



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

THE PIPA NETWORK MONITORING REPORT 2009

Summary

During 2009 PIPA has continued to grow, widen its sphere of interconnectivities, build its reputation and help to ensure that the RTPI can speak with authority on the democratic dimensions of spatial planning. An increasing number of individual Members have contributed to the success of the PIPA Network over the year. The challenge for 2010 will be, within severely constrained finances, to further consolidate on the interest that PIPA activities and events have generated, continuing to build a real sense that only Councillors and officers together can deliver the place-making commitments that the democratic system requires of them. In these endeavours the recommendations and actions arising from the Killian & Pretty Review continue to be supportive.

The Year

Through efforts throughout the year to raise the profile and awareness of PIPA and its potential, membership has continued to grow steadily, from 232 in 2007 now to 402 at the end of 2009. Natural 'turnover' with elected local Councillors and changes in political control have restricted the net growth in membership but not diminished the interest in local planning as a vital area of local Councillor responsibility. The Network has yet to achieve its ambition of at least one member from each local authority across the UK, but word continues to spread. In particular, the plans for re-delegation of planning responsibilities to local Councils across Northern Ireland (that will see in 2011 eleven new local Councils with planning powers) are being watched with interest, with the offer of assistance having been made to RTPI NI.

The Network made a contribution to RTPI governance activities when PIPA Member Cllr Peter Wharf from Purbeck Council gave a 'view from the local Planning Committee' to the RTPI's General Assembly. Peter's contribution was well received and promoted a constructive debate amongst Assembly Members. Also, in conjunction with the RTPI Development Planning Network, PIPA took a lead in facilitating discussion and drafting the RTPI submission on the CLG Consultation on Regional Strategies & Leaders Boards. And in Northern Ireland in November PIPA contributed to a Conference in Belfast about the local government reform that will see local planning powers for the first time since 1973.

The year saw our third PIPA Conference in England. The theme for the 2009 event was 'Planning – delivering for the upturn'. The venue (after Birmingham in 2007 and Manchester in 2008) was the Savoy Conference Centre in London. We offered a wider range of sessions than ever before and the feedback from delegates (via the evaluation forms) was extremely positive with more than half saying that the organisation of the event was 'excellent' and no-one marking it less than 'good'. We fully expect that national events in Northern Ireland and Wales will follow in due course (a Conference in Scotland having been held in 2008). The Conference was only possible thanks to continuing financial support from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).

A particular commitment has been made to build engagement with other organisation with shared interests and one positive way to achieve this has been by inviting their participation in providing speakers for the PIPA Conference. The programme for the 2009 Conference shows engagement across a wide range of related and influential bodies from the new Infrastructure Planning Commission, the Homes & Communities Agency and CLG to Heritage Link and the

English National Parks Authorities Association. The Conference also had an international element taking a comparative look at the Dutch experience of urban characterisation and the French approach to town mobility management.

A further Member Survey was conducted early in the year. The analysis of the 2009 PIPA Survey showed that by far the most valued feature of the PIPA offer is 'information giving' (91% ranked this No1); second favourite was 'sharing information & knowledge with other Members' (via events in particular) and third was 'opportunities to explore and express views on planning policies'. A number of other specific PIPA features were also valued amongst which were: 'the Conference as per the event with Hazel Blears in 2008', 'ability to keep my fellow members up to date with legislation, etc', 'information search – on-line and in person with the Network Manager'. It was also pleasing to note that just over 87% of those completing the survey would be supportive of setting up some task groups to look at some specific or more detailed issues – although not all would be immediately available to support initiatives. There are a wide range of suggestions for PIPA priorities – 75 in total – and these immediately helped to make selections for the content of the annual PIPA Conference.

A particular highlight of the year was the session that PIPA offered to delegates at the 2009 Planning Convention - a discussion under the title 'Does recession mean sell-out? - maintaining quality in a cold climate'. The discussion was started by Cllr Clare Denman (Crawley BC) and Cllr Alastair Moss (LB Westminster) and the 50+ audience were quickly engaged in both the prospects and challenges of continuing to ensure quality developments despite economic difficulties. The attendees were a mix of Council officers, consultants with some Councillors but there was general support for the proposition that now was not the time to start compromising on design or build standards.

