

Executive Board

13 January 2010

Secretary General's Report

Decision sought

The Board is asked to note this report.

As we approach the end of the year we shall be reflecting on the not inconsiderable changes of 2009. The climate in which we are operating has become increasingly challenging on all fronts and we are now busy with planning for next year. Much work has been undertaken this year by the Board and the Executive Officers on corporate strategy, recognising the need to ensure that we have a very clear set of priorities to inform our business and budget planning for 2010. We anticipate the need to prepare annual budgets within tight financial constraints for the foreseeable future. While RTPI membership continues to grow this will not necessarily result in a significant increase in revenue as we experience the forecast shift in demographics to an increase in retired members and the downturn in employment.

We are also looking forward to an election within months and continuing to focus our efforts on maintaining good relationships with representatives of all political parties. Some notable successes around the party conferences and with such events as the Bow Group event have helped to raise the profile of the Institute. More details of these and reasons to celebrate success in a range of key areas are given below.

1. Member Services

The initial results of the Planning Population survey are in, which have not been controlled and may be misleading, but so far confirm the earlier estimates of a total number of planners working in the UK being around 25,000. The survey also suggests that there are over 10,000 people working in planning administration, enforcement and technical roles. Over 70% of the organisations who responded also paid membership fees, of which about 50% of the local authorities cover the cost of subscriptions.

The Regional Business Plans for 2010 are being submitted at the moment, with a general forecast of lower income due to lower attendance at Regional events in 2010. This is partly driven by reductions in training budgets and also by local authorities converting to metropolitan areas and cutting head count. The wealthier Regions have also set aside parts of their reserves to be repatriated to general funds.

AGMs and elections are being held for new management boards and most RMBs and RACs have a good numbers of active members. As ever there is an issue with the same people managing the Regions and a need for new volunteers. Having said that there is a good range of young incoming chairs this year, with at least seven being under 30.

The Regions continue to provide a wide range of popular CPD events on contemporary planning issues. Recent coups have included Sir Simon Milton launching the draft London Plan at an RTPI event. RTPI social events are also very popular with a Masked Halloween Ball in Newcastle and a wine tasting at Denbies Vineyard.

Membership & Careers update

We currently have 22,539 members of all classes.

Membership Elections: Headline figures comparisons 2008 – 2009

<i>Membership Panel – 16 October 2009</i>	<i>Membership Panel –17 October 2008</i>
29 Chartered applications were processed.	201 Chartered applications were processed.
21 were elected to Chartered Membership	180 were elected to Chartered Membership
8 were deferred to the next panel	26 were deferred to the next panel
0 submissions were rejected.	0 submissions were rejected.
13 Associate Members were also elected into membership.	16 Associate Members were also elected.
<i>APC – July 2009</i>	<i>APC – July 2008</i>
218 submissions were processed.	107 submissions were processed.
130 were elected into Chartered membership	65 were elected into Chartered membership
20 were failed	18 were failed
68 were referred	24 were referred
<i>APC – September 2009</i>	
142 submissions were processed.	
90 were elected into Chartered membership	
15 were failed	
37 were referred	

The Membership Review Steering group met for the first time on 28 October to begin reviewing classes to ensure they remain fit for purpose. In due course the group will also consider benefits and services offered to individual membership classes and the potential for introducing new classes.

The project to develop a co-ordinated approach to careers promotion is on target to be ready for implementation by Christmas. A design agency has now been appointed and is working with the Interim Careers Co-ordinator to produce a range of materials to form a careers 'toolkit' for Regions & Nations to use. Work is on-going to update the careers pages of the RTPI website. A database of careers events across the UK and a mail-shot to careers advisors are also in development.

Over the past month, presentations on the APC process have been delivered to Licentiates in Ipswich, London and Oxford.

Awards and Events

RTPI Planning Award 2009

- The judges have now agreed a total of 14 award winners and 8 Commendations for this year's RTPI Planning Awards. They have completed their report and this has now been passed to Haymarket, our partners in this award.
- The Awards lunch and presentation will be held on **Thursday 4th February** at The London Hilton, Park Lane. Invitations to guests of the RTPI are now being issued.
- **London Planning Awards run jointly with London First and the GLA**
A total of 65 entries were received at the closing date of 19 October which was slightly down on last year's 89. Meeta Kaur, Immediate Past Chair of the London Region is

representing the RTPI on the judging panel and they met on 12 November in order to compile a short-list. Site visits will take place the first two weeks of December. There is no news yet on a date for the presentation of these awards by the Mayor but it is likely to be in January or February 2010.

- **Planning Consultancy of the Year Award 2009**

17 entries were received covering all three categories. Pat Castledine is representing the RTPI along with David Hackforth, President of POS and Nigel Hawkey at Quintain Estates representing the British Property Federation. They have shortlisted 8 entries and they have all been invited to give presentations to the judging panel on 26 November. References from their clients are also a key part of the assessment process and these are currently being taken up.

