



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

PIPA - the RTPI Politicians in Planning Network Business Plan 2010

What is PIPA - the Politicians in Planning Network?

PIPA is a network that aims to support the co-operative working between professionals and local politicians that is essential to achieve the most effective planning outcomes on the ground. The collective voice of local Councillors through PIPA has enormous potential to have an influence on national decision-making affecting the delivery of democratic planning. It also has a strong role to play in helping politicians adjust to changes required by introduction of new planning systems. The Network presently has over 300 Members.

Why do we have a Politicians in Planning Network?

Politicians are at the core of a democratic planning system. They make decisions on local planning issues within national policy, informed and advised by professionals who are invariably RTPI Members. It is right that the RTPI should actively support the effective working of the mechanisms that support the local, democratic accountability of planning. PIPA can aid understanding and review.

In these endeavours PIPA has had the benefit of invaluable sponsorship support from the Planning Advisory Service for 3 annual Conferences in England and from the Scottish Government for a Conference in Scotland. Thus PIPA has been able to make substantial progress alongside those partners in raising the profile and esteem of the democratic elements of planning and, in conjunction with Members, helped to fill knowledge and skill gaps within local authorities. When they consider that the appropriate time has arrived, we will work with the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly to deliver similar but tailored events for those devolved administrations. The Network will continue to support the Summer School for Elected Members since this shares a number of PIPA's aims in a compact format and helps to build lasting relationships with Summer School contributors and attendees.

The Network's objectives are to:

1. Raise the profile and understanding of professional planning amongst people who are engaged in planning from a local Councillor perspective
2. Provide a responsive 'one stop shop' information and signposting service on spatial planning for all those involved in democratic planning within the UK.
3. Provide a vehicle for all those involved in democratic planning to come together to build knowledge and exchange information and experiences
4. Provide a sounding board to further develop and improve democratic planning practice

Action Plan

Objective 1:

To raise the profile and understanding of professional planning amongst people who are engaged in planning from a local Councillor perspective

Action	When	Who
Have in place for 2010 a programme of UK-wide promotional initiatives and activities, including contributions to <i>Planning</i> magazine, that will widen awareness and help to build membership	January 2010	Network Manager co-ordination and contributions with support from RTPi Communications team, magazine editors and Members
In keeping with the RTPi's Seven Climate Change commitments, support and develop initiatives to allow for active engagement by PIPA Members	Throughout 2010	Network Manager co-ordination with support from PIPA Climate Change Champion(s)
Carry out a Member survey during 2010 to gauge levels of satisfaction and potential content for the Business Plan 2011.	March 2010	Network Manager with Member input
Foster and review the targeted task groups set up from the feedback of the Member survey 2010	June 2010	Members volunteering to attend set-up meetings; Network Manager co-ordination and contributions.
Host a Workshop at the Planning Convention 2010 following the success of a similar offer 2009	June 2010	Network Manager and Workshop contributors
Host a reception or other appropriate contribution at the Elected Members' Summer School	September 2010	Network Manager with Summer School team support
In conjunction with local Members and Planning Aid, have a presence at Party Local Government Conferences and other appropriate events	As per 2010 programme above	Network Manager with Planning Aid staff

Objective 2:

To provide a responsive 'one stop shop' information and signposting service on planning for all those involved in democratic planning within the UK

Action	When	Who
Populate the website with comprehensive resources, including specifically a page on Climate Change, adding new information content each month.	Monthly	Network Manager with Member contributions, Sift co-operation and IT support as required

In conjunction with Members and Planning Aid, to contribute Planning 'Surgeries' at Conferences and other appropriate events	As per 2010 programme above	Network Manager with Planning Aid staff
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**Objective 3:
To provide a vehicle for all those involved in democratic planning to come together to build knowledge and exchange information and experiences**

Action	When	Who
To offer at a regional or sub-regional level a series of Network-led events that might widen awareness by bringing Councillors together (as per Section 106 event in Grantham in 2009)	Quarterly	Network Manager setting up; event hosts, providing venue and refreshments;
To offer in each UK nation on a 3 year cycle a Conference of the style which re-launched PIPA in 2007	2010: England (Leeds?) + Northern Ireland	Network Manager with support from PAS and Northern Ireland Assembly.
Enable relevant topics to be debated through the website Discussion Forum	New topics introduced monthly	Network Manager and Member contributions