During the year the Quarterly Bulletin designed to meet the particular needs of MPs, MSPs, Northern Ireland and Welsh Assembly Members continued to keep them all well informed about current planning developments and issues. This has given a broader audience to the RTPI's Policy Team's specific briefings on matters of most consequence.

In keeping with the RTPI Seven Commitments on Climate Change a PIPA website page was introduced covering the types of contribution that local planning Councillors might make to address these issues. Further contributions were invited from Members. This was part of an initiative across the range of RTPI Networks.

The challenge for 2010 will be, within severely constrained finances, to further consolidate on the interest that PIPA activities and events have generated, continuing to build a real sense that only Councillors and officers together can deliver the place-making commitments that the democratic system requires of them. In these endeavours the recommendations and actions arising from the Killian & Pretty Review continue to be supportive.

Membership:

Figures current at 31.12.09: **402**

(For comparison: Members 2007 - 232; 2008 - 363)

RTPI members on register: roughly 10% (membership data has been accumulated in such a way that this figure is difficult to derive more accurately at present)

Advisory Group

The Group chaired by Councillor Mike Roberts of Rushmore DC has not met during the year. Within financial and time constraints, PIPA has relied on electronic means of engagement both with Advisory Group Members and the wider PIPA Membership.

The Advisory Group was (attendance figures shown in brackets):

Ashis Choudhury	Consultant
Cllr Bill Sharp	Councillor for Castle Point
Cllr Brian O'Hare	ex-Councillor for Knowsley
Cllr Mike Roberts	Councillor for Rushmoor
<i>Retired:</i> Trevor Roberts	TRA Ltd

The Advisory Group with other Members made input to the content & speakers for PIPA events, and, made contributions to the development of RTPI Policy, most notably in 2009 the PPS4 Planning for a Prosperous Economy and Regional Strategies & Leaders Boards.

Publicity & Promotion

PIPA Membership annually benefits from raised awareness of what it offers after the Planning Convention, Elected Member Summer School and PIPA Conference. At the Planning Convention PIPA contributed a popular session as noted above, widely publicized through the Convention brochure. At the 2009 Summer School all the delegates received a PIPA leaflet in their delegate bag and were welcomed by the Network Manager at the Reception on the opening evening, which was sponsored by the RTPI. Every local planning authority in England is invited to take up free places for the PIPA Conference – thanks to financial and other support from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). The success of the 2009 Conference was celebrated with a feature of the home page of the RTPI website.

The Network has contributed articles to editions of 'Planning' and its equivalents, such as Cynllunio in Wales, across the UK. An article on sustaining good design despite the downturn was timed to precede the PIPA contribution to the Planning Convention and provide some forethought for the debate that was had there.

As 2010 ends we are again contemplating a mailing to encourage every local Cabinet-level Councillor responsible for planning issues to take up PIPA membership.

E-bulletins

Bulletins have been issued fortnightly, with special editions for any topics of urgency.

Unsolicited Feedback received in 2009

"Thank you for all the information from PIPA which I have found very useful"

"Just wanted to fire a quick email to you to say I thought your e-bulletin you recently sent through was very good. Well done to you and the team." *[NB 'the team' is actually a third of one person!]*

"It's all very interesting information.... many thanks", Grant Shapps MP

"I have just become the Chairman of our Development Control Committee and understand your publication is very useful"

"Thank you for the information you have provided, much appreciated."

"An unsolicited note of congratulation and thanks. This is a great bulletin - excellent work"

"Thank you for the Bulletins you send, I find them most useful"

“I was recently informed of this networking group by our officers, and would very much like to join”

“A very good Conference again – well planned and well executed”

“[The Conference provided] a very good day in an excellent venue”

“[One of the Conference speakers] in particular was like a breath of fresh air, and sensible in today’s market”

Policy consultations

Network members have been invited to contribute to consultations on the following during 2009:

Draft Planning Policy Statement: Eco-towns - CLG

All Landscapes Matter – Natural England

Definition of Zero Carbon Homes and Non-Domestic Buildings - CLG

Guidance for Local Transport Plans - Department for Transport

Draft River Basin Management Plans – Environment Agency

Draft Revised Circular 12/1996: Planning Agreements – Scottish Government

Climate Change Strategy – First Stage – Welsh Assembly Government

One Wales: The All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy - Welsh Assembly Government