- **Young Planner of the Year Award 2009**

There were 10 entries at the closing date of 28 September. The judges are the President, Andrew Taylor, member of the Executive Board, and Bryan Johnston, Consultant Editor of Planning. Five have been short-listed and their profiles, together with photographs, will appear on the website and in Planning magazine towards the end of November/beginning December so that members can vote for the young planner of their choice.

- **Education and Lifelong Learning Awards 2009**

Four planning schools entered the category "Excellence in Planning Education", three in the "Employer/Practitioner Award for Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Professional Development", and six students submitted essays in the "Student Award for Outstanding Achievement in Planning Education". The judges are Professor Chris Webster, Cardiff University, Jenny Poxon, Local Government Yorkshire and Humber, and Nicola Bond, HCA Academy.

A conference call to determine the winners will take place on 20 November.

Events

- **Nat Lichfield Celebratory Conference**

A very successful conference took place at UCL on 23 October with over 100 delegates. A proposal for an annual lecture with UCL and Lichfield Planning is under consideration.

- **Past Presidents** will meet on 10 December for their annual dinner at the Royal Overseas League. It is hoped that the presentation of a leaving present to Robert Upton will take place that evening.

2. Policy and Partnerships

In addition to the work reported separately (below) by the Networks and Nations, the Policy and Partnerships directorate, skilfully steered by special adviser Kelvin Macdonald working with the Presidential Team and others, have been focusing on some of the big-picture issues for the Institute, including inputting into party political thinking on planning ahead of the impending election, honing the emerging Corporate Plan and beginning to develop a "Manifesto" to promote the RTPI's campaigning interests over the period of the next parliament. Input from others, particularly the political expertise of the Communications Team, has been invaluable, and further opportunities for involvement from others, including Executive Board and GA members, are to follow.

Our joint response with IHBC on draft PPS15 – lead by the Networks' Heritage Interest Group – generated significant media interest, most notably a quote from the President on the front page of the Sunday Telegraph. Ministers and CLG officials have been quick to seek further views from us, and begin to discuss possible changes to the emerging policy on heritage, and we have followed this up by pressing for a rethink on progress with the Heritage Bill – disappointingly missing from the Queen's Speech.

The publication of 3,000 pages of policy and guidance on energy and ports in the National Policy Statements has also been high on our agenda, and will be for several months – emphasised by calls for evidence to Select Committees on the NPSs in January. A programme of engagement with Members is being drawn up, and a loose alliance of bodies with a professional interest in environmental management has been set up between CIEH and RTPI to help share understanding, and now includes POS, IEMA, LACORS and others.

We have also been engaged with PAS “Autumn Series” events advocating what they call “Pragmatic Planning” to junior-to-middle ranking public sector planners, particularly promoting the concepts of spatial planning and development management. The RTPI section of these events includes a presentation on “Planning Together 2”, and the CLG guidance on how to link SCSs, LAAs and LDFs.

Finally, we are continuing our significant liaison with stakeholders, finding that our unique position is valued in terms of being able to feed back to a wide range of organisations the alternative views of planning that are being discussed ahead of the election. With thanks again to the Communications Team, our penetration of the party conferences – at least in England – and the resulting relationships with party spokespeople are proving invaluable.

Research

The RTPI has been developing its response to the Government’s consultation on the Research Excellence Framework. The REF will form the future basis for the allocation of research funding. Discussions have been held with the RTPI Education and Lifelong Learning Committee and Planning Education and Research Network, the Academy of Social Sciences and the Heads of Planning Schools.

The ESPON UK Contact Point submitted a bid for funding for enhancing the engagement of policymakers in integrated spatial plan-making in November. The bid was for a total of €882,000, in partnership with National Contact Points from Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. A final decision is expected by March 2010. The third ESPON call for research project bids also received considerable interest from UK researchers and authorities and the UK Contact Point fielded many partner institution requests. Bids are made confidentially but we are hopeful that the UK will be well represented in the project awards.

The Research team are working with RTPI Cymru to design and host a Planning Research Seminar in early 2010 at the request of the Welsh Assembly. The seminar is intended to explore the potential to develop stronger links between researchers and policy-makers and to improve communications.

The Academy of Social Sciences has conferred the award of Academician on Professor Cecilia Wong of the School of Environment and Development at the University of Manchester for her significant contribution to the social sciences. Professor Wong is a member of the RTPI Education and Lifelong Learning Committee and has led a number of significant RTPI research projects. As a member of the College of Learned Societies at the Academy, the RTPI is entitled to put forward outstanding planning practitioners and researchers for recognition as Academicians.

Networks

Three very successful conferences have been held this autumn, all of which heard an address from RTPI President, Martin Willey:

- The Young Planners’ annual conference was held in Newcastle Gateshead on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd October. Entitled *Participation in Planning – how positive stakeholder engagement can create better places*. Our aim was to highlight why stakeholder engagement is so important and necessary, not just for the planning system but also for the planning profession. More than 150 people attended the conference and excellent feedback from delegates showed our objectives were achieved. Young Planners themselves raised

substantial sponsorship for the conference enabling it to be offered at a discounted rate for delegates.

