Government in November 2007, albeit the EIP was delayed as a result of the intervention of Baroness Andrews who considered that the Strategy had not provided sufficient housing to meet anticipated needs. The Government subsequently commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners to undertake a study of the capacity for growth in the region and this was completed in October 2008. The NLP report argued for substantial growth in the region, with scenarios ranging from 50,000 – 80,000 extra homes.


The Chairman has however (probably wisely) taken a very measured approach to his conclusions and has recommended a 9% increase in the overall level of additional housing within the region, from 365,600 to 397,900 (over the 20 year period from 2006-26). This he points out, is only what the WMRA would probably have proposed themselves had the new 2006 household projections been published at the time they submitted their plan. He has also clearly been influenced by the impact of the recession on the market and the challenges currently faced by the house-building industry.

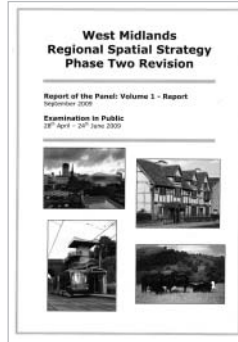
The Panel warmly supports the WMRSS Urban Renaissance Strategy which aims to focus as much development as possible into the Major Urban Areas. Indeed, he has suggested a slightly increased proportion of housing in the MUA's – the biggest increases are in Birmingham (+6,900) and the Potteries (+6,000). However, significant increases have also been recommended in some of the higher market areas such as Bromsgrove, Solihull and Stratford upon Avon.

Their cautious line on housing provision appears to be calculated to 'pilot through' the RSS review in advance of the impending General Election. Against the background of a potential future Conservative Government who are publicly committed to removing the Regional Planning tier, the recommendations appear designed to placate both the local authorities and the Regional Assembly who might otherwise have challenged any substantial housing increases, as has happened elsewhere in the country.

If this was the objective, it seems to have worked. Initial responses from the Regional Assembly have urged the Government Office to move quickly to accept the recommendations so that the revised strategy can be adopted before next May. Whether this timetable can be achieved, remains to be seen.

The Panel report unusually takes an almost site-specific approach to examining alternative options for growth, a dangerous line when the evidence tends to be so flimsy (at this level) and there is no scope within the EIP process to properly challenge and test peoples' written or verbal contributions. Whilst this may help some parties, it is likely to create some serious concerns amongst some local authorities who may find their emerging LDF's prejudiced and those landowners and developers who may feel their sites have been summarily 'rejected' without proper consideration.

The Chairman's report does not of course have the status of 'policy'. Nor is it subject to consultation. It is simply advice to central Government who will now need to produce Proposed Modifications for consultation by the end of the year. If things run according plan, the RSS could be adopted in the Spring. However, any slippage may result in the RSS being lost. 



Editor's thoughts

A few weeks ago, the Tate Modern in London launched a huge 'black hole' in the turbine hall designed by polish artist Miroslav Balka. People were invited to enter complete darkness to experience total emptiness.

One gets a similar impression when judging the Tory party planning policies floated at the recent party conference. The Shadow Housing Minister, Grant Shapps, was clear that they propose to abolish regional planning, scrap 'stalinist' housing targets and abandon central controls. But he was somewhat less clear what would be put in its place other than a concept of 'localism'.


The current development plan system is generally recognised to have been a deep disappointment (if not an unmitigated disaster) in terms of delivery. Few authorities having yet adopted their Core Strategies, let alone completed their Local Development Frameworks, but the alternative is like falling from the frying pan into the fire!

The Conservatives' concept of 'local choice', borrowed from the Liberal Democrats, offers the prospect of a prolonged hiatus with the likelihood of local campaigners resisting change – whether for residential, retail, roads or 'renewables'. The promise of voluntary Housing Trusts delivering housing through local consent seems little

more than an empty gesture – more like a forlorn hope. Without agreed housing targets how will Inspectors judge whether a 5 year housing supply exists in determining appeals – or will these disappear too?

So will this change, if it occurs, be a welcome change for local communities? Probably not! If people prefer the status quo, they may be content. But if they, or any of their family, need housing, employment, services or facilities, they will surely be worse off.

Paradoxically, developers, local authorities and local people all strive to achieve clarity and certainty in the planning system. The opposite is a recipe for chaos. An ad hoc system which relies on the vagaries of 'local choice' through the 'power of protest' ultimately leads to 'planning by appeal'. This is hardly the best route to achieve fairness and certainty.