**Objective 4:
To provide a sounding board to develop and improve democratic planning practice**

Action	When	Who
Conduct a survey of each Local Authority Lead Councillor for Planning around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The status of the Chief Planning Officer within the local authority The need to sustain or increase the numbers of qualified planners and compare with 2009 results. 	September 2010	Network Manager with admin support
Provide intelligence to the RTPI Policy Staff by identifying forthcoming issues and arranging joint activities as appropriate	Throughout 2010	Member contributions; Network Manager co-ordination
Build co-operation with other organisations with shared interests by inviting their contributions to/participation in events whilst avoiding duplication	Throughout 2010	Member contributions; Network Manager co-ordination

Resources

Resources required for 2010

- 11.5 hours per week professional staff time from the RTPI Network Manager to ensure the consistent delivery of the role as set out in a manner that reflects positively on the Institute and its relationships with all local planning authorities

The Network Manager is the day-to-day interface between the Network membership, which we aim to extend to include every local authority in the UK, and the Institute, its partners and supporters. To understand Member expectations and to efficiently and effectively deliver to these, mindful too of the RTPI's aspirations for the Networks, the Network Manager must horizon scan, evaluate Member input and options, present the Network and its capabilities positively to a wide range of other parties and confidently review performance and its contributions to planning practice and development. The more specific contributions of the Manager for 2010 are set out in the Action Plan above.

- Support in kind from the Communications Team, PAS & Planning Aid to ensure the most effective use of this limited resource in pursuing PIPAs aims.
- Financial support:
Summer School 2010:
£750 for the Network Manager's attendance at this annual gathering of PIPA Members and prospective Members. As PIPA can justifiably say that it is a vital benefit for all Councillors engaged in planning locally it is important that PIPA is active and engaged with all events aimed specifically at planning Councillors.
Other costs:
£250 for incidental Network expenses. PIPA will continue to seek sponsorship to carry out its major public activities. However there will be incidental costs associated with activities such as task group expenses and refreshments (tea & coffee) for which we seek financial support.

Total

Human Resources:

11.5 hours per week professional staff time from the RTPI Network Manager

Financial Resources:

£1,000

Income opportunities

Sponsorship opportunities

- Funding for at least two Conferences, one in England and one in Northern Ireland

Local authority budgets are at full stretch and yet it is in their interests as well as the profession's that Councillors involved in planning decisions are well informed and able to explore planning as a topic in depth and in context. Well supported and successful PIPA Conferences have been held in England and Scotland each with free places thanks to financial support from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and the Scottish Government respectively. We will be asking for support from PAS and the Northern Ireland Assembly for our 2010 Conferences as programmed.

- Other topics suitable for regional or local Conferences may arise and Member or stakeholder support in terms of venues, speakers and incidentals will be sought with, on the basis of past experience, a very reasonable chance of success.

Partnership opportunities

PIPA has received positive support and assistance with events etc from a wide range of organisations such as the Planning Advisory Service, the Improvement Service (in

Scotland), the Local Government Association, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the National Association of Local Councils, the Planning Officers Society, the Planning Inspectorate, the Chief Reporters Office (Scotland), Built Environment Forum Scotland, Sustainable Development Commission Scotland, the Homes & Communities Agency, Communities and Local Government (CLG), and the Scottish Government. There continue to be opportunities to work positively with these and related organisations to serve the interests of local democratic planning and these in turn have shown themselves willing to provide support in kind.

Membership opportunities

It is unlikely that many PIPA Members will meet the eligibility criteria for current RTPPI Memberships. However, PIPA provides a significant route through which the role of the RTPPI can be broadcast and explained to a vital audience, through which the value of professionally supported officers can be made known, and understanding of the benefits of employing staff with an RTPPI membership can be enhanced.

Prospects for future growth

PIPA will play a major role in the RTPPI's aim to put planning at the heart of local government. PIPA will continue to build relationships with the key politicians in planning to raise its profile and co-operation with professionals. 2010 can be expected to be an election year and through its Members PIPA can help to press a positive priority for planning issues in manifesto commitments.

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