- PIPA's (the Politicians in Planning Network) annual conference was held in London on Saturday 31st October and attracted over 100 predominantly local authority councillors. Entitled *Planning – Delivering for the Upturn*, this was PIPA's most successful conference to date, and messages heard there emphasised the need to retain expertise and maintain standards during the current recession. The conference was sponsored by the Planning Advisory Service enabling us to offer it free of charge.
- NAPE's (the National Association for Planning Enforcement) annual conference was held in Newark on 11th November and was attended by over 120 delegates, predominantly local authority enforcement officers. Entitled *Negotiation*, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The conference was sponsored by Browne Jacobson, Francis Taylor Building and Newark & Sherwood District Council enabling us to offer it free of charge.

The Networks continue to input to the RTPI response to government consultations where specific expertise is required, and have led on 18 such consultations in the last 3 months. Networks also continue to keep their members up-to-date through regular e-bulletins and offer one or two informal and free of charge or low cost network events each week, aimed at encouraging members not just to learn from, but to help develop, good practice. The Development Planning Network has been working closely with the Planning Advisory Service to deliver the current regional workshops on *Planning Together 2*, and the Development Management Network has hosted a series of workshops looking at *Section 106 Agreements – time for review?*

Within the 16 networks and associations there are now 23 network Interest Groups. Some of these are time-limited and task specific, others are on-going developmental groups, but they are all a way of involving network members in a wide range of projects and activities appealing to their particular specialist areas of work or interest. *Network News*, which is publicly available on the front page of the 'Networks and Associations' webpage on the RTPI website, provides a monthly roundup of all network activities.

Membership now stands at nearly 8000 across the networks, although some are members of more than one network. Approximately 25% of network members are not members of the Institute but, through the networks, willingly provide their expertise from other disciplines to encourage better planning results on the ground.

3. Nations

RTPI Scotland

Development of Scottish Planning Policy and Practice

Scottish Government has reported that in the last six months, more than 80 per cent of written planning appeals have been dealt with within 12 weeks, compared to 27 per cent in 2008-09 and only six per cent in 2007-08. The average time taken to decide written planning appeals is now 11 weeks against an average of 16 weeks over the previous five years. Finance Secretary, John Swinney said '*The extraordinary progress we have made in making faster decisions is hugely welcome, and demonstrates the seriousness we attach to government activity on regulation and planning supporting economic development*'.

A Local Review Body Forum meeting organised by Scottish Government was attended by David Suttie and Iain Ross on behalf of the Institute. Four reviews have taken place in Scotland; one in Glasgow, one in South Lanarkshire and two in Fife. The former two upheld officer decisions but, in both Fife cases, decisions were overturned. Further meetings of the LRB Forum will be held with a view to establishing best practice for planners and other stakeholders.

High level guidance on Local Review Bodies has been published by CoSLA and the Improvement Service and is available at: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/local-review-bodies-lrbs/>

RTPI Scotland Current Policy Work

The following areas of policy work are in progress:

a) Marine Issues

A Network event to discuss issues relating to the Marine (Scotland) Bill 2009 was held on 13 November. A series of proposed amendments were sent to Elaine Murray MSP, and these have since been submitted to the Parliamentary Rural Affairs and Environment Committee.

b) Housing

A joint event to launch the joint RTPI / CIH Housing Network was held on Friday 4th December.

c) Climate Change

At a recent meeting of the Policy Sub Committee it was agreed that a position paper on 'Planning and Climate Change' would be produced. A meeting has been held with the Acting Director (Policy + Partnerships), Head of Research and Director RTPI Cymru.

Following a meeting with the Energy Saving Trust in light of the new planning system and other developments they are to commission an update of their advice to planners.

To celebrate World Town Planning Day, following approaches to Consulates and contacts within the Commonwealth Association of Planners, a number of countries have provided details of climate change concerns and actions: each has been encouraged to provide a picture, some text, and links to further information. This material can be found on the website at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?ap=1&id=3090>.

Scottish Planner

The October edition of the Scottish Planner was published on 23rd October and contained a focus section on 'International Involvement'. The December issue of the Scottish Planner will be published on 18th December and will have a focus on transport.

Scottish Executive Committee

The Scottish Executive Committee met on 7th December. Sara Drake and Sue Percy were in attendance.

Conference

The annual conference held on 10th November attracted a record number of attendees (110). A report of the event will be posted on the website.

Publications

A Careers Brochure for Scotland was launched at the Annual Conference: hard copies will be distributed to careers officers, schools, Universities and other interest groups. A flyer is in preparation.

Other Events

The Institute was represented at the Built Environment Summit held in Glasgow University's Bute Hall under the chairmanship of Scottish Minister Michael Russell.

RTPI Northern Ireland

Political Update

Northern Ireland environment Minister has recently cast doubts on the timetable for the reform of local government in Northern Ireland (RPA). The original date for completion of the reforms, including the devolution of planning functions, was May 2010. However, failure to get key legislation moving and concerns raised about the cost of the reforms is now jeopardising the original schedule. The Minister's doubts have raised concerns among politicians, council senior teams and staff organisations. RTPI NI will be discussing these concerns at this weeks Planning Convention to be held in Belfast.