Our current planning system may be slow and ponderous but currently it is only workable system we have got. The last thing planning needs now is to create complete upheaval. If we keep digging up the tree by the roots, we will never get it to grow! 

John Acres
Tripwire Editor

Strategic Planning for the West Midlands

Regional Planning in England is in a state of flux. The Government is proposing to introduce integrated regional strategies from April 2010. Current Conservative proposals are still emerging but seem to involve the rescinding of regional spatial strategies as part of their localism agenda.

Rather than just defend the status quo, it is more helpful to make the case for strategic planning in the West Midlands to stimulate a proper debate. There are six main strategic planning functions:

1. UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PICTURE

There is voluminous and ever changing national planning guidance which needs to be related to the West Midlands. This is challenging given that there is no national spatial plan for England (unlike our Celtic cousins) and national targets (e.g. housing figures) are never tested at the national level.

2. PROVISION OF A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

There needs to be a well informed development strategy for the West Midlands to provide a context for planning at the local level. The current spatial strategy for the West Midlands with its twin emphasis on urban renaissance of the major urban areas and rural renaissance has been strongly endorsed by the Panel following the RSS 2 EiP in Spring 2009. This is complementary to the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Housing Strategy. There are considerable merits in a combined single strategy for the West Midlands. This should be rolled forward to 2031 and, as in the past, this will be an opportunity for a review of the strategy. Such a debate is healthy but the removal of the strategic level would leave a policy vacuum that advantages no-one. The removal of the top half of the development plan creates uncertainty at the local level and is likely to lead to wholesale and costly "planning by appeal", as in the 1980s.

3. GUIDANCE ON STRATEGIC ISSUES

Strategic planning provides guidance for policy areas which cover more than just the local area e.g. climate change, flooding, economic development and transport. There are good regional examples of joined up working but these will be harder to maintain without a strategic planning framework, in particular the relationship and connectivity between the major urban areas and the surrounding Shire Areas.

4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR INVESTMENT DECISIONS

Not all investment decisions can be taken at national or local level. The recent coming together of key regional partners to agree on Regional Funding Advice is a positive example. Private sector developers also need to have clarity and as much certainty as possible when making investment decisions. We need to work together strategically to pull the West Midlands out of the current economic recession.

5. TAKING THE DIFFICULT STRATEGIC DECISIONS

It is not easy to make difficult strategic political decisions at the local level. Whatever your views on housing figures, this needs to be tackled at the strategic level. Imposition of figures from London is not the answer nor is it realistic to hope that locally all the answers will be provided and that there will never be any cross boundary issues. In the West Midlands we have always tried to balance the "top down" and the "bottom up" considerations. This may not always have been perfect but total removal of this strategic level is a recipe for chaos.

6. ENABLES GOOD SUB-REGIONAL PLANNING

The West Midlands is a complex and diverse region which has always encouraged good sub-regional planning to take place: current examples include Coventry/Solihull/ Warwickshire, the Black Country, South Worcestershire, North Staffordshire and co-operation between authorities such as Birmingham and Solihull and Herefordshire and Shropshire. Strategic planning has always been done via a decentralised model in the West Midlands with a small core regional planning team support by policy leads and sub-regional leads across the West Midlands. Removal of a central co-ordinating core will save relatively little money and put much at risk.

CONCLUSIONS

It is hard to predict what the future will bring for the West Midlands. There has been a tradition of working together at a strategic level for over 50 years in one form or another. One must hope that, if the Conservatives are elected to Government, that 'they do not throw the baby out with the bathwater!'

We do need to be positive and realistic and to think of models which embrace the spirit of the 'localism' but with the retention of the best elements of strategic planning. Perhaps a solution based around the West Midlands Leaders Board would be the best way forward though we shall need to find a way which includes business and other stakeholders. Perhaps a less formalised strategy for the West Midlands will be the only way forward though surely this must embrace the spatial, economic, housing and transport elements. And, perhaps our current decentralised strategic planning model gives us a better way forward than other English regions.

Whatever your views, please contribute to this debate both professionally and with your MP and local politicians. Beyond the political rhetoric, we need to chart a way forward for the strategic planning of the West Midlands Region. 🏠

John Pattinson

Head of Planning
West Midlands Regional Assembly

The views expressed in this article are my own and do not necessarily represent the view of my employer.

Support for members during the recession

The RTPI has been working hard to find new ways to support members during the recession. The economic climate has created uncertainty for some employed planners, especially those who run their own practice and graduates looking to gain employment.