List of statutory consultees for National Policy Statements - CLG

Draft of ‘Designing Streets’ – Scottish Government

Sustainable Homes: A National Housing Strategy for Wales - Welsh Assembly Government

Power to Promote or Improve Economic, Social and Environmental Well-Being - Welsh Assembly Government

Heat and Energy Saving Strategy - DECC

Financial Inclusion Strategy - Welsh Assembly Government

Sustainable Communities Act 2007: Local Spending Reports - CLG

Financial viability study of the eco-towns programme - CLG

Consultation on a Bioenergy Action Plan for Wales - Welsh Assembly Government

The term ‘carbon neutral’: its definition and recommendations for good practice - DECC

National Energy Efficiency and Savings Plan - Welsh Assembly Government

Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to the Draft Policy on Gypsy and Traveller

Accommodation in the East of England & from the Recommendations of the Examination in

Public Panel - CLG

Planning Act 2008: the Pre-Application Consultation and Application Procedures for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects - CLG

Nominated Nuclear Power Sites - DECC

Scottish Planning Policy – Scottish Government

Scottish Planning Policy Environmental Report – Scottish Government

Commons Act 2006 - Updating the Commons Registers in Wales - Welsh Assembly Government

Safer places: a counter-terrorism supplement – Home Office

New Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Prosperous Economies - CLG

Freedoms and flexibilities under the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) - CLG

Scotland’s Climate Change Adaptation Framework – Scottish Government

Draft Housing (Scotland) Bill 2009 – Scottish Government

The Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill – Scottish Government

Draft Technical Advice Note 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings - Welsh Assembly Government

Houses in multiple occupation and possible planning responses – CLG

Building Sound Foundations - A Strategy for the Private Rented Sector – Northern Ireland Assembly

Commission on the Future for Housing in Northern Ireland – The Commission

Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill - Scottish Government

Charges payable to the Planning Inspectorate - Welsh Assembly Government

Greater Flexibility for Planning Permissions - CLG
A sustainable future for transport - Towards an integrated, technology-led and user-friendly system – Department for Transport
Urban Development Corporations' Quinquennial Review - CLG
Building a Society for All Ages - CLG
New Planning Policy on Development and Coastal Change - CLG
Adapting to Climate Change: Ensuring progress in key sectors - the adaptation reporting power in the Climate Change Act 2008 – DEFRA
Coastal Change Policy - DEFRA
Planning Act 2008: Examination procedures for nationally significant infrastructure projects - CLG
Building a Society for All Ages – HMG
The Planning System in Northern Ireland - Northern Ireland Assembly
NIHE Draft Corporate and Business Plan - Northern Ireland Assembly
Strengthening local democracy - CLG
New planning policy on Development and coastal change - CLG
Streamlining Information Requirements for Planning Applications - CLG
Improving Permitted Development - CLG
Publicity for Planning Applications - CLG
Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning for the Historic Environment - CLG
Hazardous Waste Strategy - DEFRA
Draft Noise Action Plans – DEFRA
Proposals for Fairer and Better Environmental Enforcement – DEFRA & Welsh Assembly Government
Policy Statement on Regional Strategies - CLG
Proposed amendments to Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk - CLG
Proposals and Draft Regulations for the Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy - CLG
Implementation of the Removal of the Duty of Planning Authorities to Notify Historic Scotland on Certain Types of Listed Building Consent Application - Scottish Government
UK Equality Bill - Specific Public Sector Duties to Promote Equality, and Socio-economic Duty - Scottish Government
National Transport Plan - Welsh Assembly Government
TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities - Welsh Assembly Government
Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance - Cadw
Changes to Planning Policy Wales to support the requirement for travel plans for specific types of development - Welsh Assembly Government
Eco-towns - allocations from the eco-towns fund - CLG
A consultation on high hedges and other nuisance vegetation - Scottish Government
Coastal Access: Proposals to amend the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 for coastal land - DEFRA
Scotland's Zero Waste Plan Consultation - Scottish Government
Historic Scotland Guidance Notes - Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Scottish Government
A Road Less Travelled - A Draft Gypsy Traveller Strategy Document - Welsh Assembly Government
Proposed changes to the Growth Fund for 2010-11 - CLG
Scottish Planning Policy - Proposed Policy Changes - Scottish Government
Thames Gateway Eco-quarter - CLG
Three London Mayoral Strategies – London Assembly
Proposals to incentivise landowners to bring forward land for housing in rural areas – CLG
Proposed Permitted Development Rights for Microgeneration - Northern Ireland Assembly
Proposed Changes to Householder Permitted Development Rights - Northern Ireland Assembly
Permitted development rights for small scale renewable and low carbon energy technologies, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure - CLG
Revisions to the Councillors' Code of Conduct – Scottish Government
Listening to communities: draft statutory guidance on the duty to respond to petitions - CLG
Draft Addendum to PPS 7: Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas - Northern Ireland Assembly
Code for Sustainable Homes and the Energy Efficiency standard for Zero Carbon Homes - CLG