Policy Activity

RTPI NI recently launched the Planning for Housing website in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Housing at the Hilton Hotel Belfast. Rynd Smith represented the RTPI, including the NI Policy Officer and the NI Branch Chairman. Minister Poots and the Director of the CIH NI Grainne Long were part of the launch.

The Northern Ireland Planning Reform consultations were completed on the 3rd October. A 36 page consultation response was submitted to the Planning Service incorporating the comments requested by PPPC. The final report can be viewed on the RTPI NI webpage at: http://www.rtpi.org.uk/groups/rtpi_northern_ireland/

International Development Network

The OIKOS conference was held at QUB and the NI Policy Officer attended as an RTPI representative. The ID network of the RTPI sponsored Glafkos Constantides to speak at the conference as he had spoken at the Planning Convention in 2008 on "Belfast/Nicosia the Divided Cities". The session was well attended and raised issues about the difficulties of spatial planning in divided communities and the problems of integration during the economic crisis.

RTPI Cymru

Reviewing the Planning System in Wales

It was previously reported that the Welsh Assembly Government would be carrying out a review of the planning system in Wales (DC / DM only). RTPI Cymru's National Director, Roisin Willmott is a member of the steering group for this important piece of work in Wales.

RTPI Cymru is taking an active role in the group and working with the appointed consultants, GVA Grimley. During November and December views are being sought from stakeholders and RTPI Cymru is assisting with this process.

Wales Planning Award

The Wales Planning Award was announced at RTPI Cymru's Annual Dinner on 6th November. The 2009 Winner is St David's Gateway: St David's Gallery and Oriol y Parc, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

The Wales Planning Award 2009 has been awarded to the scheme because in the opinion of the judges this project provides a model of good practice for the management of large numbers of tourists in environmentally sensitive areas. In particular the judges were impressed by:

- The location and range of facilities, including a gallery for the National Museum of Wales, provided for the 300,000 tourists visiting St David's during the year;
- The application of sustainable design principles in the construction of the building (achieving BREEAM Excellent) and the way the building itself is used to promote sustainable design;
- The way the building and the car park are 'absorbed' into the landscape;
- The integrated public / private transport facilities that have resulted in 40,000 passengers in the last year using the three coastal bus services that radiate from the Visitor Centre car park; and
- The role of Planners in conceiving the Gateway concept and ensuring its delivery.

A Commendation was also made to Cardiff Council for the Cardiff Conservation Area Appraisal Programme. The judges feel that recognition should be given to the comprehensive way the Council's planners have tackled this work, the way they have involved local communities and the fact that the appraisals now provide an agreed framework for Council's activities in conservation areas.

Bill Unsworth Memorial Prize

The Bill Unsworth Memorial Prize for excellence in examinations and coursework is awarded to a student in the first year of the BSC. in City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University who reaches a high level of achievement across all their course work. The 2008/09 Prize was awarded to Charles Thomas-Davies at the RTPI Cymru Annual Dinner in November.

Governance

The RTPI Cymru Management Board is an important part of the governance of RTPI Cymru and in setting the strategy for activity in Wales. It is a very good sign of the growing strength in RTPI Cymru, that we have this year received more nominations than there are positions in two of the Membership categories: Licentiate and Student. RTPI Cymru is therefore holding an election for these positions.

Events

We are planning a joint seminar with the Severn Estuary Partnership and RTPI South West to discuss the Severn Estuary – not just tidal power but looking at other issues such as ICZM, biodiversity etc. This is likely to be in March 2010, so that we can take advantage of European funding.

Spring Conference: Planning for Flooding - *March 2010*, Llandudno, sponsored by the Environment Agency Wales

Wales Planning Conference: The Making of Place - *7th June 2010, Cardiff*

Cynllunio

The next edition of Cynllunio, RTPI Cymru's quarterly newsletter, will be published at the beginning of December.

4. Education and Lifelong Learning

The Education and Lifelong Learning Committee met on 5 November. The main item of business was a workshop session, led by John Knight, on proposed revisions to the learning outcomes for accredited planning courses. The purpose of the revisions is to: explicitly address climate change; reduce complexity and to ensure that the outcomes are measurable, in line with best educational practice. In the light of comments received from the committee, the steering group will amend the draft and conduct a consultation with members and planning schools.

The RTPI's Partnership approach to working with accredited planning schools has been in place now for 5 years. As a consequence many members have given long service to some Partnership Boards, either as Chairs or RTPI representatives. This year we will be moving some members around in order to introduce new blood and expose some members to different institutions.

With the start of the new academic year the Education and Lifelong Learning have begun a series of visits to planning schools to explain the APC process to students. These visits have been supplemented by a series of podcasts which can be downloaded from the RTPI web site.