Initially the economic slowdown affected planning consultants whose main clients were house-builders and developers. The RTPI was quick to respond, developing a range of online guidance and information designed to support consultants and small consultancies. This included free management guidance factsheets covering a wide range of small business issues including HR and finance topics, such as debt management.

As the downturn moved into a recession its effects were felt more widely. The RTPI reviewed its recession guidance to ensure it offered support to all RTPI members affected by the recession. We are committed to



supporting members during this difficult time and help them consider some of the options available to them.

The RTPI's 'recession support' guidance is published online and set out under four separate headings; 'facing redundancy?', 'finding that next job', 'work for yourself?' and 'how we can help'. Support includes free access to an employment law helpline, the latest planning job adverts and information on updating your CV and 'successful job interviews'.

The recession has led to a contracted jobs market. It is important to remember that RTPI membership provides you with a competitive edge – it is a clear recognition of your professionalism, your competence and your expertise.

For further information and support please visit http://www.rtpi.org.uk/member_services/piwp/

Chris Sheriden
RTPI Planners in the Workplace Manager

WMPAS in North Staffordshire

West Midlands Planning Aid Community Planner, Richard Hammersley, has been busy with preparations for the "North Staffordshire Initiative" where we are raising the profile of WMPAS. We have been fortunate in identifying a very helpful and active partner in Urban Vision North Staffs (UVNS), who are providing a base for our activities in their premises in Burslem (the historic School of Art) and giving some excellent practical support.

We have focused initially on two initiatives:-

Firstly, a couple of pilot "advice surgeries", where Richard has been located at the UVNS office for individual consultations to advise communities on how to respond to individual planning applications and get involved in masterplans and Development Plans. Hannah Barter, Urban Vision's Project

Development Co-ordinator has welcomed this as a fantastic opportunity for local community groups and representatives to take advantage of free, independent and impartial advice. Urban Vision will be supporting Planning Aid within North Staffordshire, to promote awareness in the sub-region and help to facilitate positive community engagement.

Secondly, a series of events entitled "Engaging with the Planning System" which is to be held on 4th November at the Burslem School of Art. We have enlisted speakers from Stoke and Newcastle Councils and will be advertising the event very shortly

For further information please contact WMPAS on 0121 766 8044 or via email to: wmco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Grand Designs Live comes to Birmingham

'Grand Designs Live' came to the West Midlands during October at the NEC. Amongst the various roadshow stands selling everything from bi-fold doors to garden spas was the Expert Advice Centre. This hub of activity was located in the middle of the 'Grand Build' sector of the show. It was the first time that RTPI West Midlands have been invited to participate in this feature.

The Expert Advice Centre was set up with an array of consulting tables at which various professionals sat, processing a conveyor belt of 'clients' who were either being allocated pre-bookable time slots or nipping in between appointments.

RTPI West Midlands covered the planning & urban design advice, (with a planner/urban designer from Chelmsford in support). Roger currently provides planning advice for the Grand Designs magazine so it was good to make contact with him. It is great to think that RTPI West Midlands is now able to provide a more structured approach to providing planning advice rather than relying on a planner coming up from south Essex!

RIBA were well presented at the show due to generous sponsorship from Velux windows. They were invited occupy half the Expert Advice Centre area because, (I'm speculating

here), of their generally accepted strong association of 'building' and 'Architecture'. It is Grand Designs after all!! This is a classic example of how perceptions can influence opportunity.

If there was a better understanding of the role of planning and design and how this can influence buildings in their context from the outset of the design and build process, maybe RTPI would have been given more presence at the show?

Several MRTPI volunteers covered the 3-day event on a rota system. For more information about who was at Grand Designs Live 2009 representing RTPI visit the website www.granddesignslive.com and follow the links via *Show Highlights*.

If getting involved in regional activities sounds like the kind of opportunity that you may be interested in, contact Sue Griffiths-Jones at RTPI West Midlands to receive up-to-date information on how to get involved in future events.

Julie Morgan
Urban Design Consultant – Place Elements 07980 615056
julie@placeelements.co.uk
www.placeelements.co.uk

YPwestmids Reflect on a Cracking Year!

With the end of 2009 fast approaching, it seemed opportune to review the number of very successful professional development and networking events on topical planning and development issues held by Young Planners West Midlands (YPwestmids) during the past year.