Task Groups

There have been no task groups as such and financial restraints have limited the means by which such initiatives can be pursued. However, the Membership does rise to an occasion quite often: Cllr Alan Parkin from South Kesteven District Council volunteered their Council Chamber and a speaker for one of the Networks' session of Section 106 Agreements; Cllrs Clare Denman (Crawley BC) and Alastair Moss (LB Westminster) stepped forward to lead the PIPA session at the 2009 Planning Convention - a discussion under the title 'Does recession mean sell-out? - maintaining quality in a cold climate'. Also PIPA Member Cllr Peter Wharf from Purbeck Council gave a 'view from the local Planning Committee' to the RTPI's General Assembly. And Cllr Neil Gulliver from Chelmsford Council stepped forward to be the PIPA Climate Change Champion amongst the array of Network Champions on this important topic. Member participation has regularly contributed to the joint meetings with RTPI Policy Team that during the year several consultations of significance – as noted below. Advisory Group member Ashis Choudhury has continued to keep us informed on 'capturing land value' from his membership of a pressure group for reform which during the year held a session in the Houses of Parliament. And Member Prof Alan Townsend from Durham University in particular continued to examine and consider the democratic aspects of regionalism with the aim of assisting with the development of RTPI policy here.

Requests to/from Members

Planning Authorities developing measures for **coping with ageing or declining populations** were invited to contribute to Dresden Leibniz Graduate School research.

The RTPI response to the CLG Consultation on **Community Land Trusts** was publicised to Members who were invited to follow up on any points made in the submission.

RTPI Information Services invited Network Members to take part in a survey to find out what they think about the information the RTPI provides and how it is provided.

PIPA Members contributed comments and experience to the Networks' initiative around **Section 106 Agreements – time for review?**

Members responded to the request for contributions the RTPI's **Planning to Live with Climate Change**.

The programme for the **2009 PIPA Conference** was developed with input from Members via Bulletin invites.

A PIPA Member asked to hear from other planning Councillors that had been involved in formulating local policies on the **location of wind farms**.

In the wake of **Matthew Taylor's Report** on Rural Economies Members were asked to share any experience of, or views on, the impact of second homes in rural areas.

The Centre for Public Health Excellence (CPHE) invited Members to join their Group working on guidance for policy makers, planners, local authorities, & primary care trusts on how to improve health and reduce inequalities through the process of spatial planning

One or more Member was sought to be the Network's **Climate Change Champion** and one volunteer stepped forward.

Following the announcement of the new **Planning Policy Statement for Eco Towns** and a raft of related green development initiatives, Members were invited to comment and exchange views.

PIPA Members were invited to feed their knowledge, opinions and good practice examples into the new resource of a **Coastal Regeneration Guide** from the Coastal Communities Alliance, which is a group of coastal LA regeneration practitioners.

Members were introduced to the many opportunities for partners and Members to become involved in the **RTPI's Seven Commitments to Climate Change**.

Members were asked 'Do you have a view on what skills you need to fulfill your role as a Planning Committee Member?' for an **HCA Academy planning skills survey**.

Members were introduced to the purpose of and activities for **World Town Planning Day**.

PIPA Member Tim Wotherspoon of South Cambridgeshire Council kindly copied to us the Report that he sent to his Chief Officer following attendance at the **PIPA Conference 2009** – the Report gave an excellent account for those that did not manage to attend.

Members were told of the opportunity for the **Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize**, a biennial international award to recognise individuals and organisations that have made outstanding contributions to the creation of vibrant, liveable and sustainable urban communities.

The Government release of 7 of the intended 12 **National Policy Statements** was publicised to Members alongside Planning Aid explanatory material and opportunities to contribute to the formal Consultations.