CLG have funded a pilot project on developing a National Competency Framework for Planners. A brief is being developed by the partners which will go out to tender shortly. Project partners consist of the following organizations:- London Borough of Haringey, PAS, POS, RTPI, Leeds City Council, Lincolnshire Council Council, North Kesteven District Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, HCA Academy and a private planning consultancy. The project will develop a competency framework and demonstrate its application in four local authority planning departments. The work will map across to the RTPI's APC requirements and membership classes.

5. Marketing & Communications

The overwhelmingly hostile reception given to the government's draft of PPS15 was catapulted onto a new level when we managed to secure (as previously mentioned) a front page Sunday Telegraph story outlining our severe criticisms of what we saw as plans to water down valuable heritage protections. Often it is not easy to say whether a piece of publicity has led to a major government rethink but in this case we can say it did. Within a week we were back in the Sunday Telegraph as the minister John Healey declared to the papers' readers that he would have a serious rethink about the direction of the policy. The policy team were called into the department within days to discuss our concerns in detail. Working with the government we were included in a ministerial press release outlining plans to make changes to permitted development rights. This also led to high profile RTPI coverage in the Daily Telegraph.

The return of the Westminster parliament brought what many commentators considered a somewhat lack lustre Queens Speech, with the main item of interest for us being the Flood and Water Management Bill. Once enacted, the Bill claims a new system will be in place to provide better, more sustainable management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses, help safeguard community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges and protect water supplies to the consumer.

We welcomed the publication of the first national policy statements but warned that without an overall national spatial plan, we risk missing out significantly on the real economic, social and climate change benefits of planning new major infrastructure in a coherent way.

On the political front we have been following up actions and personal contacts made at the party conferences. Our first joint event with a think tank – the Bow Group – took place this month. We have continued to meet regularly with the Conservative front bench whom we expect will shortly be issuing their delayed Green Paper on planning. We are also working with colleagues to develop a Manifesto on planning with the aim of informing and influencing policy over the longer period, whoever is in government.

A very successful event was organised with the International Officer and the Royal Institution to celebrate and draw attention to the publication of the recent UN Global report on Human settlements. A prestigious venue was secured at the House of Commons, with more than 70 attending to hear the Dr. Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza, Conservative International Development spokesman Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, the Chairman of the International Development Select Committee, the Rt Hon Malcolm Bruce, and a range of leading academics debate the report and the issues.

Other communications activities include agreeing new plans to provide regions with greater communications support and better coordination of publicity and promotional activities, working with the President to secure coverage for his regional visits, planning ways in which we can support the incoming President, plus a visit to RTPI Scotland to help support its conference and agree how we could offer greater support on the media and stakeholder management activities.

The feedback for the new Members Guide for 2010, containing for the first time a membership card, has been very positive. An innovative design and a fresh approach was taken with the document, which was sent to members as part of the subscriptions renewals process.

Other marketing activity has included working with membership on new careers material, producing a new PIPA leaflet, working with Planning Summer School to review and make their marketing more effective and supporting the work of the Planning Convention group.

Planning Aid England Marketing and Communications

Planning Aid England's (PAE) list of 2009 achievements continues to lengthen. In the time since the last Secretary General Report, planning advice service has also managed a number of firsts.

In the second week of November the first seven National Policy Statements, which set out the government's policy on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), were published. PAE simultaneously released a set of seven summary sheets which were produced to assist our clients and other stakeholders in navigating the government's complex and lengthy documents. They were sent electronically to up to 3,000 stakeholder groups across the country and arrived with our clients and stakeholders the exact minute the government's NPS announcement was made in the House of Commons.

The leaflets were uploaded to a unique micro site and since the NPS' publication it has received more than 45,000 hits and almost 5,000 documents had been downloaded. The project was praised in the House of Lords by a Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Minister in response to a question on consultation.

PAE is now advising DECC, the Department for Transport and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) - the body set up by DCLG which will decide NSIPs applications from March 2010 – on good consultation practice. PAE conducted a day long training session in October for all IPC employees which set out the basics of good consultation. PAE is building solid working relationships at the most senior levels of the IPC and government.

The service is continuing to increase its level of media coverage and was featured in the regional media nine times since the last report. National Planner Sue Manns was interviewed by Planning Magazine in November and PAE has been approached by the national media to comment on stories on the new national planning arrangements. Trained staff are leading a drive to increase the number of press releases issued to the local media and the communications team is collaborating with them to ensure there is consistency in the messages being disseminated across the country.

PAE is also now operating within its new Programme Management structure. The Planning Aid Executive Group (PAEG) has met twice and the Programme Management board has also met on two occasions. Regional managers meetings and Planning Aid National Unit team meetings have also been held in-between. The new meeting structure has been praised by staff and it is hoped that large improvements in efficiency and cost savings will occur as the new processes settle down further.