The inaugural YPwestmids seminar of 2009, held during April within the Auditorium, Cornwall Court, focused on the Birmingham Big City Plan where Philip Singleton, Assistant Director of City Centre Development and Design at Birmingham City Council presented and explained the ways in which the aims and aspirations of the Big City Plan will be seen to shape and revitalise the City of Birmingham over the next 20 years. Philip introduced several examples of regeneration initiatives currently lying at the fore of the City's renaissance all of which are designed at "polishing the existing diamond" that is the City of Birmingham. Such proposals included the redevelopment of New Street Station and the subsequent 'arc of opportunity', and the City's New Central Library, so keep an eye on these taking shape throughout 2010.

Next up was the first ever Young Planners Speed Networking Event, held at Bushwackers at the end of June. The sole objective of this night was to meet and greet as many young planners as possible by finding out for example who they worked for, what drew them initially to planning as a career and what fields in particular they were involved in and enjoyed. Over drinks and nibbles young professionals embarked on extending their networking circle all before the buzzer sounded.

The latest installment of the YPwestmids network seminar programme took place at King Sturge's offices at the end of July and concerned the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). This seminar heard from Vincent Maher who had been seconded to the IPC's transition team charged with setting up the agency which will consider applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008. Vincent subsequently set the context for the proposed reform of national infrastructure planning.

The seminar also heard from National Grid's Land and Development Stakeholder and Policy Manager Hector Pearson, who outlined the key challenges facing major energy infrastructure projects, drawing on his experience in national gas transmission systems and gas supply and


demand. From an industrial perspective, Hector explained that effective planning is the key to meeting the national need for energy in view of the climate change agenda.

The YPwestmids seminar series includes Q&A sessions that are always very popular and offer opportunity to find out more on the topic at hand, and maybe even ask our prominent speakers their thoughts on other matters. Our events attract in the region of 100 young planners & professionals, corporate and public sector sponsorship, as well as local media coverage thus providing a great opportunity to meet fellow young planners and professionals and get your name out there!

Early October saw Young Planners head to the north east at the Young Planners Conference in Newcastle and Gateshead. The theme for the Conference was community involvement in planning and consultation, and saw some very lively debates and valuable seminars, not forgetting the obligatory night on the Toon...!

Mid October saw YPwestmids contribution towards an RTPI West Midlands event welcoming Birmingham City University planning students to the region, with YPwestmids presenting the Group as a useful resource to students for advice and to extend their networking circle.

YPwestmids tend to plan events in advance; seminars are inspired by the prominent themes in the planning world; and careers and networking events occur throughout the year. Over the next few months, there are three proposed events, including a seminar on the future of Planning under different political parties, with key Political speakers from the 3 main parties in early December, our Annual Christmas Drinks, to be held jointly with Matrics, and a Careers and Advice Event for new students in the region, to be held jointly with other students studying the built environment in January.

For details of all of these forthcoming YPwestmids events, please watch this space. If you would like more information about our activities and events, please email ypwestmids@googlemail.com. 

YPwestmids Core Group

(Jo Hooper, Tim Webb, Joe Turner, Laura Smith, Rob Krzyszowski, Al Thornton and Claudia Clemente)


Centre for Sustainable Energy

The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) is currently managing a programme of activities funded by the Department for Energy and Climate Change and the Department for Communities and Local Government to support the planning community (local authority officers, councillors and inspectors) on the issues surrounding climate change, renewable energy and planning.

One element of the programme is an expert support network. This initiative gives planning officers the opportunity to receive expert advice, information and guidance on specific issues relating to renewable energy and planning. This service is specifically designed to assist local authority planning officers in

both forward planning and development control through the provision of advice, information and guidance from a network of renewable energy specialist.

Following the success of the initial pilot run earlier in 2009, the programme has now been extended for a further 6 month pilot to run until the end of January 2010.

For more information please contact : Madlen Hutton
Project Manager – Technical Consultancy at the CSE,
3 St Peter's Court, Bedminster Parade, Bristol, BS3 4AQ
0117 934 1415 or Email: madlen.hutton@cse.org.uk 

REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Non-members of RTPI welcome to attend.

THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER

Development Control Conference

Conference, run by Landmark Planning in association with the East and West Midlands RTPI. Morning of planning law, including overview for the past year and an update on the Community Infrastructure Levy. Afternoon of topical DC presentations, including EIAs and Valuation Appraisals.