Members were invited to submit comments to inform the RTPI submission to the **All Party Urban Development Group Inquiry** on transaction costs in urban development.

Members were invited to contribute to an RTPI response to the Scottish Government proposals for significant changes to their **Councillors' Code of Conduct** to address the way in which Councillors should now take decisions since the changes in the Scottish Planning System have come into effect.

Members were asked to make a contribution to the RTPI response to the CLG Consultation paper seeking views on proposals to incentivise landowners to bring forward **land for affordable housing in rural areas**.

Training opportunities specifically for Councillors promoted

Understanding and Delivering Community Empowerment – Trafford Hall

PAS training materials for Councillors on Local Development Framework & 'Pick & Mix' modules
– Planning Advisory Service

Avoiding Costs in Planning Appeals - Linda S Russell, Solicitors

In a Nutshell: online course on sustainable communities - HCA Academy

New tools and guides relating to engagement with Parish & Town Councils - National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC)

PAS Leadership Academy: Your place in leading economic recovery – Planning Advisory Service
Planning Summer School for Elected Members 2009

Putting Place Shaping at the Heart of the Corporate Agenda – RTPI North West

An Update Conference for Councillors – RTPI East of England

The 21st Century Councillor Local Leadership Conference - IDeA

Using planning to make a difference to local communities - LGA

Events

Date: 30th January 2009
Event: Joint Meeting with the RTPI-CIH Planning for Housing Network
Venue: London
Subject: The work of the newly created Homes & Communities Agency
Participants: 24
The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 30th January 2009
Event: Consultation Event with RTPI & CIH Policy
Venue: London
Subject: Consultation on the draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on Eco-towns
Participants: 24
The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 5th, 10th & 17th February 2009
Event: Consultation event with Urban Design Network Heritage Interest Group
Venue: Edinburgh, Greenwich & Blaenavon
Subject: DCMS proposals for World Heritage Site designations
Participants: 64 (from a number of Networks and across the three events)
The Presentations from these events were available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 27th March 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPI Development Management Network
Venue: Bristol
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 25
Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 11th June 2009
Event: Consultation Event with RTPI Policy
Venue: London
Subject: Draft PPS4 Planning for Prosperous Economies
Participants: 20
The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 18th June 2009
Event: Workshop at The Planning Convention
Venue: QEII Conference Centre
Subject: Does recession mean sell-out? - maintaining quality in a cold climate
Participants: 55
Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 22nd June 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPI Development Management Network
Venue: Brighton
Subject: The Planning System and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
Participants: 28

Date: 30th June 2009
Event: An event for National Housing Week hosted by Family HA Birmingham

Venue: Birmingham
Subject: Localis Report: Fixing Broken Neighbourhoods
Participants: 18

The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 2nd July 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPi Development Management Network
Venue: London
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 24

Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 16th July 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPi Development Planning Network
Venue: London
Subject: Conservative party Green Paper 'Control Shift – Returning Power to Local Communities'
Participants: 21

Date: 29th July 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPi Development Management Network
Venue: Tunbridge Wells
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 20

Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 1st September 2009
Event: Elected Members' Summer School
Venue: Exeter University
Subject: Briefing session on PIPA
Participants: 220

Presentations from this event were available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 14th September 2009
Event: Joint event with the RTPi Development Management Network
Venue: Grantham
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 30

A Report from this event is available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 29th September 2009
Event: Event hosted by the National Housing Federation (NHF)
Venue: London
Subject: Draft Regulations for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
Participants: 25

Date: 30th September 2009
Event: Joint event with the Development Planning Network
Venue: London
Subject: Consultation on Regional Strategies & Leaders Boards
Participants: 23

The Presentations made at the event were available to members on the PIPA webpages

Date: 30th October 2009

Event: PIPA UK Conference
Venue: London
Subject: Planning: Delivering for the upturn
Participants: 110

The Presentations made at the Conference are available to members on the PIPA webpages

Date: 25th November 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPI Development Management Network
Venue: Leeds
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 28

The Presentation from this event is available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 9th December 2009
Event: Network event hosted by ECOTEC
Venue: Birmingham
Subject: Transforming Estates
Participants: 22

The Presentation from this event is available via the members' area of the website.

**Andrew Matheson MRTPI
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