6. International

The UN-HABITAT Global Report on Human Settlements 2009, **Planning Sustainable Cities** was successfully launched at the House of Commons on 10th November with a press briefing and launch seminar (jointly with the Royal Institution) addressed by the Report's Editor, two of its contributing authors and two MPs. The debate following showed a clear role – and invitation - for RTPi and other professional planning institutions to contribute to future UN-HABITAT policy work e.g. the GRHS 2011 (Climate Change) and 2013 (Sustainable Transport); there was also a clear message that in the interests both of inclusivity and promotion of the discipline, such work will

should recognise that not everyone who plans is a professionally qualified planner. The Institute's role in that case may be a supporting, educating and enabling one. Planning for Climate Change, the book co-edited by Jenny Crawford, Simin Davoudi and Abid Mehmood was launched at the same event.

World Town Planning Day was further marked on 10th November with a well-attended reception organised by RTPI London Region at Canning House (Latin American Cultural Centre) and sponsored by RTPI. It celebrated the creation of WTPD 60 years ago in Argentina. Coming as it did immediately after the launch of the GRHS the same afternoon there were frequent references in speeches to the universal values of planning and the contribution made by professional planners all round the world.

Institute staff helped to organise an online conference on Resilience in a Changing Climate - Why my town/city – or the planning system I work in – will be resilient to climate change with IFHP, ECTP-CEU and the International Division of the American Planning Association over three days in November. It was (with only one hitch) an exemplary use of new technology and was billed as a serious initiative by planning organisations to reduce the carbon footprint of their meetings. Registered participants (65) “attended” plenary sessions, watching and listening to presentations via their computers, with a webcam image of the speaker alongside slides and hearing the audio channel over a headset or computer speakers; they could then go into breakout sessions where anyone could put questions or offer comments by typing in or by being “given the microphone”. The call for “papers” resulted in 15 varied and interesting contributions which led to stimulating discussion. The event cost approximately \$1,750 to stage across all continents; developed country participants paid up to \$85 to participate and there was a sliding scale so that the (few) participants in the poorest developing countries paid nothing – but their numbers were inevitably limited by the need to have high-speed internet to make the technology work. The organising Committee felt it was a great success and plans a similar conference for World Town Planning Day next year. Aspects of the organisation of the event may also suggest ways to meet the need for a “Global Planning Practice Network” – in effect, the event was based round a professional networking site of the type envisaged for GP2N.

The RTPI in Scotland marked WTPD with an “exhibition” on its website of good practice on climate change round the world.

The ComHABITAT report on the “State of the Commonwealth Cities”, written by CAP and RTPI is being presented to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Trinidad this week. Cliff will be presenting it to a workshop together with a proposal for the work to be taken forward as part of a larger programme.

Regular monthly telephone conference calls continue with partners in the Global Planners Network (GPN).

The invitation-only symposium on British and German Perspectives on Climate Change will take place at the Royal Institution on Wednesday 20th January 2010; the Institute's International and Research staff continue to work on the programme with the German Academy of Spatial and Regional Planning (ARL).

Noel Riordan and Judith Eversley (deputising for Vincent Goodstadt) attended the ECTP General Assembly in Caminha in Portugal from 5th-7th November. Main topics covered were European Urban & Regional Planning Awards - RTPI is asked to seek 3 entries to the 2010 Awards based on nominations from judges for the RTPI Awards given in Jan 2009. New Working Groups are being set up to consider mutual recognition of each others' qualifications, future EU spatial development policy; and ways of marking the first hundred years of European spatial planning. The next General Assembly could be held in Edinburgh; work continues on planning this and a professional conference to form part of it. RTPI is asked to produce a list of larger local authorities and other organisations which might become Associate members of ECTP-CEU and to publicise its Experts

Register (both of these being both fund-raisers and ways of raising the profile of the organisation and the discipline of planning).

Will French attended a two-day European Environment Agency workshop on “integrated urban monitoring in Europe” (IUME). This work arises from an EEA report on “Ensuring Quality of Life European Towns & Cities” to which Vincent Goodstadt and Will had contributed. IUME aims to improve the information base on urban issues across Europe to facilitate integrated assessments and improve urban policy-making in Europe. The meeting identified further actions in support of IUME for 2010 and beyond, made recommendations on co-operation with newly identified institutions dealing with urban information and suggested ways to involve European city networks e.g. via the Convention of Mayors.

As always there is a steady stream of enquiries about working overseas, planning systems in other countries and opportunities for visiting planners to work, study and find contacts in UK.

7. Premises

West Midlands Planning Aid have relocated – bringing an end to some 19/20 years residency in the Custard Factory. The office move took place on Monday 30th November

The new office address is: Pt 1st Floor, Griffin House, 18 Ludgate Hill, Birmingham, B3 1DW

ICT

2009 has been a very busy time for ICT and has required much organisation, effort and travel by those involved, to move forward with several important IT projects during this time.

The initial creation of an HTTPS network facility via a secure internet/Web base connection provided the RTPI with its first centralised network capability and provided all RTPI users with the full use of Outlook based facilities such as calendar and public folder sharing and very importantly provided a standardised RTPI e-mail facility from which we were then able to begin the move to off site data archiving.