Venue: Central Baptist Church, Leicester (close to railway station)

Time: 10am – 3.40pm (Registration from 9.45am)

Cost: **£109.25 incl VAT** (full-time students & unwaged £25)

Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones

Tel 0121 709 1599

Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER

"Sustainability" what will it mean for you?

Seminar in association with RTPI East Midlands & SSR Planning

Venue: Aviator Hotel, Sywell, Northampton

Time: 2pm – 4.15pm (registration from 1.45pm)

Cost: **£40.25 incl VAT**

Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones

Tel 0121 709 1599

Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER

Is this what a sustainable community looks like?

Jointly organised with RTPI Rural Planning Network

Venue: Abbey Fields Community Centre, Winchcombe, near Cheltenham

Time: 11am – 3.30pm

Cost: **£50 incl VAT** (full-time students & unwaged £20) for seminar, lunch & guided walking tour

Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones

Tel 0121 709 1599

Email: rtpiwestmids@btinternet.com

OTHER EVENTS

THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER

Designing Better Projects

Venue: Balcony Rooms, Millennium Point, Birmingham

Time: 10am – 1pm

Cost: **Free**

Organiser: RegenWM

Details & booking: Tel 0121 202 3260

Email: carolyn.pratt@regenwm.org.uk

THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER

Introduction to Regeneration

Venue: Balcony Rooms, Millennium Point, Birmingham

Time: 10am – 1pm

Cost: **Free**

Organiser: RegenWM

Details & booking: Tel 0121 202 3260

Email: carolyn.pratt@regenwm.org.uk

MONDAY 23 NOVEMBER

Planning for Inclusion

Venue: Leicester

Other dates and venues on website

www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/tcpa_inclusion.pdf

Time: 9.30am – 3.30pm

Cost: **£28.75 (Free)** (Free for TCPA members & voluntary organisations)

Organiser: TCPA

Details & booking: Michael Mclean

Tel 0207 930 3280

Email: michael.mclean@tcpa.org.uk

Starting end of NOVEMBER

Urban Design Short Courses

Art Landscape Place

Community & Place

Venue: BCU, Birmingham

Time: One day a week for seven weeks

Cost: **£450**

Organiser: Birmingham School of Architecture

Details & booking: Dr Noha Nasser

Tel 0121 331 7901

Email: noha.nasser@bcu.ac.uk

OTHER EVENTS

THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER

10th Bristol Planning Law and Policy

Conference:

Ten Years of Planning

– two steps forward, one step back?

Venue: Marriott City Centre Hotel, Bristol

Time: Day conference followed by dinner

Cost: Conference **£135 – £250**. Dinner £95

Organiser: UWE

Details & booking: Tan Moore

Tel 0117 32 83303

<http://environment.uwe.ac.uk/plpc>

Email: Tan.Moore@uwe.ac.uk

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER

Meetings & Facilitation Skills

Venue: Balcony Rooms, Millennium Point, Birmingham

Time: 10am – 1pm

Cost: **Free**

Organiser: RegenWM

Details & booking: Tel 0121 202 3260

Email: carolyn.pratt@regenwm.org.uk

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER

What Future for Social & Affordable Housing?

Venue: Royal Commonwealth Society, London

Time: Day conference

Cost: **£345 + VAT**

Organiser: CPPSeminars

Details & booking: Louise Rushworth

Tel 01422 845004

Email: seminars@cppseminars.org.uk

THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER

Introduction to Economic Development

Venue: Balcony Rooms, Millennium Point, Birmingham

Time: 10am – 1pm

Cost: **Free**

Organiser: RegenWM

Details & booking: Tel 0121 202 3260

Email: carolyn.pratt@regenwm.org.uk

West Midlands Regional Planning Award 2010

As well as the RTPI holding a national competition its regions run their own, complementary awards. All entries to the national competition from within the West Midlands are automatically entered into our award. But we also provide the opportunity for submissions to be made direct to the regional award.

Our Award is an ideal opportunity to promote schemes and projects that have made a significant difference to the quality of the environment and/or to the lives of communities in the West Midlands region.

Schemes can be entered by a local authority, private consultancy, developer, voluntary group, academic institution or community. There is

no requirement for entries to be submitted by RTPI members, although the central role played by the planning profession is critical.

All types of project are equally eligible, including physical development, strategies and guidance, processes and research documents. The project should have been substantially completed during the past year or so.

If you would like to know more about the Award please give Paul Harris a call on 01789 260314 or email him on paul.harris@stratford-dc.gov.uk.

The deadline for entries is Friday 27 November.

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