It was this first step into networking that lead to the more ambitious project of creating and installing a TSN (Terminal Server Network) IT network to link up some 140 RTPI staff members, working from a variety of locations across the British Isles, into a centralised facility that would provide all of them with the ability to access, use and share all of the RTPI business software and to create a master data management structure to compliment and unite all RTPI staff wherever situated.

This ‘First Phase’ continues to provide ‘communication between all RTPI users’ through the means to share calendars, contact details and work folders and now includes access to all our primary systems such as Microsoft Office, Outlook, Membership and Volunteers databases, the Website and Finance systems and eventually a new Intranet. Additionally with TSN our systems can be accessed from anywhere with the right equipment and providing there is a stable Internet connection which now opens up other opportunities in off site working. Very soon regional managers will have access to the membership database in order to take over a number of tasks that were previously done on their behalf by the membership team. With NPAU networked via TSN, access to Botolph Lane Financial Systems is also planned. Likewise maintenance of membership records regarding ‘volunteering’ will be undertaken by NPAU staff. Current manually activated interfaces that transfer selected information between the membership database the Stratum Data base and the Web Site are in the processes of being redeveloped to overcome current limitations by the initial introduction of automated integration. In the scheme of things these are all simple first steps but they open the way to much more.

A natural consequence of this growing networked activity is the considerable increase in data now being generated and therefore the growing need to ensure its safety and ability to quickly retrieve and restore such information as and when necessary. This also applies to e-mails which need special attention particularly when they can also, in certain circumstances have an important bearing in matters of law. Therefore particular attention must be given to their safety and confidentiality'. Prior to TSN many RTPI personnel were working in isolation and e-mails could only be copied down to their PCs which not only limited maintenance but also their safety. Off site storage facilities are now in place, operational and being progressively developed and refined in order to provide a reliable and proven Disaster Recovery capability for all areas of the RTPI. To date a number of situations have already occurred that required fast data recovery. The next step in Disaster Recovery is a plan to carry out a (controlled) first full DR test in the early part of the New Year. Likewise a TSN Network relies on good internet facilities and therefore considerable reliance on communication facilities. All these factors are being addressed including the recent upgrade of our main Ether Stream Line into Botolph Lane from where the network starts and ends.

Human Resources

As previously mentioned, the recruitment consultancy Veredus were appointed in September to assist with the appointment of a new Secretary General. Following consultation with Trustees and the Executive Team, a new job description and the job title of Director General have been agreed. The position was advertised in Planning Magazine and the Sunday Times in November and there have been an encouraging number of enquiries so far. The Appointments Panel is meeting with Veredus on 8th December to review the applications and agree a long list of candidates for initial interviews with Veredus. Short listing will take place on 12th January and the final candidate assessments will be held on 21st and 22nd January.

Over the last year the HR department has been updating HR policies and procedures to ensure they comply with current employment law and good practice. As well as changes to HR processes, the following policies and procedures have been updated and published on the staff intranet:

- Equality and Diversity Policy Statement
- Sickness Policy
- Stress Policy
- Disciplinary and Capability Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy

The following policies will be published in the next few weeks:

- Managing Change Policy and Procedure
- Resourcing Policy
- Learning and Development Policy

The next step is to publish an online Staff Handbook in December. The handbook which will be available to all staff will contain all HR Policies as well as the essential information every new member of staff needs to know when joining the Institute. The staff handbook is the first of several initiatives to ensure a good induction is provided for new staff.

A new Performance Development Review (PDR) system will also be introduced in December with a view to PDR's being completed in the first quarter of 2010. The new system introduces Key Behaviours for RTPI staff as well as measuring performance against workplan targets and planning career development.

Annex I

RTPI press releases October 2009 to present

PR 43 – President visits Plymouth to see regeneration in action

PR 44 - President praises regeneration efforts in the North East

PR 45 - Government proposals to simplify planning system ill-thought out

PR 46 - Infrastructure Levy plans seriously flawed

PR 47 - Worrying Government proposals will put heritage at risk

PR 48 - Minister tells RTPI Scotland conference planning is key to economic recovery

PR 49 - Government response on out of town retail development undermines town centre first policy

PR 50 - President praises Aberdeen's booming development

PR 51 - RTPI response to Queen's Speech

PR 52 - Planners welcome Government announcement giving flexibility on planning permissions

Annex II

England & UK Consultations

RTPI Response to Proposed Amendments to PPS25: Development and Flood Risk (P2009/11/01)
Response to the Communities and Local Government consultation. Date: 02/11/2009

RTPI Response to Developing a Strategy for Smart and Integrated Ticketing (P2009/11/02)
Response to the Department for Transport consultation. Date: 02/11/2009

RTPI Response to draft Noise Action Plans (P2009/11/03)
Response to the Defra consultation. Date: 03/11/2009

RTPI Response to the Transposition of the Revised Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) in England and Wales (P2009/10/01)
Response to the Defra consultation. Date: 08/10/2009

RTPI Response to the NSIP examination procedures (P2009/10/02)
Response to the Communities and Local Government consultation. Date: 05/10/2009

RTPI Response to Development of Indicators for a Sustainable Food System (P2009/10/03)
Response to the Defra consultation. Date: 16/10/2009

RTPI Response to Improving Permitted Development (P2009/10/04)
Response to the Communities and Local Government consultation. Date: 23/10/2009

RTPI Response to Publicity for Planning Applications (P2009/10/05)
Response to the Communities and Local Government consultation. Date: 23/10/2009

RTPI Response to the draft Regulations for the Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy and The Planning Aid Response (P2009/10/06)
Response to the Communities and Local Government consultation. Date: 23/10/2009

RTPI Response to Streamlining Information Requirements for Planning Applications (P2009/10/07)
Response to the Communities and Local Government consultation. Date: 23/10/2009

Joint RTPI & IHBC Response to the draft PPS15: Planning for the Historic Environment (P2009/10/08)
Response to the Communities and Local Government consultation. Date: 29/10/2009

RTPI Response to Policy Statement on Regional Strategies and Guidance on the Establishment of Leaders' Boards (P2009/10/09)
Response to the Communities and Local Government consultation. Date: 30/10/2009

RTPI Scotland Policy Consultations

RTPI Scotland has recently responded to the following consultations:

- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) - proposed policy changes and
- Scottish Planning Policy Environmental Report Annex A

The following consultations from government and other bodies have been received:

Current Consultations

- [Consultation on the Councillors' Code of Conduct](#)
- [Consultation on Options for the Implementation of the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation \(SCIO\)](#)
- [Proposal to modify the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Designation Order](#)
- [Proposal to modify the Cairngorms National Park Designation Order](#)
- [Consultation on the Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Scotland](#)
- [Environmental Assessment \(Scotland\) Act 2005: Consultation on the Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Scotland: Strategic Environmental Assessment: Environmental Report \[Consultation\]](#)
- [Consultation on Historic Scotland Guidance Notes - Managing Change in the Historic Environment](#)

Forthcoming Consultations

- New practical fire safety guidance for small bed and breakfast and self-catering premises
- Revised Code of Practice issued under section 60 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act
- Consultation on a Risk Based Reservoir Safety Regime for Scotland
- Implementing the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003: Environmental Impact Assessments in respect of agricultural irrigation projects - proposals for a simplified approach

RTPI Cymru Policy Consultations

RTPI Cymru has recently responded to the following consultations:

Wales National Transport Plan

Draft TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Communities

Proposed Changes to PPW to support the requirement for travel plans for specific types of development.

Conservation Principles

There are no current Wales only consultations.

RTPI NI Policy Consultations

- [Consultation paper on Householder Permitted Development Rights in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Consultation paper on Non-Householder Permitted Development Rights in Northern Ireland](#)

The purpose of these two consultations is to obtain the views of the public and all interested parties on the Department's proposals to extend householder permitted development rights, making them more accessible and easier understood. With the extension of the permitted development rights it is hoped to reduce the need for developers/operators to seek planning permission for minor development; and to reduce the number of planning applications made, enabling the Planning Service to redirect resources to address more strategic and complex planning applications, improving the efficiency in the planning system.

Copies of the consultation papers may be downloaded from the Planning Service website at www.planningni.gov.uk. The consultation period will end on 22nd January 2010.

- Consultation Paper on Permitted Development Rights for Small Scale Renewable Energy (Microgeneration) development in Northern Ireland: Consultation

The purpose of this consultation document is to obtain views on the Department's proposals to provide specific permitted development rights for microgeneration development including solar panels, wind turbines, heat pumps, anaerobic digestion plant etc. The proposals will allow certain, often minor or non-contentious, types of small scale renewable energy generation development to proceed without the need for a planning application, since planning permission for them will be deemed to be granted subject to certain exclusions and conditions. Copies of the consultation paper may be downloaded from the Planning Service website at www.planningni.gov.uk. Consultation closes on 22nd January 2010

- Final Version of PPS 18 Issued

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 sets out the planning policy for development that generates energy from renewable resources. The PPS aims to facilitate the siting of renewable energy generating facilities in appropriate locations within the built and natural environments. The policy is accompanied by a Best Practice Guidance document which provides technical information and guidance on a range of renewable energy technologies as well as information about approaches to Passive Solar Design (PSD). The final document and the summary of the consultation responses which included RTPi NI can be found at:

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/policy_publications/planning_statements/planning_policy_statement_18_renewable_energy-4.htm

- Planning Policy Statement 7 Addendum

Minister Poots has launched a consultation for a new draft planning policy statement to safeguard the character of established residential areas. The draft policies, set out as an Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7), aim to help towards the better management of proposals for the redevelopment of existing buildings, proposals for the infilling of vacant sites (including extended garden areas), and proposals for the conversion or sub-division of existing buildings to flats or apartments (including those for multiple occupancy).

The consultation period for the new draft addendum runs until 5 March 2010.

Consultation on PPS 7 Addendum (Draft): Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas can be read [here](#).